

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

This unit of seven sessions in Isaiah is perfect to use at Christmastime. Consider using the first five sessions during Advent leading up to Christmas and the final two sessions (The Servant Songs) following Christmas. All are appropriate anytime during the year.

Celebrating a Baby's Birth
Isaiah 9:1-7

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader: Prepare copies of Isaiah 9:2,6 for the group to practice memorizing. The Scripture is given at the end of the worship time resources.

Please read the suggested activity instructions for building a manger. Those instructions, with a picture of what it could look like, are found in the article "How to

Build a Manger" in the "How To:" manual on the Home Church Online website. This activity will help include children and/or youth in making this special Bible study meaningful to all your group.

Worship Time Leader:

If your church has chosen to use this session at a time other than Christmas, it would be meaningful to go ahead and sing Christmas hymns and carols. Some may have never sung songs about the birth of Jesus. Others may have only sung them at Christmastime. Help the group to feel comfortable singing them "off-season". After all, we should celebrate the coming of the King of Kings all year long.

Music Sources:

"Away in a Manger", *The Worship Hymnal*, #205 and 208. CCLI #38583 Public Domain.

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus", *The Worship Hymnal*, #176. CCLI not available.

"There's a Song in the Air", *The Worship Hymnal*, #185. CCLI #273236, Public Domain.

"He is Born", *The Worship Hymnal*, #190. CCLI—Various songs on this theme available.

"I Have Seen the Light", *The Worship Hymnal*, #211, CCLI Not available.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Celebrating a Baby's Birth*****Focal Text**

Isaiah 9:1-7

Background Text

Isaiah 8:21—9:7

Main Idea

A genuine celebration of Christmas calls for recognizing that God indeed has come to us in the birth of Jesus.

Question to Explore

What is so important about one little baby?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to tell what Christ's birth means.

Gathering together:

Sing "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" or another favourite Christmas song.

First thoughts:

The poem written by Henry W. Longfellow and set to music by John Calkin is one of the most meaningful of Christmas songs. It captures the sadness and the joy of the prophetic message given many years ago by Isaiah. Its hope rests in the birth of the child about whom we will study this day.

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,

The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th' unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
There is no peace on earth" I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail; the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Public domain

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Celebrating a Baby’s Birth

Focal Text

Isaiah 9:1-7

Background Text

Isaiah 8:21—9:7

Main Idea

A genuine celebration of Christmas calls for recognizing that God indeed has come to us in the birth of Jesus.

Question to Explore

What is so important about one little baby?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to tell what Christ’s birth means.

Introduction to your personal study:

A favourite song at Christmas for children and adults alike is “Away in a Manger”. Think about the words of this song as you begin your study today.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.
Public domain

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

This asking of a blessing for this earth and for granting of growth to prepare us for heaven captures the message of many of Isaiah’s prophecies. He speaks to the present and to the future.

The prophets were chosen by God to bring messages of warning and of hope to the people. The passage we are dealing with today is one of hope.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Isaiah 9: 1-2

1Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan.

***2The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
On those living in the land of the shadow of death***

Verse 1 serves as a transition from Chapter 8 which describes the darkness of the current situation. Today’s lesson takes us back early in the prophetic ministry of Isaiah. Ahaz is king and is fearful of Assyria and trying to make an alliance with Assyria. Isaiah has said to him, “***Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood (Chapter 7:4) and “If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all (Chapter 7:9).*** The Lord himself spoke to Ahaz “***Ask the Lord for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.***” But Ahaz said, “***I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test***” (7:10-11).

A early prophecy concerning Messiah is seen in Chapter 7:14. ***“The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”.***

Ahaz’s refusal to depend upon God led to the defeat of Israel by the Assyrians. The northern kingdoms – the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali – were invaded early on and Gentile customs introduced to the people. This verse – Chapter 9:1 indicates that this Galilean area will again be honoured in Israel. The darkness of idol worship will be replaced by a great light. In the time of Jesus, the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea looked down on Galilean Jews (see John 7:41: 52: Acts 2:7) Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, lay in what had been the territory of Zebulun.

The last few verses of chapter 8 refer to darkness coming as a result of the people’s sins. Isaiah 8:19-20 refers to the fate of those who turn to spiritualists and fortune tellers and reject God’s Word. ***“There is no light in them”*** (Isaiah 8:20).

Isaiah is most likely referring to a future Davidic king who will bring a period of light and peace to God’s people. This king will rule with peace and justice contrasted to the sinful pride and oppression which led to the downfall of Israel and Assyria by the Babylonians.

