



THE
GOSPEL
PROJECT[®]
FOR KIDS

—★ **CHRISTMAS EDITION** ★—

Younger and Older Kids Leader Guide



Use Week of:

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:

Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

INTRODUCE THE STORY (10–15 MINUTES)



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TEACH THE STORY (25–30 MINUTES)



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APPLY THE STORY (25–30 MINUTES)



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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

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.

The BIBLE Story

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

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KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

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

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. 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.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Christmas Card" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

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!

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Promise chairs

Arrange chairs in a circle, one for each kid. Write promises on index cards and place one card facedown in each chair.

Some should be easy: *I promise not to eat grass today* or *I promise to high five a friend*. Some should be harder: *I promise to never eat chocolate again* or *I promise to always obey my parents*.

Direct the kids to walk clockwise inside the circle of chairs while music plays. Once the music stops, kids sit down and read the card in their seat. Ask if the promise would be hard or easy to keep. Play again as time allows.

SAY • We don't always keep our promises, but God does.

Today, we will learn about a promise God kept and some of the ways He revealed bits of the promise beforehand.

OPTION 2: They go together

Bring in household items that go together (toothpaste and a toothbrush, soap and a washcloth, a fork and spoon, and so forth). Put each item in a separate paper bag and mix up the bags. Invite a kid to choose two bags. If the two items go together, set them aside and let another volunteer pick. If not, put the items back in the bag. Play until all items are matched.

SAY • The Old Testament and New Testament may seem like separate things, but they go together like many of the items you matched in our game. They are both part of the one big story God has been telling. We'll learn more about how they connect today!

LOW PREP

- chairs
- index cards
- tape
- worship songs of your choice

- household items that go together, such as toothpaste and a toothbrush, soap and a washcloth, or a fork and spoon
- paper bags

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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

• room decorations

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Use any traditional Christmas decorations that are appropriate for your church environment. If you are pausing in the middle of another theme to celebrate Christmas, add Christmas decorations to the existing theme.

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
• cookie cutters
• rolling pin

[Leader enters wearing an apron and carrying cookie cutters and a rolling pin.]

LEADER •Hey, everyone! Welcome. As you can see, I was just getting ready to make some Christmas cookies. I love this time of year for so many reasons. One reason is the delicious treats I can make. Today I will be making cookies that look like megaphones. I know that doesn't sound very Christmas-y, but I promise it makes sense when you know what story we will be talking about today.

You see, a megaphone is used to deliver a message that you want many people to hear. Although God

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

didn't use an actual megaphone, I like to use the shape of a megaphone to represent the way God shared the message of the coming Messiah with His people. God sent prophets to write about Jesus' birth, and their writings were read by many people through the years. They spread God's message almost like a megaphone. Here, I'll tell you all about it.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • All these messages about Jesus' birth bring us to a very important question. ***Why was Jesus born?*** That's our big picture question. It's important for us to know not just that Jesus was born, but why He came as a baby in the first place. We will learn more about what the Bible teaches so we can find the answer.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. Point to the time of the prophets.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • We know that all of the Bible is telling one big story. That means that no matter which part of the timeline we are in, all of it connects to the other parts of it. Today we will look at some writings that came many years before Jesus was born. Even so, the things God revealed to people were about Jesus!

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

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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 • Jesus' birth should not have been a mystery to God's people. God told the Israelites that Jesus was coming long before He actually arrived. Isaiah and Micah wrote about Jesus' birth hundreds of years before He was born. Isaiah talked about Mary and some names that described who Jesus would be. He said Jesus would be called "God with us," Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. Isaiah told us that Jesus would be part of King David's family. He said Jesus would be wise, strong, and fair.

Micah said Jesus would be ruler over Israel, and Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Did the things Isaiah and Micah talked about actually happen? They sure did. These prophecies—and many others—all came true. **Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.**

That means that we can read the Old Testament and the New Testament and see how they fit together. We can see that the Bible is true and that God is faithful, because what He said would happen really did! God always keeps His promises. We know from the Bible that He kept His promise to send a Messiah. And because God is trustworthy, we know that He will keep His promise to send Jesus back again. Jesus came to earth to die for our sins, and He rose on the third day. He went back to heaven, but will one day come again to fix everything broken in the world. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.***

Christ connection

LEADER • 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.

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.

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 faith is all God wants from us to be forgiven of our sins.

• “Christmas, Session 1” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the missions video “Nativity Sets Lead to Ministry.”

• “Nativity Sets Lead to Ministry” missions video

LEADER • Wow! What a great video. *Nativity* is a word that means “when a person was born.” Nowadays, we use the word *nativity* mostly to speak about Jesus’ birth. Any scene that shows what Jesus’ birth may have looked like is known as a nativity set or nativity scene. It’s so cool to see how missionaries are using nativity sets to tell people about Jesus. Remember, you don’t have to have a nativity set to tell people about the birth of Jesus. All you need is your words and a little courage!

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. One of Jesus' followers, Paul, wrote this book to Christians living in a place called Galatia. Paul wanted them to know what we have been learning: *Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.* When we are rescued from sin, God makes us His sons and daughters!

Sing (4 minutes)

• Christmas songs of
your choice

LEADER • It's easy to forget the real reason for Christmas in our excitement over gifts and parties, but we are really celebrating something far more important. That reminds me of a song. Let's sing it together. Sing together Christmas songs of your choice.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for providing trustworthy information to tell people about the Messiah. Your perfect Word helps us see that the Bible is trustworthy and true. Help us to boldly tell others about Jesus. Give us courage to live on mission for You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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.

APPLY the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Form three groups of kids. Choose one group to say the first word of the key passage, followed by the second group saying the second word, and then the third group saying the third word. Point to each group when it is their turn to say their word. Then point back to the first group to say the fourth word.

Continue in this way until the entire key passage has been said. You may repeat the process starting with a different group.

SAY • Paul wrote these words to remind followers of Jesus of the same thing we have been learning: ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.*** We know from this key passage that when we are saved from sin, we become part of God's family!

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid

• Story Point Poster

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help the kids use the table of contents to find the Book of Isaiah in their Bibles and then the Book of Micah. Ask the kids which division of the Old Testament Isaiah and Micah can be found in. (Major Prophets and Minor Prophets, respectively)

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

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

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.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

- air-dry clay
- sculpting tools

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.



OPTION 1: Nativity figurines

Provide each kid with a lump of air-dry clay. Allow the kids to share sculpting tools, such as toothpicks or plastic flatware. Instruct the kids to make a nativity set with a figure for Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. Remind the kids that they can use the set to tell others about Jesus' birth and display them in their homes.

SAY • God sent prophets to tell about the coming Messiah.

Despite their prophecies, people did not know exactly what to expect or when the Messiah would come. We can look back on Jesus' birth and see that **everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.** When you use these nativity sets to tell people about Jesus' birth, remember to also tell them our big picture questions and answer: *Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.*

LOW PREP

- construction paper
- tape
- craft supplies

OPTION 2: Megaphones

Give each kid a sheet of construction paper. Help the kids to roll the paper into a cone shape and use tape to secure them. Invite kids to decorate their megaphones using markers, glitter glue, stickers, or other craft supplies. Then practice shouting the story point and big picture question and answer, using the megaphones to amplify the volume.

SAY • A megaphone is a great way to share a message with lots of people. God didn't use a megaphone to tell people about Jesus, but He did tell prophets exactly what to write to tell people about Jesus' coming.

Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.
Jesus came to the world just as God's messengers said
He would.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a journal sheet to each child. 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 to send the journal sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.