

Use Week of: **Dec. 5/6/9**

Christmas • Session 1

Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

STORY POINT:

Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.

Key Passage:

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Galatians 4:4-5 NIV

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Additional resources are available at *gospelproject.com.*

LEADER Bible Study

When Adam and Eve introduced sin into the world, all of creation fell under a curse. (See Gen. 3:17-19.) We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We've inherited the curse of death from Adam. (See Rom. 3:23; 5:12.) Throughout the Old Testament, the consequences of sin are obvious. God's people were separated from Him; they did not enjoy the intimate relationship with their Creator for which He had created them. God's people were affected by sickness and pain. Corruption spread quickly throughout the earth. The situation seemed hopeless, yet God did not leave His people without hope.

It was into this hopelessness that God spoke. Hundreds of messages came through the prophets concerning a coming Messiah—One who would rescue people from their sins. But when would this Promised One come? How would He come? Would the people recognize Him?

The prophets Isaiah and Micah—who both lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born—spoke specifically of the Messiah's birth. Isaiah told King Ahaz what the Lord would do. "The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). He described the birth of a Prince of Peace—a Son of David who will reign forever. (Isa. 9:6-7) Isaiah said that He would be a King! (Isa. 11:1-5) The prophet Micah named the specific town—Bethlehem—in which Jesus would be born. (Mic. 5:2)

As you teach kids about the prophecies concerning Jesus' birth, help them understand that everything God said about Jesus' birth came true. Hundreds of years later, Jesus was born into the world.

God's plan to rescue people from sin was not a secret plan. God gave His people hope: A Savior is coming. Though death came through Adam, life comes through Christ. (1 Cor. 15:22) Through His death on the cross, Jesus finished the work for our salvation. In Him lies our hope of forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus reconciles to God those who trust in Him.

Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth

Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

Long before Jesus was born, some of God's prophets told people that Jesus would come. The prophets' words are written in the Old Testament. Two of the men who told about Jesus' birth were the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Micah.



Isaiah the prophet lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born on earth. The first message about Jesus was about who Jesus' mother would be and who Jesus would be. Isaiah said, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel." Isaiah said that God would choose a woman who was not yet married, and she would be Jesus' mother. **He said too that one of Jesus' names would be *Immanuel*, which means "God with us." Some time later, Isaiah talked about Jesus again. He said, "A child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of peace."**

Even more names for Jesus! **All these names tell us who Jesus is and the great things He would do.** Jesus was coming to earth to help

people and protect people. Jesus would be a king who cares about His people, and He would bring peace to the whole world.

Isaiah's third message was about Jesus' family and His power. Isaiah said that Jesus would be part of Jesse's family. Jesse was King David's father. Isaiah said that God's Spirit would be with Jesus, and Jesus would be wise and strong. Jesus would do the right thing, and He would be a fair ruler.

Finally, the prophet Micah told about where Jesus would be born. Micah said that Jesus would be born in a town called Bethlehem. Micah also said that Jesus would be ruler over Israel. Hundreds of years later, everything the prophets Isaiah and Micah said about Jesus came true.



Christ Connection: God's plan to save people from sin and death was not a secret plan. God used the prophets to give hope to His people. They said God would send a Messiah—born into the world as a baby—to live the perfect life people fail to live and die the guilty death we deserve.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Vary body posture:** Stand at the center of the room at the beginning of the story. Move left of center when speaking about the prophet Isaiah, and finish the story right of center with details about Micah.
- **Make eye contact:** As you tell the story, make eye contact with listeners to draw them in.

INTRODUCE the Story

SESSION TITLE: Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth

BIBLE PASSAGE: Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

STORY POINT: Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Classroom

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share some things they think will happen in the future. What do they think will happen later today, later this week, or later this year?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Future News" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Future News" on the activity page.

SAY • Throughout the Old Testament, God gave messages, or prophecies, through the prophets. Today we are going to hear some messages about Jesus' birth that came hundreds of years before Jesus was born!

LOW PREP

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Make predictions

Explain to kids that in 1952, a newspaper published an article about what some famous scientists said the world would be like 50 years later (2002). Read some of the predictions:

- Cures for most diseases will be discovered, and the average person will live to be 100 years old.

- People will travel through space on rocket ships and visit other planets.
- Fresh water will be collected from the sea so that deserts, like the African Sahara, will become gardens.

SAY • Did those predictions come true? No. Doctors have made great advances in treating disease, but it still exists. And we still don't take vacations to Mars.

