

Bible Passage: Isaiah 7; 9; 11; Micah 5

Story Point: Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.

Key Passage: "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live." John 11:25

Big Picture Question: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

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.

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WELCOME

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. Ask kids about times they made predictions, such as who would win a sporting event or what they would get as gifts.

Were they correct?

SAY • A *prediction* is when a person tries to say what will happen later based on information they already know. We make predictions often. A *prophecy* is different. A prophecy is when God reveals information about what is definitely going to happen later. Today we will learn more about some of the prophecies that told about Jesus' birth.

*** Please remember to reference the class schedules posted in your room for the timing of your class's various activities

ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete the "Christmas Card" activity page. Instruct the kids to circle the words or images that don't make sense on the Christmas card.

SAY • When God told of Jesus' birth, He didn't send Christmas cards; He sent prophets. Prophets were people to whom God revealed some things about the future. Let's learn more!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Have each child represent one word of the key passage. Have the children act out the passage as they say the word they are assigned.

SESSION STARTER

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 (in 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 diseases, but many still exist.

And we still don't take vacations to Jupiter.

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!

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BIBLE LESSON

Prophets Told About Jesus

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.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Small Group ACTIVITIES



Say • Raise your hand if you had heard this Bible story before today.

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to **the various passages listed below**.

Remind kids that the Major Prophets are called such because they are longer. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Which prophet wrote about Jesus' mother? (*Isaiah, Isa. 7:14*)
2. Which prophet wrote that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem? (*Micah, Mic. 5:2*)
3. Did these prophecies come true? (**Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true**; *Luke 1:27; 2:4-6*)
4. Why is it important that these prophecies came true? *Guide kids to see that God proves Himself faithful and trustworthy by always keeping His promises. Help them understand that the Old Testament prophecies coming true shows us that the Bible is God's Word and is telling one story.*
5. What promises are we still waiting on God to fulfill? *Guide kids to think about the promises of salvation and eternal life with God. Remind kids that Jesus promised to return someday and completely do away with all evil. Jesus will return and fix everything that is broken in the world. God will keep those promises just as He kept His promises about Jesus' birth.*
6. What are some reasons it may be hard for us to always trust God's promises? *Guide kids to discuss the idea that we are living in a world that is still broken by sin. We are sometimes impatient and often forgetful. We may be tempted to doubt God's goodness when we see sin and pain in the world, but we can trust God more by reading His Word and praying to ask Him for help.*

SAY • God sent messages to His people describing Jesus many years before He was born. He didn't just use Isaiah and Micah either. There are prophecies about Jesus' birth, His life, His miracles, His death, His resurrection, and even His return one day.

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ENGAGE ACTIVITIES

OPTION 2: Christmas drawing game

Play a drawing and guessing game. Before class, write Christmas-themed words or phrases on index cards, enough for several rounds of play. Suggested words or phrases: *Christmas, gifts, angels, stable, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, wise men, Bethlehem, shepherds, good news, Jesus*

Form two groups; assign one group to be team A and one group to be team B. The first player on team A will come to the board or chart paper and select an index card. Give the player a few seconds to look over the card and think of what she will draw.

When she is ready, start the timer. She has one minute to draw pictures so that her team may guess the word or phrase she is depicting. If her team is unable to guess the word or phrase when the timer runs out, the opposing team has the chance to guess.

Teams get five points for each correct guess. The first player on team B draws next. Play as time allows.

SAY • Wow! You all did a great job. Was it easy or difficult to play this game? Today we learned that **God chose Mary and Joseph to be Jesus' earthly parents.** That is a big responsibility! It probably wasn't easy, but Mary said she wanted to be part of God's plan.

PRAYER TIME

Lead the kids in a time of guided prayer. Remind them that they do not have to pray aloud if they feel uncomfortable doing so. Encourage them to pray about more than just things they want, but also to pray as a way to praise God and thank Him.

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions: What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

Take prayer requests and pray for your group.