

Jesus Christ is born



Isaiah 9:6–7; 11:1–5; 53:4–5 / Micah 5:2 / Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–20

On God's instructions, the prophets Isaiah and Micah foretold the birth of a Redeemer hundreds of years before it actually happened. When God was about to send the Redeemer, an angel announced to the virgin Mary that she would bear a son engendered by the Holy Spirit. At that time the Roman Emperor ordered everybody to travel to their respective places of birth to be registered for tax purposes. Consequently Mary, who was soon expecting her first child, and her fiancé Joseph, had to travel to Bethlehem. There, under the poorest of conditions, the Son of God was born. That night shepherds in the field heard the glad tidings of the birth of the Saviour from angels.

The children learn that God keeps his promises. They are happy that, out of love, he sent his Son into the world to redeem man.



Hundreds of years before the Son of God was born, the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of a Redeemer. He spoke in the name of God: "A child will be born to us who will one day be our king. This king shall rule wisely and prudently. He will reign eternally with power and might as the Prince of Peace. He will establish his kingdom and observe divine judgment and justice. Thus it has been decreed by God, our Lord." Isaiah also said that the Redeemer would be filled with the Spirit of God, but that he would have to suffer much and even die for mankind. The prophet Micah also prophesied the coming of the Redeemer. He foretold the Saviour's birthplace, namely Bethlehem. After hundreds of years, God's promises were fulfilled.

1

Mary, a God-fearing and believing young woman, lives in Nazareth. She is alone at home when an angel suddenly appears to her and says: "Peace be with you! You have found favour with God." Mary is rather frightened, but the angel says: "Do not be afraid, Mary. You will bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He shall be the Son of the Most High." The angel

explains to Mary that God will give her this child. He will be great and called the Son of God. Mary says humbly: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it happen to me as you have said."

Mary's fiancé, Joseph, also had an encounter with the angel of God. The angel advised him in a dream that he should take Mary to be his wife, and rejoice with her about the child given to her by God.

Shortly afterwards the Roman Emperor Augustus orders a census to be taken in his empire. All citizens must therefore travel to their home towns to be registered. Joseph, together with Mary who is soon expecting the birth of her first child, also set out. Their arduous journey to Bethlehem takes them through hilly countryside. Tired from the long journey, they finally arrive in the little town. Many other people have come here to register as well; the narrow streets and alleys are crowded. Mary and Joseph look for a room in one of the local inns, but find none. Exhausted, they eventually settle down in a simple shelter. Night has already fallen and the stars are twinkling in the heavens. Then the great miracle takes place: the Saviour and Redeemer is born in this humble place! Mary wraps her son in swaddling clothes and lays him on some straw in a manger. Mary and Joseph are very happy. Suddenly a group of shepherds approaches them. They have heard from angels outside in the fields that the Saviour has been born and have hurried here to find him. They see two

people, poor like themselves, with a new-born child. Yet this is no ordinary child—that the angel has told them. The shepherds kneel down before the infant and worship him. Then they relate their experience in the field to Mary and Joseph. The shepherds praise and thank God for everything they have heard and seen. The glad tidings of the birth of the Saviour spread like wildfire.

2/3/4



When the Lord was about to send the promised Redeemer, he sent an angel to Mary.

The angel told her that she would bear a son whom she was to call Jesus.

The Roman Emperor Augustus ordered a census. Joseph and Mary had to travel to their birthplace, Bethlehem.

And there, in the poorest of circumstances, the Son of God was born. Angels proclaimed the glad tidings of his birth to the shepherds.

- 1 Using the pictures as visual aid, the children tell the story of Jesus' birth. The teacher supplements the narrative where necessary. The above story is simply an aid.
- 2 Why do we rejoice from the depth of our heart that the Lord Jesus was born? (Jesus is the Son of God, our Saviour. / He is a gift from God. / He has told us much about his Father. / Through his sacrifice he redeemed us from sin ...)
- 3 God fulfilled his promise of a Redeemer and sent his Son. We also await the fulfilment of promises. What are they? (the return of Jesus Christ / wedding in heaven). Through Jesus Christ we are connected with God.
- 4 The children can draw a picture of the Christmas story.