

united kingdom

ISAIAH

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

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Introduction

God kept His promises to David – he became king, and members of his family continued to sit on his throne, generation after generation. Some kings obeyed God and led the people towards Him, but many kings disobeyed and led the people away from God. The people needed a king who would lead them back to God. God sent His prophet Isaiah to give a message of hope to His people. This is what God said through Isaiah:

Isaiah 53:1-3

God's Promised King ... will have nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him. He will be despised and rejected, feeling our deepest sorrows. We will turn our back on Him and look the other way. ... We won't care.

Isaiah 53:4

... We will think His troubles are a punishment from God ... for His own disobedience!

Isaiah 53:6,5

But instead God will lay on this King the guilt and disobedience of us all. ... He will be ... crushed for our disobedience. He will be beaten and whipped ... so we can be whole. ...

Isaiah 53:7-9

He will be ... treated harshly, yet ... never say a word. ... He will be unjustly condemned and put to death ... and buried like a criminal.

Isaiah 53:11 (partly from NIV)

After His suffering ... He will see ... life again. ... And because of what He has experienced, the Promised King will make it possible for many to be counted as having right relationships with God and full life, because He took on their disobedience.

Isaiah 53:12

God will give Him the honours of one who is mighty and great, because He exposed Himself to death. ...

Isaiah 9:6-7

And the government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity.

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

The people in God's kingdom continue to disobey Him and be separated from Him, but God wants His people back. He sends them warnings and messages of hope. In this message of hope, He promised them that He will send a perfect King from David's dynasty – an unexpected one – one that will pay for the disobedience of all people through His death. Then, this King will be given honour and glory, and His kingdom will last forever.

There are few, if any, prophecies that more clearly explain God's redemption plan. This story is a cornerstone of the story set. Until now we've heard rumours of this plan in God's promise to Abraham to bless the world through him, and in God's promise to David to give him a dynasty that will last forever. We've seen that God is serious about sin, but that He also forgives a repentant heart. Now God fleshes out the plan a little more – telling us more about a promised King to come who will solve the problem of our broken relationship with God once and for all. This King is both humble and majestic.

Key concepts to include in your story

- God promised David that 1) he would become king, and 2) someone from his family would reign forever as king
- Isaiah was a prophet from God who had a message from God about a King who would rule forever
- The King will
 - Not look majestic
 - Suffer
 - Never say or do anything wrong
 - Be despised and rejected by many
- The King will be put to death
 - His death will be violent and painful
 - He will die not because of what He's done wrong, but because of what we've done wrong
 - His death will make a way for all of us to have a right relationship with God and live a full life
- God will
 - Give the King his life back
 - Give the King great honour
- The King will rule over a great kingdom
 - He will rule with justice and righteousness
 - The kingdom will last forever
- The King will be called
 - Wonderful
 - Counsellor
 - Mighty God
 - Everlasting Father
 - Prince of Peace

Notes about how the story was crafted

Because this story is not a narrative it is not as easy to retell. This is a prophecy, and as such, the chronology of the information is not as important as the actual information. We have chosen the parts of the text that highlight the theme of God's Kingdom. The example story attempts to follow a logical, semi-chronological flow of thought: 1) Description of the King, 2) The King takes on our disobedience, 3) Description of the King's death, 4) God gives Him life and honours of a great king, and 5) Description of Him as King.

In order to make the story easier to remember, we want to present the events that Isaiah prophesied as chronologically as possible. Therefore, we have included the passage from Isaiah 9 at the end of the story.

This prophecy was written in the past tense (called the “prophetic past”), but the original audience would have understood that the events would take place in the future. You may want to change the past tense in this story to the future tense so that our modern-day audience will clearly understand that these are events that (at the time of the writing of this text) would happen in the future.

Several Isaiah passages describe the “Servant,” and biblical scholars agree that this Servant referred to the Messiah who was to come from David’s line. Several of the other servant passages in Isaiah (42:1-9, 49:1-9, 50:4-9) correspond well with the Davidic Messianic passages (chapters 9 and 11), and this seems to indicate that it’s possible that the original audience would have understood the Servant described here to be the Davidic Messiah – the Saviour whom the Israelites were waiting for to come and save them. Therefore, we have inserted a title for this Messiah that we will use throughout the rest of the story set – the **Promised King**. “Messiah” has no meaning to the modern hearer, but an appointed, anointed, Promised King is an accurate title that conveys meaning to our audience.