This kingship would be characterized by light rather than darkness. As we look on this prophecy with its fulfillment in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, we understand how overwhelming this light would be. From the Bethlehem star to the light that dawns in the heart of a new believer, we see the picture of light dawning.

Light signifies hope; in this passage it is a sign that God had not given up on his people. A new day of hope and light will eventually arrive. God’s words are light (Psalm 119:105). God’s glorious coming to his kingdom is pictured as light. ***“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn”*** (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Verses 2-7 of Chapter 9 form a thanksgiving hymn written in the second person. Verse 3 says ***“You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.”***

For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire” (Verses 4-5).

Two clear examples of wild celebrative joy are given here – the rejoicing that harvest time brings is the first. Many cultures have a day of Thanksgiving at the end of harvest. The second would have more reality to the people of Isaiah’s time than it possibly would have to us. Even though war is as prevalent as ever, the plundering of the defeated in

order to gain their material goods may not be as real to a modern day reader. The burning of boots and bloodied garments signify not only victory, but an ending to the war.

The reference to the day of Midian's defeat refers to the victory that God gave over Midian in the time of Gideon (See Judges 6-7). The victory of Gideon was actually the victory of the Lord. Gideon was a reluctant leader. Only a handful of men were selected to attack the vast hosts of the Midianites. Just as God gave victory over Midian, so will He win the final battle over vast and powerful evil forces.

However, these verses lack a call to praise God; they never use the word thanksgiving and they center on future positive change rather than just what God has done. Some commentators feel this is an accession oracle for the installation of a new king and feel that king would be Hezekiah. Hezekiah proved to be one of Israel's best kings, but most Bible scholars feel that Isaiah 9:6 refer to something more than just another merely human king of David's line.

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. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this (verses 6-7).

Obviously, we understand these verses to be a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah as did the Jews for many, many years. In fact, Jewish people still await the birth of that Messiah.

The background to Isaiah 9:6-7 and to the messianic hope in general was God's promise to David recorded in 2 Samuel 7:4-17. God promised that David's dynasty would continue forever. The word *messiah* means anointed one. Since kings were anointed with oil in ancient Israel, *messiah* become synonymous with *king*. It was natural for the people of Israel to view this promise in earthly terms. Even in Jesus' day, this was the kind of messiah expected by most Jews (*52 Ready-to Teach Bible Study Lessons, Broadman Comments 1995-96*, p.123).

The promise of verse 7 is peace and justice and righteousness. The people might have asked, "How can this ever be?" even as we ask that of our human rulers today. The answer is in the final sentence of verse 7 "***The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.***"

This truth is similar to the conversation of Mary with the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38. After the angel announced to her that she was to bear a son to be called Jesus, Gabriel added: "***He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end***"

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “Since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God” (32-37).

The names for this future child are meaningful: *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. Wonderful Counselor would indicate one giving wise advice; one who assists with wise planning and decision making. Mighty God indicates a close connection to God; a divine warrior. Everlasting Father indicates a unending concern for people. Prince of Peace indicates one who loves peace and will bring peace.

To summarize the teachings of this passage we would include:

1. No one can successfully oppose the authority of this coming king.
2. The ruler will reign on the throne of David and re-establish his kingdom. The ultimate fulfillment will be Messiah.
3. The method of ruling will be based on principles of justice and freedom.
4. The ruler will reign forever as explained in the Davidic covenant.
5. God almighty himself will do it.

We asked the question, “What is so important about one little baby?” as the question to explore in this Bible study. We must answer that individually. What is so important to me about the birth of Jesus? In the midst of war and devastation, the prophet Isaiah gave hope to the Israelites that the line of kings of which David was the first would not die out. The people came to understand this to mean an “anointed one” a messiah would come who would deliver them from their enemies. They expected an earthly powerful king, but a baby was born. That baby grew to be a man who healed disease, raised people from the dead, preached a message of forgiveness and ultimately gave his life as atonement for the sins of the world. No other birth has ever compared with this birth. May we realize that afresh and anew this Christmas season.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Each participant in your group will bring to the study their own mental understanding of the birth of Jesus. During the session please remember that each one's ideas regarding the birth of Jesus may be a little different than the others. As the leader, your

responsibilities include helping each person understand the importance of Jesus' birth so that it transforms his/her celebration of the Christmas season.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Celebrating a Baby's Birth

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Isaiah 9:1-7

Background Text

Isaiah 8:21—9:7

Main Idea

A genuine celebration of Christmas calls for recognizing that God indeed has come to us in the birth of Jesus.

