

How Would People Get Ready for Jesus?

Small Group Lesson

Long before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah encouraged people to prepare for Jesus' arrival. Ultimately, this was fulfilled in the Gospels when John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus. By seeing Jesus' arrival through the lens of Isaiah and through the work of John the Baptist, students will better understand how to get ready for Jesus to enter their own lives.

Lesson Objectives

1. **WHAT:** This lesson will encourage students to prepare for Jesus to come and care for them, even amid difficult circumstances.
2. **WHY:** Jesus is ready to passionately care for us, if only we will prepare our hearts to receive him.
3. **HOW:** Students will study Scripture passages that encourage people to embrace the coming Messiah, who will restore them despite their sin and circumstances.

Primary Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11

Secondary Scriptures: Mark 1:1-8 and John 10:11

Let's spend a few minutes exploring Isaiah's message about being open-hearted people.

1. The Messiah was coming to bring healing and hope

Think of a difficult situation you've experienced because of a bad choice you made. In light of that, how do the words in verses 1 and 2 make you feel?

What do those words reveal about God's open heart for people?

Now look at verses 9-11. What does Isaiah reveal about the identity of the promised Messiah? What descriptions of power and care does Isaiah provide?

How does the image of Jesus as our shepherd reveal how much he cares for us?

To someone who's struggling or hurting right now, what would you tell them about Jesus being their shepherd?

Isaiah wanted people to take comfort in the fact that Jesus was coming to restore them. But Isaiah also wanted them to take some action to get ready for that moment.

2. People needed to clear the way for the Messiah's arrival

Look at verses 3-5. Describe the construction project that Isaiah proposes. What might this imagery mean to us?

What kind of work must go into such a massive project?

How can people who were once closed-hearted—like in verse 2—voluntarily open their hearts to receive Jesus' love and care?

Isaiah was very clear that he's referring to God coming in person to bring comfort to people who have sinned and need restoration. Even though Isaiah wrote these verses 700 years before Jesus' birth, he foresaw the forgiveness and healing that Jesus would offer to people. As Jesus' ministry was about to begin, one person in particular worked to prepare people to welcome the coming Lord into their lives.

3. Preparing our hearts for the Messiah leads to great rewards

John the Baptist became a voice shouting in the wilderness—literally! He urged people to get ready for Jesus' coming.

How did John the Baptist work to get people prepared for Jesus?

Based on John's appearance and habits, he must've seemed a little crazy. If you had lived during that time, what might you have thought about John and his message?

Why can it be hard to receive such a message, even today?

What preparation steps did John the Baptist recommend, and why? How can taking these same steps today welcome Jesus into our lives?

BGroup Questions

1. What are some ways you need Jesus today?
2. To get ready for Jesus, what in your life might you have to turn away from?

3. How might you be able to act like John the Baptist to people around you? What can you do that might encourage them to open their hearts and lives to Jesus?

TAKE ACTION: Memorize this Scripture this week! *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep"* (John 10:11).

**Leaders, leave 3-5 minutes for prayer at the end of your group time.