

date: **12/10/17****Bible Passage: Isaiah 7:14; 9:1–7; Luke 1:1–4, 26–56**
(Mary)

Jesus Is Immanuel

REMEMBER VERSE

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

On Christmas morning my family sleeps in, eats a few cinnamon rolls, then congregates in the living room. Before we open the gifts piled under the tree, we read the Scripture account of Christ's birth. As we read this passage from Luke, I experience peace and gratitude in the midst of the flurry of Christmas morning.

Every Christmas I love to experience the joy of being together with my family and my faith community, talking about God's faithfulness, feeling gratitude for each other, and experiencing Him together in a way different from any other time of the year.

Even so, for all of the wonderful friendship and love I receive from my family and my faith community, I sometimes get the sense that we can unwittingly become isolated. Without meaning to, we can become self-centered; we can begin to exist for our own sake instead of for the sake of the gospel.

Christmas is about the fact that God came to be with us. This is the saving promise from the Old Testament, the perfect answer to the problem of sin—the hope of the world. This is good news that causes (as we hear in the song “O Holy Night”) “a thrill of hope ... for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.”

This Christmas, may we celebrate together the fact that God came to be with us, and may we look for opportunities to share this amazing hope with those around us.

Tori Funkhouser
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

When Isaiah prophesied about Christ's birth in Isaiah 7, he was speaking to a very worried King Ahaz. Isaiah found Ahaz by the upper pool, fretting over his nation's water supply. As Ahaz complained to Isaiah that he was about to be attacked, Isaiah announced that God would give a sign to the nation of Judah. He said, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel [God with us]" (Isaiah 7:14).

Through this sign God was telling Ahaz to trust Him and that Ahaz's nation would survive because the promised Messiah would, indeed, come from the seed of David. Even so, Ahaz did not trust God and sought the support of the Assyrian empire, and Judah was overtaken. This was horrible. Unthinkable. God's people must have wondered from where the Messiah would come. Would He even come at all?

As we know, God still had a plan to bring the Messiah. This plan began in the middle of the night, in a small town, with a virgin maiden. That night God came to be with us. God fulfilled His saving promises of old, and this culminated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, heir to King David's throne (Matthew 1:17).

Why Was the Virgin Birth Necessary?

First, for the sacrifice of Jesus to be effectual and sufficient to pay for our sins, the sacrifice of Himself had to be both God and man. He had to be God for the magnitude of the sacrifice to cover the sins of all mankind, and He had to be human for His sacrifice to apply to us.

Next, Jesus had to be our sinless sacrifice. For Him to be sinless, He had to be free from a fallen nature. Following Adam and Eve this fallen nature is passed on from generation to generation. Because of His supernatural conception, Jesus did not fall under this curse.

Finally, the virgin birth was required to bypass the blood curse God placed on Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin) (Jeremiah 22) and thus upon the rest of the royal line of David. Mary's genealogy (Matthew 1) bypasses the blood curse by following David's line through Nathan, David's son who wasn't part of the royal line and therefore wasn't under the curse. Joseph's genealogy (Luke 3) follows the legal line through King Solomon, but Joseph wasn't Jesus' biological father. He was Jesus' legal, adopted father. Therefore, Jesus is entitled to the throne both legally and by blood. (For further explanation about the blood curse, see the EQUIP section in Winter Lesson 3.)

Explaining Virgin Birth to Kids

Some kids will be familiar with the meaning of the word *virgin*, while others may not be. Be sensitive to the different knowledge and maturity levels of the kids. We suggest not planning to explain the meaning of this word, but being prepared with an age-appropriate answer in case anyone asks. An example of an age-appropriate answer may be: "This word tells us the baby would have no human father, but the Holy Spirit alone would place this baby in Mary to be the mother. Joseph would be the baby's adopted father."

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

God came to be with us. How God did this is a pretty big question. How does an infinite God dwell in a finite body? How does light and life come to dwell in a world of death and darkness? Why did He do this?

Take a few moments just to imagine it. How much does God love you? Enough to come and restore you.

Enough to be with you, even now. Enough to stay with you no matter what. What love. What deep, eternal, undeniable, incomprehensible, perfect love!

As you prepare for this lesson, pray that God would allow your children to truly experience the joy of the good news of Christ's arrival, news that had been prophesied for hundreds of years. Lead them into celebration, together as a faith community, because God has come to be with us. He is Immanuel.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

This lesson focuses on the prophecy about Jesus Christ in Isaiah 7:14 as well as the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary in Luke 1:28–38. Today kids will play some guessing games to consider what it's like to not know an answer right away.

Guess the Drawing (for older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Christmas Picture cards (see Resources)
- Scissors
- Markers
- Paper

SET UP

Print and cut out the Christmas Picture cards. Optional: Cut blank paper into half-sheets or quarter-sheets to save paper.

RELATE

Select one child and hand him a Christmas Picture card. Have him take a look at the card without showing it to anyone. Then select a second child and hand her a blank paper and a marker. Have the first child whisper what is on his Christmas Picture card to the second child and ask her to draw the same image on her blank paper. As she draws, have the rest of the group see if they can guess what she's drawing. Repeat until all the cards have been used. After you finish, ask: **What was it like trying to draw something you hadn't seen before? What was it like trying to guess what the picture was when you had no idea what it could be?**

LARGE GROUP

SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible Verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)
- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Connect

Encourage the members of your community to get to know one another through engaging questions, energizing games, and creative activities.