Question to Explore

What is so important about one little baby?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to tell what Christ's birth means.

Connect with Life:

Leader: Using the suggested activity of building a manger, have the teens, children, or adults sit on the floor and give them the screwdrivers, wood, and screws that they will use to construct the manger. **However, don't tell them that it is a manger.** Let them build on it until they realize what it is that they are putting together. You might tell them that it is a puzzle for grownups.

Ask: Can anyone tell me what the word "symbol" means? Share things that you know are used as symbols. (a necklace with a cross on it, a money bill or coin, a flag, etc.).

Then say: A symbol is something that makes us think of an object, an act or event, a person, a geographical place, or other significant things. The item you are building is a symbol. It will help all of us to think more clearly about the meaning of our Bible study lesson today.

Guide the Study:

Have someone read the entire Bible passage – Isaiah 9:1-7.

Discuss the transitional verse 1 and the relationship between the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali and Jesus' home town of Nazareth. If you have a map in your Bible which shows the divided kingdom or Palestine in the time of Jesus, locate Nazareth and focus on the fact that it is in the northern part of the Kingdom. Discuss how that made it more vulnerable to attack by neighbouring countries.

Ask the group: Who were the people walking in darkness? (The Israelites who failed to worship Jehovah. They had forgotten the law of Moses and the commandments of the Lord. Their leaders such as King Ahaz refused to depend upon God for help).

Read Isaiah 8: 19-20 for a description of one way the people were walking in darkness.

Have a person answer this question: Does the term “the people walking in darkness” have significance for us today?

Get the group to discuss these two thought questions: How do we feel when we think of light? Would that image have had even more meaning for people who lived before electricity was available?

Have members read some of the Biblical images of light given in the background material – Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 60: 1-3.

Say: Verses 3-5 of Isaiah 9 are more difficult to understand in the light of the Messianic prophecy. It is definitely a picture of rejoicing. There is the picture of a military victory and a remembering of the victory of Gideon over the Midianites. We are dealing here with the tension between understanding this passage as a word for the people of Isaiah's day and/or a prophecy of the coming Messiah.

Tell the group: Verses 6-7 are more familiar and are easily understood as the Messianic prophecy.

Then ask: What is the promise of the passage? (A child will be born; a son will be given)

Now ask the class to share this: What can we understand by “the government will be on his shoulders”?

Ask: What four names are given to the Messiah and what is the significance of each? (Write the names on large pieces of paper and have members of the class choose one. You may want to have each name written twice so that every participant has a name.)

Say: The Messiah has come, but has the prophecy been entirely fulfilled?

Ask: Can we say that “his peace will know no end”? (Yes, we can say that for individual believers.

Again: Do we expect peace for the whole world at the return of Jesus?

Seek a brief discussion: Is verse 7 yet to be fulfilled in its entirety? (Be very careful that this question is answered briefly. You may have a participant that could talk and argue this question for too long).

Look for an answer: How will this peace be accomplished? (The zeal of the Almighty will accomplish this.)

Have someone reread the entire passage starting with verse 2.

Ask one, two, or three participants to suggest possible answers to this question: What made it possible for Isaiah to write these magnificent words so many years ago? (Was he was very intelligent or was he chosen by God to be the messenger of this prophetic word?)

Encourage Application:

Leader: If your youth participated in the construction of the manger, they may want to simply stay with the rest of the group for the Bible study application. However, they may prefer to use the “**Youth: Take Ten**” time by themselves. Let them make the choice.

This is a familiar passage. Spend a few minutes committing Isaiah 9: 2,6 to memory. Have it written on cards which the participant can keep with him/her during the week in order to continue memorizing. Suggest ways to memorize – put it on your bathroom mirror; keep it on the dashboard of your car and study when waiting in traffic; practice with your family before you begin to eat a meal. A copy of the Scripture is given at the end of the Worship Time materials.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Celebrating a Baby's Birth **Isaiah 9:1-7**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

A Year-long Christmas

Christmastime only comes once a year. With the season we experience special music; visits from and to friends and family that we may not see the rest of the year; giving and receiving gifts; beautifully decorations in homes and towns; and different food (and the excuse to overeat sweets!).

But what are your Christmas plans in February or May or September? After all, Christ's birth is a call to do what He commands. (Think about the four names that Isaiah records for Jesus). Christmas should be far more than just a fun remembrance of Mary giving birth to a baby some 2,000 years ago.