In the example story, we’ve used the word **disobedience** instead of “sin” because “sin” may be misunderstood religious terminology. **Disobedience** retains most of the original meaning of “sin” while using a conversational term. Because many people today do not have a concept of what sin is, the best way for them to learn is to see it happening in the stories and learn the meaning through the narrative rather than through the specific term that we use. You may choose a different wording for describing this *Disobedience* such as “... they turned their backs on God and went their own way ...”

Isaiah 53:11 says that many will be counted “righteous” as a result of what the King will do. “Righteous” may be an unfamiliar religious term for many. The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on relationship between God and man, or between man and man. Righteousness refers to holiness, right standing or lack of guilt. Think about your audience and how best to convey this meaning to them. In one example story, **right relationship and full life** was used. As we think about our kingdom theme, we also want the way we express key concepts such as “righteousness” to logically fit into that theme. As you’ve heard and learned the previous stories, choose a word for your own story that works best for you and for your audience. Other ways of conveying this concept could include:

Being made blameless/innocent

Being right in God’s sight

Being in right standing with God

Being accepted by God

The Isaiah 9 verse used in this story is meant as a celebration of this Promised King’s reign. If the members of your group cannot remember all the titles of the King, it’s not as important as that they get a sense of the power, sovereignty, peace and authority that the King will possess.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- As your group practices retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story. If you think of this story chronologically (i.e. a description of this King's 1. Life, 2. Death, 3. Resurrection and the 4. Reign), it will be easier to remember.
- Introduction--description of the king—his characteristics, how he grows up, how people see him
- Description of the king's death and the reason for it
- God's sovereign plan for the king to die, come back to life, and reign
- Description of the king's reign and his kingdom
- Conclusion and celebration--the king's names

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? (*Tell it!*)
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get sidetracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- This seems like such a clear prophecy about Jesus. How is it that people didn't recognize Jesus as this Promised King when He came?
 - *700 years had passed since this prophecy. When Jesus was born, God's people were being ruled by the Roman Empire and they really wanted a victorious warrior king to come and save them from the Romans. The King described here, though, was a different sort of king. We'll see in the future stories how this plays out – why people didn't like Jesus and what kind of King God meant Him to be. As for this prophecy, how often it seems that people overlook the things they don't want to hear!*

- Why does this King have to die for sins to be forgiven?
 - *Isaiah 53:5 talks about the King being beaten and whipped so we can be made “whole.” This concept of “wholeness” in Hebrew (sometimes translated “peace”) refers to the balancing of the unjust, broken order. When God’s children break the order by disobeying, God’s authority must be recognized again so balance can be restored. Because God is perfectly just, our relationship to Him cannot be restored until justice has been served. The Promised King, through his death in which he took our punishment for our disobedience, served the justice for us and re-balanced the equation. Exactly how this King’s actions could pay our punishment is a mystery.*
- Why did God wait so long to send this Promised King?
 - *700 years passed between this prophecy and when Jesus was born. In that time, God’s people disobeyed him often, and kings led them astray. Finally neighbouring countries came to conquer them, and God’s people were scattered throughout the world. God’s timing is rarely explained in the Bible – but what we do know is that He felt that the time for Jesus to be born was just right. Remember that in the story of David becoming king, we heard that God does not make decisions the way that people make decisions. However, through every story so far we have seen that God’s love is extravagant and consistent. Although we don’t always understand His timing, we’ve seen God’s amazing love for His people.*

ISAIAH – for children

(NCV with some passages from the NLT)

Introduction

God kept His promises to David – he became king, and members of his family continued to sit on his throne, generation after generation. Some kings obeyed God and led the people towards Him, but many kings disobeyed and led the people away from God. The people needed a king who would lead them back to God. God sent His prophet Isaiah to give a message of hope to His people. This is what God said through Isaiah:

Isaiah 53:1-3

God's Promised King ... will have no special beauty or form to make us notice Him; there will be nothing in His appearance to make us desire Him. He will be hated and rejected by people. He will have much pain and suffering. People will not even look at Him. He will be hated, and we won't even notice Him.

Isaiah 53:4

... We will see His suffering and think God is punishing Him.