Question

What do you look forward to most at Christmas? Why?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Isaiah 7:14; 9:1–7; Luke 1:1–4, 26–56

Storytelling Technique: Revealing a Gift

Jesus Is Immanuel

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Images: Israelites in Wilderness, Israelites as Nation with King, Isaiah](#) (see Resources)
- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Puzzles (2, large-piece)
- Baby doll
- Cardboard gift box (big enough to hold baby doll)

- Christmas wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Permanent marker

PREPARE AHEAD

Place the baby doll inside of the cardboard gift box and wrap it with Christmas wrapping paper. On the wrapping paper, write “Luke 1:31–32.” Then wrap the box again. Now write “Isaiah 7:14” on the wrapping paper. Finally, wrap the box one last time and place it in the storytelling area.

SET UP

Put the two large-piece puzzles in the storytelling area, but take away the boxes so the kids won’t see the finished pictures.

RELATE

Ask for six to eight child volunteers to come up front. Make two teams of volunteers, and assign each team to one of the large-piece puzzles. On your signal, have them race to see which team can put together its puzzle faster. After the race, ask the kids: **Before you finished the puzzle, did you know what it would look like? Did you know what the finished picture would be? As you put the puzzle together, did you need more pieces before you could figure out the picture?** Interact with their responses. Then thank them for volunteering and ask them to return to their seats.

Sometimes The Big God Story feels like a giant puzzle. When you work on a puzzle, you can’t see the whole picture until you’ve put together all of the pieces. During the past few weeks we’ve heard about many pieces of The Big God Story, including how God created the world and formed a covenant with Abraham and God’s people, the Israelites. Today we’re going to fast-forward through The Big God Story a bit to fill in the most important piece of The Big God Story—the piece when Jesus, God’s Son, came to be with us. First, let’s pray and ask God to teach us. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Last week we heard about the Israelites in the wilderness and how God claimed them as His people. Tech: Cue Israelites in Wilderness image. The Israelites stayed in the wilderness for 40 years. Then God brought them into their new land and eventually gave them a king. Tech: Cue Israelites as Nation with King image. Later, the Israelites broke into two separate kingdoms called Israel and Judah.

God then sent a prophet named Isaiah to Judah. Tech: Cue Isaiah image. Who knows what a prophet is? Allow responses. A prophet is a person who shares God’s message. The message Isaiah would share was very important. It would reveal more about God’s plans for His people and the amazing gift He planned to give them. Invite a child to come to the front, take the wrapped box, and carefully unwrap the first layer to reveal “Isaiah 7:14.” Ask her to read the reference aloud and, if comfortable, also read the verse aloud from a Bible. Otherwise, read the verse for the kids, and encourage them to follow along in their Bibles. **God said through Isaiah that a virgin would give birth to a son and call him Immanuel. What does this mean? Allow responses. Then read the verse again. Immanuel means “God with us.”**

God revealed more about His plans many years later when He sent an angel to speak to a young woman in a small country town called Nazareth. Do you know what her name was? Allow responses. That’s right! It was Mary. Imagine Mary, a young girl maybe 15 years old, at her house one night when all of a sudden an angel appeared! He said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you” (Luke 1:28).

Mary was overwhelmed, but the angel told her to not be afraid. Then the angel revealed to Mary the meaning of the prophecy from Isaiah long ago. Read the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 again. **What does this mean? Who would be Immanuel?** Pause for responses. Then invite a second child to carefully unwrap the next layer of wrapping paper from the box to reveal “Luke 1:31–32,” and read the reference aloud. **The angel said to Mary, “You will ... give birth to a son ... and [he] will be called the Son of the Most High.” Wow! So Mary was the young woman in Isaiah’s prophecy! And this baby wouldn’t be just any baby. This baby would be God’s Son!**

As you probably know, Mary believed the angel. She knew how good this news was, and she was overwhelmed with joy because God had chosen her. In her excitement, Mary said, “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ... He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors” (Luke 1:46–47, 54–55). Then Mary told her cousin Elizabeth the good news, and they celebrated together.

Invite one last child to come unwrap the gift with the baby doll inside. **Jesus, God’s Son, was Immanuel—God with us—the One whom the Israelites had heard about for hundreds of years. He came to be with us! That’s the best gift anyone’s ever received!** Share an age-appropriate story of how God’s Son coming to earth to be with you has changed your life.

Because God came to be with us, to be one of us, and to die for us, we all have the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins and become a part of His family and to join together as a faith community. That’s amazing!

SMALL GROUP SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: Jesus Is Immanuel

Encourage the kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

Questions for Younger Kids

- What is a prophet?
- What does a prophet do?
- How does it make you feel to know God came to be with you?

Read Luke 1:28–33 or ask a few volunteers to read it while the kids follow along.

- How would you respond if an angel visited you with a message this big?
- How do you want to celebrate God coming to be with us?

Questions for Older Kids

Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 6:8 aloud while the kids follow along.

- **What do you think it would have been like to be a prophet? Why do you think Isaiah was so eager to be a prophet?**
- **Would you have been as eager as Isaiah? Why or why not?**

Read Luke 1:29 aloud or ask a volunteer to read it while the kids follow along.

- **How do you think you would have felt if you'd been in Mary's position?**

Ask the kids to listen carefully as you read Luke 1:46–55 while they follow along. After you finish, read the passage one more time.

- **Does anything stand out to you in Mary's song? Can you relate to her words?**
- **How does it make you feel to know God kept His promise to send His Son to be with us?**
- **Why do you think it matters that God brought Jesus into the world just like He said He would?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God. As children prepare to receive a blessing, invite them to be still for a moment and remember that God came to be with us. He is always present and active in our lives.

Encourage the kids to stand with their palms open, silently asking God to make His presence known to them. After a few moments, pray a blessing over them.

Open a Bible and read the Remember Verse, Isaiah 9:6:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given ... And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

May you go out this week with peace. May you know that Jesus is Immanuel—God with us.