



SESSION 1 of 4

Isaiah

MEETING AIM

To understand that Isaiah was God's messenger and that he prophesied Jesus was going to come.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 6:1-8

BACKGROUND

Today's session looks at Isaiah; a big subject, book and character for one group session! We start understanding Isaiah by looking at his vision in Isaiah 6, where God reveals that Isaiah is to be his messenger. One of Isaiah's main jobs is to remind the Israelites to remember to listen to God in a period in which they have gone far away from and forgotten him. Another of Isaiah's big jobs as a prophet was to prophesy to the Israelites that Jesus was coming, and to give them hope. This is why the Bible section is split into two parts, so we can understand two of these big 'headlines' in Isaiah.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the group to circle time and share out any refreshments. Ask the group to think about who the most important people to listen to in the world might be. Let them chat, share and debate!

5 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: a bag, hat or bowl; strips of paper with names of well-known people or characters

Pass the hat around and ask everyone to take a name out. Each player takes a turn to describe the person on their paper without saying their name. Everyone else has to guess who they are talking about. Depending on the group size, you could have a few turns. If appropriate, have a prize ready for the person who guessed the most right answers.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens; Bible

The Bible story is in two parts to help us understand first that Isaiah was God's messenger and second that he prophesied Jesus was going to come.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8 aloud using a child-friendly translation of the Bible (such as the Contemporary English Version or the New Living Translation) to make it a little easier to understand. As you read, ask the group to draw a picture of the scene together. It's a bizarre vision to understand, so let them think freely about what they think it might look like.

Afterwards, enjoy the scenes they've created. Explain that this is a helpful introduction to understanding who Isaiah was. He was an important prophet; God's messenger to the Israelites. Explain that the Israelites have stopped listening to God, and Isaiah's job was to remind them to listen again. Then go on to explain that one of Isaiah's most important messages was to tell the Israelites about someone very important...

Now read Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12. This is one of the key passages where Isaiah talks about Jesus. Ask the group: "Who do you think this passage is about?" Let them discuss their ideas.

Explain that this is God's big salvation plan; Isaiah is prophesying to the Israelites about Jesus. Isaiah's job was to remind them that they needed to listen to God, and even though they had turned their backs and gone far away, God still had a plan to bring them back to him through Jesus.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

There are some big themes in this session. Help the group make sense of what you've read by sharing some discussion on Isaiah and his messages from God. Use these questions to facilitate discussion, but encourage the group to ask their own questions:

- What do you think it would have been like to be Isaiah at the time? Would it have been easy or difficult?
- How would you feel if God chose you to be a messenger to his people?
- Why do you think the Israelites stopped listening to God?
- Why do you think God wanted to tell them about Jesus before he came?

15 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: pens and paper

Split the children into small groups, of around three, ideally with a leader in each to help facilitate the discussion. Ask them to think about what God most wants to tell us today. Give the groups a pen and paper and ask them to have a go at writing a letter from God to the world. If this feels tricky and a bit overwhelming, encourage them to write a list of bullet points. Give them about ten minutes to work on this, then ask them to share what they came up with.

5 PRAYER

You will need: a bucket or bowl; coal; small bags

One of the big things that made Isaiah fit for the job of being God's messenger was that he was willing. He said in the passage: "Here I am. Send me!" In the vision an angel touches a coal to Isaiah's lips as a sign that he has been made holy and is ready to speak God's words.

Put a bowl or bucket of coal in the middle of the group. Explain that you are going to pray that God would help us be people who speak holy words so that people will listen to God and know who Jesus is.

Pray as a group: "Dear God, thank you that Isaiah listened to you and was willing to be your messenger. Help us speak holy words to help people hear you better when they have forgotten and turned away from you."

Then invite each member of the group to take a piece of coal and put it in a small bag so they don't get dirty. They can take it home as a reminder of their willingness to be God's messengers in his world, especially when it feels as though we are far away from him.

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