Isaiah 53:5-6

But He will be wounded for the wrong we do; He will be crushed for the evil we do. The punishment, which will make us well, will be given to Him, and we will be healed because of His wounds. We all wander away like sheep; each of us goes his own way. But God will put on this King the punishment for all the evil we will do.

Isaiah 53:7-9

He will be beaten down and punished, but He won't say a word. He will be like a lamb being led to be killed. He will be quiet, as a sheep is quiet while its wool is being cut; He will never open His mouth. Men will take Him away roughly and unfairly. ... He will be put to death; He will be punished for my sins ... and buried like a criminal.

Isaiah 53:11

After His suffering ... He will see ... life again. ... And because of what He has experienced, the Promised King will make many people right with God; He will carry away their sins.

Isaiah 53:12

For this reason God will make Him great and strong, because He willingly gave His life.

Isaiah 9:6-7

And ... He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful, Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. Power and peace will be in His kingdom and will continue to grow forever. He will rule as King on David's throne and over David's kingdom. He will make it strong by ruling with justice and goodness from now on and forever. ...

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

All Scriptures for children are taken from the New Century Version unless otherwise noted. The New Century Version has been chosen, because it is not an adult Bible packaged for children. It has been translated directly from the original texts into English with short sentences and simple, modern vocabulary that can be read and understood by children – specifically directed toward those aged between 6 and 12.

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- God promised David that
 - He would become king
 - Someone from his family would reign forever as king
- Isaiah was a prophet from God who had a message from God about a King who would rule forever
- The King will
 - Not look majestic
 - Suffer
 - Never say or do anything wrong
 - Be despised and rejected by many
- The King will be put to death
 - His death will be violent and painful
 - He will die not because of what He's done wrong, but because of what we've done wrong
 - His death will make a way for all of us to have a right relationship with God and live a full life
- God will
 - Give the King his life back
 - Give the King great honour
- The King will rule over a great kingdom
 - He will rule with justice and righteousness
 - The kingdom will last forever
- The King will be called
 - Wonderful
 - Counsellor
 - Mighty God
 - Everlasting Father
 - Prince of Peace

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

God kept His promises to David – he became king, and members of his family were kings after him. Some of the kings obeyed God, but many of the kings disobeyed God – leading people away from God. The people needed a king to lead them back to God. So God sent His prophet Isaiah with a message of hope for His people. This is what God said through Isaiah: the King will be born, but He won't look like a king. Nothing He does will make you think He's a king. He will be hurt and suffer. He will never say or do anything wrong, and He'll never hurt anybody. But people will hate Him and reject Him. Isaiah says a lot about this King's death. It will be painful and violent. He will be put to death – not because of anything He's done wrong – but because of everything everyone else has done wrong. All of us have done things God doesn't want us to do, and this King will have to die because of what we've done wrong. The King will die willingly; He won't complain or defend Himself. But Isaiah tells us that this King's death makes a way for all of us to have peace with God and be a part of His kingdom. Because of this King's death, we can be forgiven for our disobedience. God chose that the King will die this way, but God also chose that the King would be given back His life. And God will make the King great and strong, because He willingly died for others. This King will be a good judge and a good king, and His kingdom will last forever and ever. And Isaiah tell us that this King will have some amazing names – such as Wonderful, Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever and Prince of Peace!

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storying session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age-appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30	Retell the story. Use a Storybook Bible or pictures, and point to the King (Jesus) through different times in His life as those parts of the story are mentioned.	Resources Needed: • Storybook Bible or pictures • Rice cakes
	Snack – rice cakes	
10:45	Craft: Reversible Puppets/Kings – make puppets that can be reversed ... either someone looking like a king or someone not looking like a king Craft: ~ Make "good messages" and put them in envelopes	• Pompoms • Red & white cloth • Crowns • Envelopes • Postcards • Stickers • Crayons
11:15	Music Time – (Names of God? My God is so Big?)	• Music
11:20	Play	

Little Flames

10:30	Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.) ~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today. Keep today's focus in mind: "God promises me a King who will make my dirty heart clean."	Resources Needed:
10:35	Retell the story together multiple times. Use a "Wordless Book" – with coloured pages (black, red, white, green, gold) Use a storyboard method – something that is interactive and allows the children to participate in telling the story.	• Wordless Book – with coloured pages: black, red, white, green, gold
10:45	"Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below) ~ What promises did God give David? ~ What happened when the kings disobeyed God? ~ To whom did God tell His message of hope? ~ What did God say the new King would look like?	