What do you think the world will be like in 50 years? In today's Bible story, we are going to read some things the prophets said about Jesus' birth—hundreds of years before it happened!

OPTION 2: What's coming?

- paper bag
- candy-coated chocolate pieces
- individually wrapped candies (optional)
- Allergy Alert download

Place candies in the bag. Guide kids to line up single file. Explain that you will pull a piece of candy from a bag. Kids should try to guess what color the candy will be. Prompt the first kid in line to guess. Then pull a candy from the bag. If he is correct, he should move to the end of the line. Otherwise, he should sit down.

Put the candy back in the bag. Continue playing until only one kid remains, or as time allows. If you choose, provide individually wrapped candies for the kids to enjoy.

SAY • Was it difficult to guess the color of candy? Making an accurate prediction is hard! Only God knows the future. In today's Bible story, we will hear about some prophets who said some things about Jesus' birth—hundreds of years before He was born!

Transition to Large Group

Large Group

SESSION TITLE: Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth

BIBLE PASSAGE: Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

STORY POINT: Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate your space using traditional Christmas elements. Set up a nativity scene at the front of the room. Hang garland or string lights near the ceiling. You may choose to invite kids to help with decorations by making a paper chain with red and green construction paper.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- notepad
- pencil

[Leader enters carrying a notepad and pencil. He or she scribbles a few notes before closing the notepad and addressing the kids.]

LEADER • Hello, there! My name's [*your name*]. Pleasure to meet you. You'll have to excuse me; I was just taking some notes. You see, I am researching the details of Jesus' birth to write an important article in a very prestigious magazine. I'm so excited. This is the perfect time because everyone is getting ready to

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

celebrate Jesus' birth. Hey, do you think you can help me? Let's get started!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Long ago, God gave messages to prophets. They reported news hundreds of years before it happened! This news was called *prophecy*. Did you know there are many prophecies throughout the Bible about Jesus' birth, His life, His death, and His resurrection? All of these prophecies help us answer our big picture question, ***Why was Jesus born?*** Listen closely to the Bible story to see if you can figure out the answer.

LEADER • We have been studying about God's big story of the Bible. It started long ago, when God created the world. God created the first people, Adam and Eve, and they disobeyed God's one rule. God had promised to send a Messiah to deal with sin once and for all. But God didn't just leave His people in darkness, waiting for the Messiah to come. Today's Bible story is called "Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth." Let's check it out.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Open your Bible to Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth."

LEADER • God's people were in a sad situation. After sin

entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, all people were separated from God. God is holy, and He can't be around sin. God gave His people the law to show them how to be holy, but no matter how hard the people tried, they could not obey the law perfectly. And because they sinned, they deserved to die.

God's people needed to be rescued from their sin. They needed someone who could obey the law perfectly and fix their relationship with God. No one on earth was good enough, but God loved His people and had a plan.

God's plan was not a secret plan. Throughout the Old Testament, God gave messages to prophets who told God's people what was going to happen. God promised to send a Messiah—a Savior—to save people from sin and death. He even told the prophets Isaiah and Micah specific details about how the Savior would come into the world. God said that Jesus was going to be born into the family of King David. God told Micah that the Savior would be born in a town called Bethlehem.

Did these things really happen? Yes! Hundreds of years after God gave these messages to the prophets, **everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.**

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • How do you feel when you think about something that is going to happen in the future—like a birthday party or family vacation? Sometimes things can come up to keep these plans from happening, but God had a plan to send Jesus long

before His Son was born.

Nothing can stop God's plan. God promised His people that He would send a Savior, and God always keeps His promises. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.***

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Christmas, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how God forgave people who lived before Jesus came to earth. Guide them to discuss why they think faith is all God wants from us to be forgiven of our sins.

- "Christmas, Session 1" questions from kids video

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Galatians 4:4-5.

- Key Passage Poster

LEADER • Our key passage comes from the Book of Galatians, which is in the New Testament. At just the

right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life and die on the cross for our sins so that we can receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for giving hope to Your people long before Jesus came into the world. Thank You for always keeping Your promises. Help us tell others about Jesus so that people who do not know Him would have hope too. Amen.

Dismiss to Classroom

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

 **God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

 **We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

 **God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

 **Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

 **We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Classroom

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BIBLE PASSAGE: Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

STORY POINT: Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Isaiah 9. Explain to kids that the Book of Isaiah is one of the books of the Major Prophets. Isaiah was a prophet who gave God's message to God's people in Judah. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Isaiah 9:6.

