

Isaiah 11:1-9; 35:5-6; 42:1-7; 53

Aim of lesson

To show that the coming of Jesus Christ and the work he would do was foretold by God hundreds of years previously.

Background study

Consult Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 49:6; 52:13-15; 61:1-2, and commentaries or expositions of Isaiah for historical background and study of Messianic prophecies.

Suggested outline of lesson

Ask the children what a prophet is. Remind them about Elijah and Elisha, their role of preacher, and how by God's power they were able to reveal future events. Briefly introduce Isaiah and his place in history. Ask the children to turn to the book, and explain how and when he wrote it. Usually, when we want to learn about historical characters, we read books written about them during their lifetime by people who knew them, or written after their death by writers who have carried out a great deal of research about them. Isaiah, however, was able to write about the life of Jesus although he lived 700 years before Jesus was born. Explain that, although Jesus is never mentioned by name, Isaiah tells us so much about the king who would save people from their enemies and rule over the whole world that we can tell he was speaking about Jesus.

Ask the children to tell you what they know about Jesus, his birth, his character, his death and in what ways he was special. As they offer the items of information, list them on a chart in chronological order. The following points should be drawn out, and shown to be recorded in Isaiah:

1. The king would be born as a baby (9:6)
2. He would be a descendant of David, but greater than David, and would inherit his throne (9:7; 11:1)
3. His mother would be a young woman specially chosen (7:14). He would be sent by God himself (7:14; 61:1)
4. He would be kind to the poor and humble (11:4)
5. He would be able to see right into men's hearts and know just what they were like (11:3)
6. He would heal the sick (35:5-6)
7. He would teach people about God's laws and God's plans (61:1-2)
8. He would be wise and good, and would seek always to please God (11:2-3)
9. Although perfectly good, he would be hated by other men who would cause him great sorrow and eventually kill him. He would never complain or try to stop them ill-treating him (53:7)

10. He would die with wicked men and be buried by a rich man (53:9)
11. He would bear the punishment that other people deserved (53:4-6)
12. God would raise him from the dead and give him great power and authority (53:10-12). He would become king, and rule in righteousness and peace for ever (9:7)
13. He would rule all the world, not just the Jews but the Gentiles also (49:6)

Make full use of this opportunity to emphasize our confidence in the return of Christ. Because all the prophecies recorded by Isaiah regarding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were fulfilled, we can be sure that Isaiah was a true prophet and so look forward with certainty to the fulfilment of the rest of the prophecy.

Tell the children that Isaiah knew the sacrifice of God's son would be for a purpose. Jesus would allow himself to be punished for the wrong that all other people do - including the wrong that we ourselves do. But Jesus would consider his suffering to be worthwhile when he saw many people believing and turning to him in gratitude as a result of what he had done (53:10-11). Isaiah also makes it clear that when Jesus comes again to be king, those who have believed in him will also live with him; they will be happy, free from pain, illness, sorrow and worry. There will be peace in all the earth, even among the animals, and all people will know and love God. Furthermore, this wonderful state will last for ever (11:6-9).

Relevance to the children's lives

How can we be really sure that Jesus will come back to the earth? What is it that makes us certain? (You may find it helpful to utilize the list by putting a tick beside all the prophecies fulfilled in the past in order to demonstrate clearly that all that remains for the completion of the picture is his return).

Worksheets

These should be self-explanatory.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we thank and praise you for sending Jesus to save us, and pray that we can look forward to meeting him one day. Amen.

Memory verse

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).