- ~ How will the new King die?
- ~ Why will the new King die?
- ~ How does this King's death effect us?
- ~ Because this King willingly died, what will God do for Him?
- ~ What are some of the names that this new King will be called?

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| <p>10:50 Active (content-bearing!) game or activity to reinforce the story and the message:
 "God promises me a King who will make my dirty heart clean."
 ~ Talk about promises, and promise the kids a sweet at the end of the morning.
 ~ Game – Promise Trail: Follow coloured shapes to the prize</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweets • Coloured shapes for the prize trail |
| <p>10:55 Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time.</p> <p>Discussion:
 ~ Reflect back to them that God gives them promises, and He has promised a new King. This new King will help make their dirty hearts clean. Thank God for giving me a King who will make my heart clean.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biscuits |
| <p>11:00 Popcorn Prayer
 ~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "Thank you, Jesus, for _____!"</p> | |
| <p>11:05 Activity: Pretend Play or a table-based activity (that is non-colouring and not adult-dependant)
 ~ Allow the children to use Play-dough to make something from the story.
 ~ Leaders can play-act with the children.
 ~ Craft: Make wordless books with either coloured felt or coloured paper</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play-dough • Coloured paper or felt • Hole punch • Wool or string (to tie the book pages together) |
| <p>11:15 Sing: Choose one or two songs from the CD
 ~ "My God is so Big"</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music |
| <p>11:20 Learn the words of the week: "God promises me a King who will make my dirty heart clean." Use visuals for the kids to help them learn the words. (These can be written words even though they can't read yet.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals to help learn the phrase |
| <p>11:25 Wonder Questions: Think about how God wants us to act and what type of relationship He wants to have with us
 ~ Ask open-ended questions showing interest in the children as individuals. This will show them that we care about what they think, feel, wonder or know.</p> | |
| <p>11:30 If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them.
 ~ Play with story-oriented toys
 ~ Role play
 ~ Play-dough creations
 ~ Colouring station</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story-oriented toys • Play-dough • Jesus colouring sheets • Blank paper • Crayons |

		Resources Needed:
10:30	Welcome and straight-forward telling of the story	
10:35	Retell the story using sequencing	• Whiteboard and markers • Pictures
	Discuss the questions: ~ What do you like about this story? ~ What bothered you about this story? ~ What does this story show you about God? ~ What does this story show you about people? ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story? ~ How will you remember this story? <i>Tell it!</i> ~ Who will you tell this story to?	
10:45	Game: "Not what it appears" ~ Use flavoured Jelly Beans or different shaped that are wrapped as something different	• Jelly Beans • Wrapped shapes
10:50	In groups: Allow the children to retell the story by putting pictures in the correct order. Use comic book style frames or pictures from a graphic Bible.	• Pictures
11:00	Game or activity: Keeping promises?	
11:10	Craft: Hand Names ~ Draw around your hand. Put titles for the special King on each finger: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. Put a crown in the palm of the hand.	• Paper • Crayons or markers • Stickers •
11:25	Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering	• Container for the offering

		Resources Needed:
10:30	Retell the story – straightforward	
10:35	Divide into groups. Have each group act out parts of the story and props to go with it. When the groups are ready, have each group present their story.	• Coloured paper (for making props)
10:45	Split into groups and have the leaders retell the story Have the children help retell the story. (Find out if the children have any questions about the story.) Discuss the questions: ~ What do you like about this story? ~ What bothered you about this story? ~ What does this story show you about God?	

- ~ What does this story show you about people?
- ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- ~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
- ~ Who will you tell this story to?

Pray for who they want to share the story with

10:55	Skit (Puppet show) – interactive (<i>Elisabeth will write this.</i>)	• Two puppets • Table • Table cloth
11:05	Craft: Have the kids trace their hands on a piece of paper and cut it out. On each finger have them write one of the names mentioned in the story: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.	• Paper • Scissors • Markers or pens or crayons
11:15	Write characteristics of the Promised King on pieces of paper beforehand. Split into two groups. In each group, play charades with the characteristics. The first team to complete all the characteristics wins.	• Pieces of paper with characteristics of the Promised King. Ex: hated, rejected, beaten, peaceful, loving, rescuer, king, majestic, mighty, etc.
11:30	(As they leave) Activity pages	