



SESSION

1

# Prophets foretell the Messiah



**MEETING AIM**

To discover that God was going to send a special saviour.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2-7; Micah 2:2-5



**BACKGROUND**

The prophecies about the coming of the Messiah are an important part of understanding the whole story of the Bible, but are a bit abstract for younger children to grasp hold of (if you have little concept of how time passes, then the idea of someone a long time ago predicting something that would happen before you were born is difficult!). However, it's still important to help children explore these stories, as they introduce Jesus, show us how much God loves us and tell us how we can relate to Jesus.

**+ CIRCLE TIME**



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass round a simple object. When a child has the object, they can share a story from their week. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so that you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything they can just pass on the object. Pray and thank God for all the stories shared and the stories that weren't mentioned.

**+ WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**



Start to tell the children a story. For example:

"I went to the shops to buy a jar of jam but when I got to the door of the supermarket I saw..."

Ask the children to suggest what might have happened next, then continue including their ideas:

"...a giant gorilla, I was so surprised I..."

Ask for more ideas until the story is completed.

Explain that they helped you to tell the story and in the same way the prophets in the Old Testament were helping God explain what was going to happen next, except they were saying what God told them to say, not making it up!

**+ BIBLE STORY**



**You will need:** box; torch; paper; baby doll; small wrapped parcel; paper crown; picture of people talking; small dumbbell; picture of a father and child; toy dove (or a picture)

The prophecies might seem abstract and hard for young children to get grips with, so we are going to use objects they recognise to help them understand. Keep all the objects hidden in a box and take them out one by one at the appropriate time, allow the children to handle them and talk about them before moving on.

Long, long before Jesus was born, the prophets in the Old Testament told the people that God would send a man to save them. One of these prophets was a man called Isaiah. He said: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them."

*Show the children a torch, let them experiment with lighting up dark places. Talk about light being something that guides us and keeps us safe.*

Isaiah continued: "Lord you have set them free from the people that trapped them."

*Show them a paper butterfly and talk about how it flies free from its cocoon. Also talk about how over hundreds of years other nations were mean to the Jewish people and trapped them.*

Then he said: "A child is born to us!"

*Bring out a baby doll, talk about how this means the Messiah, God's special saviour, will be born just as we were.*

"A son is given."

*Show a wrapped parcel and ask them about presents they have been given, who gives them to us and why? How do they make us feel?*

"He will be our king."

*Show the crown and talk about rulers.*

"And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor..."

*Show a picture of people talking and listening and ask the children who they go to for help and advice.*

"Mighty God..."

*Show a small dumbbell (nothing too heavy they could hurt themselves with!) and talk about strength and power.*

"Eternal Father..."

*Show a picture of fathers and children and talk about their own dads. Be sensitive*

*if children don't see their fathers or have difficult relationships with them.*

"Prince of Peace..."

*Show the children a dove and explain that it is a symbol of peace.*

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Spread the story objects out in front of the children. Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What is your favourite story object? Why?
- Who do you think is God's special saviour?
- How do you feel when you hear that God has sent a special friend for us?
- What do these story objects tell us about Jesus?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need:** story objects from the Bible story; paper; art materials

With the story objects still in front of you, chat about the different names the prophets gave Jesus: Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God... Explain that this means we can ask Jesus for help and tell him all the things we're worried about. Give out paper and art materials and invite the children to draw a picture of something they're worried about or would like to ask for Jesus' help with.

Once everyone has finished, ask the children to put their picture in front of them. Say a prayer asking for Jesus' help with whatever the children have drawn. Tell the children that they can come and talk about anything with you.

**+ PRAYER**



**You will need:** story objects from the Bible story

Ask the children to hold a story object each. Lead them in this prayer and ask them to take turns saying what their object represents. It is more important that they say what they understand than that they recall the biblical phrase.

*Dear Father, we praise you for your wonderful gift of Jesus. The light, the Prince of Peace, everyone's daddy, the one who sets us free, the baby, the wonderful gift, the king... In Jesus' name, Amen*

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