Why not include in your "New Year's resolutions" things that will honour that birth all year long! **Give each other suggestions for a year-long Christmas.**

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Celebrating a Baby's Birth***
Isaiah 9:1-7**Beginning the Service:**

Sing "There's a Song in the Air", *The Worship Hymnal*, #185
 "He is Born", *The Worship Hymnal*, #190 and/or other Christmas favourites. Most people love Christmas music and feel they never get to sing enough of it.

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

This is a turbulent time of war, natural disasters, and religious oppression for the 170 million people who call Pakistan home. Hundreds of thousands are fleeing their homes to escape the fighting in the northwest and find safety. They are going to cities, other villages—anywhere that they have family or friends. Pray that our Father will provide many opportunities to assist these people in their time of need and to share God's love with them. Pray that the Prince of Peace will reign in hearts. The word "Pakistan" means "Land of the Pure". Pray that may be true.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Nothing Is Impossible with God
Luke 1:37

The verse recorded as Luke 1:37 appears at the end of the wonderful conversation the angel has with Mary during which he explains to her that she will be the mother of the Messiah.

“He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “Since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God” (32-37).

It is an amazing concept yet we seem to ignore it in giving attention to the incredible news which Mary has received.

But it is the heart of the Christmas story.

We often speak of miracles at Christmas time. There is the miracle of Christ’s birth and the hope it gave and still gives the world. The promise of peace is a miracle yet to be fulfilled in the sense of world peace, but is experienced daily in the lives of those who believe and trust in the Saviour.

Underlying these miracles and, in fact, making them possible is the miracle that ***“Nothing is impossible with God.”***

We don’t really believe that. If we did believe that, we would not just worship the Christ child at Christmas. We could not stand to just make an appearance once or twice a year to enjoy the fellowship of other believers, to sing songs of the faith and to hear the hope and joy of the Christmas story.

We would live lives transformed by the knowledge that ***“Nothing is impossible with God.”***

Academics discuss if the virgin birth really happened or if it is just a myth which gives interest and mystery to the life of Jesus. Many Christians feel the teachings of Jesus to be good and true, but underneath that belief is the unbelief that the virgin birth could not really have happened. It is just too fantastic. No intelligent, reasonable person could wrap their mind around such a concept.

Why is it that way? We have missed the closing statement of the angel to Mary. ***“Nothing is impossible with God.”***

A current popular book being read by Christians is called *The Shack*. In the book the principal character is dealing with a grief so enormous that he calls it “The Great Sadness.” It is with him at all hours of the day and night. It had “...draped itself around Mack’s shoulders like some invisible, but almost tangibly heavy quilt. The weight of its presence dulled his eyes and stooped his shoulders. Even his efforts to shake it off were exhausting, as if his arms were sewn into its bleak folds of despair and he had somehow become part of it. He ate, worked, loved, dreamed and played in this garment of heaviness, weighed down as if he were wearing a leaden bathrobe – trudging daily through the murky despondency that sucked the color out of everything”. (Young, William P. *The Shack*. Los Angeles, California: Windblown Media, 2007, p. 25)

In the story, Mack returns to the shack which was the place where the tragedy in his life occurred. There he meets God and Jesus and the Spirit in a way he had never experienced before. Though he never expected to be free from The Great Sadness, his encounter led to an understanding of God which lifted his despair. He, in fact, came to understand that nothing is impossible with God.

We are like Mary when we are faced with something that seems impossible. We ask very reasonable questions. ***“How can this be,” Mary asked the angel, “Seeing that I am a virgin.”***

The angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her and the holy one to be born would be called the Son of God.

Later Mary would sing:

***“My soul glorifies the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
For the Mighty One has done great things for me-
Holy is his name.”*** Luke 1: 47-49

Call to Commitment:

Mary, a young Judean girl, had heard the prophecy of Isaiah and believed that a Messiah had been promised. She was able to believe that she could be his mother. She was able to understand that nothing is impossible with God.

May that be the Christmas present we give ourselves this year. May we come to know in every part of our being that nothing is impossible with God.

Concluding the Service:

Ask a child or a youth to hand out copies of the scripture, Isaiah 9:2,6 to every participant (including the children). You should have those copies already prepared from the following page.

Ask the group to place those wherever they can best focus on them during the coming week and memorize the passage. With the help of a parent, even a young child can memorize the first phrase.

Isaiah 9:2, 6

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

***On those living in the land of the shadow of death
A light has dawned.***

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. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (verses 6-7).

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