SAY • Isaiah the prophet said that a child was coming who would be for the people. This child would be a gift from God! Who was Isaiah talking about in this passage? (*Jesus*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- Why do you think God gave people hints through the prophets about the promised Messiah? *Lead kids to consider that God's promises gave the people hope for the future. Prophecies also helped the people recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah.*
  (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 1:1-2.)
- Isaiah talked about four names for Jesus. How is Jesus a Wonderful Counselor? *Guide kids to identify Jesus as a wise Savior whom we can trust to care for us and guide us. Jesus loves us and wants what's best for us.*
  (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 139:1-2.)
- How do you think God's people felt while they waited hundreds of years for the Messiah? How do you feel waiting for Jesus' second coming? *Invite kids to share their feelings about waiting for Jesus to return. Explain that we don't know when Jesus will return but we wait expectantly for Him.*
  (Option: Choose a kid to read Mark 13:33-34.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

OPTION 1: **Draw** nativity figures

Provide **paper & pencils** for each kid. Encourage kids to **draw** Baby Jesus figure

As kids work, explain that when people heard the prophecies about the Messiah, they weren't sure how God was going to send a Savior. Many believed by faith even though they waited and did not see the Messiah themselves.

SAY • As we will hear in our Bible story next week, God kept His promise. At just the right time, He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world as a small baby.

Encourage them to use the Baby Jesus as a prompt to share with their friends about God's promise to send a Savior.

OPTION 2: Plan ahead

- toothpicks
- gumdrop candies or mini marshmallows
- paper
- pencils
- Allergy Alert download

Allow kids to work in pairs or trios. Provide toothpicks and gumdrop candies or mini marshmallows for each group. Challenge kids to work together to construct a tower. Before they begin, kids should spend a minute or two making notes or drawings on a piece of paper to plan their towers.

After a couple of minutes, invite kids to begin building their towers based on their plans. Let kids work for several minutes. Then guide them to finish.

Discuss whose tower is the tallest, the widest, the most unique, and so forth. Was it helpful to start with a plan? Did kids stick to their plans? Did they have any problems and need to adapt their plans? Invite kids to talk about their building experiences.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

SAY • Plans give us an idea of what could happen. Your construction plans helped you imagine what your tower could look like.

All along—before sin even entered the world—God planned to save people from sin and death. God planned to send Jesus to earth, and it wasn't a secret plan. He spoke through the prophets. God's plan was perfect; He never had to change it. **Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.**

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Prophecy Match" activity page, 1 per kid

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, praising God for giving people hope by promising to send Jesus and for keeping His promise.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Prophecy Match" on the activity page.

Journal Page



- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think God used the prophets to tell people about the future Messiah?
- What kind of leader is Jesus? How is that different from worldly leaders?
- Do you believe Jesus will keep His promise to come again?

FOLD

Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth

Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

STORY POINT: EVERYTHING GOD SAID ABOUT JESUS' BIRTH CAME TRUE.

Long before Jesus was born, some of God's prophets told people that Jesus would come. Isaiah the prophet lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born on earth. The first message about Jesus was about who Jesus' mother would be and who Jesus would be.

Isaiah said, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel." He said too that one of Jesus' names would be *Immanuel*, which means "God with us."



Some time later, Isaiah talked about Jesus again. He said, "A child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of peace."

All these names tell us who Jesus is and the great things He would do.

Isaiah's third message was about Jesus' family and His power.

Finally, the prophet Micah told about where Jesus would be born. Micah said that Jesus would be born in a town called Bethlehem. Micah also said that Jesus would be ruler over Israel. Hundreds of years later, everything the prophets Isaiah and Micah said about Jesus came true.

Christ Connection: God's plan to save people from sin and death was not a secret plan. God used the prophets to give hope to His people. They said God would send a Messiah—born into the world as a baby—to live the perfect life people fail to live and die the guilty death we deserve.

Future News

Rearrange the word boxes to fill in the definition of the word *prophecy*.

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Future News

TODAY'S EDITION $1.00

What's a Prophecy?

Prophecy Match

Use your Bible to look up the New Testament passages. Match each Old Testament prophecy with how it came true at Jesus' birth.

- Jesus will be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)
- Jesus' mother will be a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14)
- Jesus will be called out of Egypt. (Hosea 11:1)
- Jesus will come from the family of King David. (Jeremiah 23:5)
- Jesus will be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 12:1-3; 26:3-4; 35:11-12)



