

General Church Education



Christmas: A Little Child Shall Lead

Isaiah 11:6

Lesson 29

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

Christmas: A Little Child Shall Lead

Isaiah 11:6

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

As Christmas preparations begin we take a look at the role of prophecy in the life of the Children of Israel as they anticipated the birth of the Messiah and the part it plays in our lives today. In this prophecy from Isaiah about the little child leading, the Lord is teaching us the importance of innocence. He came as a little child into the world to lead us to heaven. Innocence is the willingness to be led by the Lord (*Heaven and Hell* 281). This quality, which is represented by children, is the inmost of heaven. As Jesus said in the New Testament, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

The innocence of childhood is a kind of prophecy of the genuine innocence of wisdom that comes later in the life of a regenerate person, in an angel. The Writings teach that the innocence of the child combines with the wisdom of the adult. “An angel is a wise child” (*Heaven and Hell* 278.3).

Ideas for Children

- The Lord came on earth as Baby Jesus.
- Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd, who came on earth to lead people to heaven.
- Christmas prophecies are the Lord’s promise to people that He will save them.

From the Writings

All innocence is from the Lord. Thus it is that in the Word the Lord is called the “Lamb,” for a lamb means innocence. Innocence is the inmost in all the good of heaven, so it affects our minds whenever it is felt by anyone. See *Heaven and Hell* 282

Innocence is the one and only thing that receives the Lord. For without innocence there can be no love to the Lord, nor can there be any charity toward the neighbor or any faith that has life within it.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.” (Isaiah 11:6) These words describe the state of peace and innocence in the heavens and in the church after the Lord came into the world.

All good, if it is to be good, must have innocence within it. Without it good is not good; for innocence is not only the ground in which truths are sown but also the very essence of good. Therefore how far people possess innocence determines how far their good becomes good and their truth has life from good, consequently how far they are endowed with life and the evils present with them are removed. See portions of *Arcana Coelestia* 10131, 10132 and 10134

Christmas: A Little Child Shall Lead

The next three stories we will read are about Christmas. Who was born on Christmas day? Yes, the Lord Jesus was born as a little baby in the town of Bethlehem long, long ago. This was not the beginning of the Lord. We know that He has always lived. He made the world and everything in it. The Lord had always told people about Himself and how to be happy. But people wanted to have their own way instead of following the Lord's way. They became selfish and unhappy. Many people did not even know what the Lord taught anymore. People needed to see Him and learn from Him how to live a good life. The Lord needed to come on earth to save people.

Today millions of people celebrate His birth into the world. People prepare for it for weeks because Christmas day helps us remember the most important event in the history of the world.

Preparing for the Coming of the Lord

Just as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Lord, people long ago had to be prepared for this most special event. One reason for this was because the people were discouraged. The Children of Israel had been conquered by enemies, their worship disrupted and their families spread

far from home. They wanted to be back in the land of Israel to worship in the temple again.

Another reason the people had to be prepared was so they would recognize the Lord when He came. The Hebrews called Him "the Messiah," which means the "anointed one." They looked forward to His coming in order to save them from their enemies and bring their nation back to the power that they once had. They looked forward to the coming of the Messiah because the Lord had sent prophets to tell of His coming. A prophet is someone who speaks for the Lord and gives His messages to people.

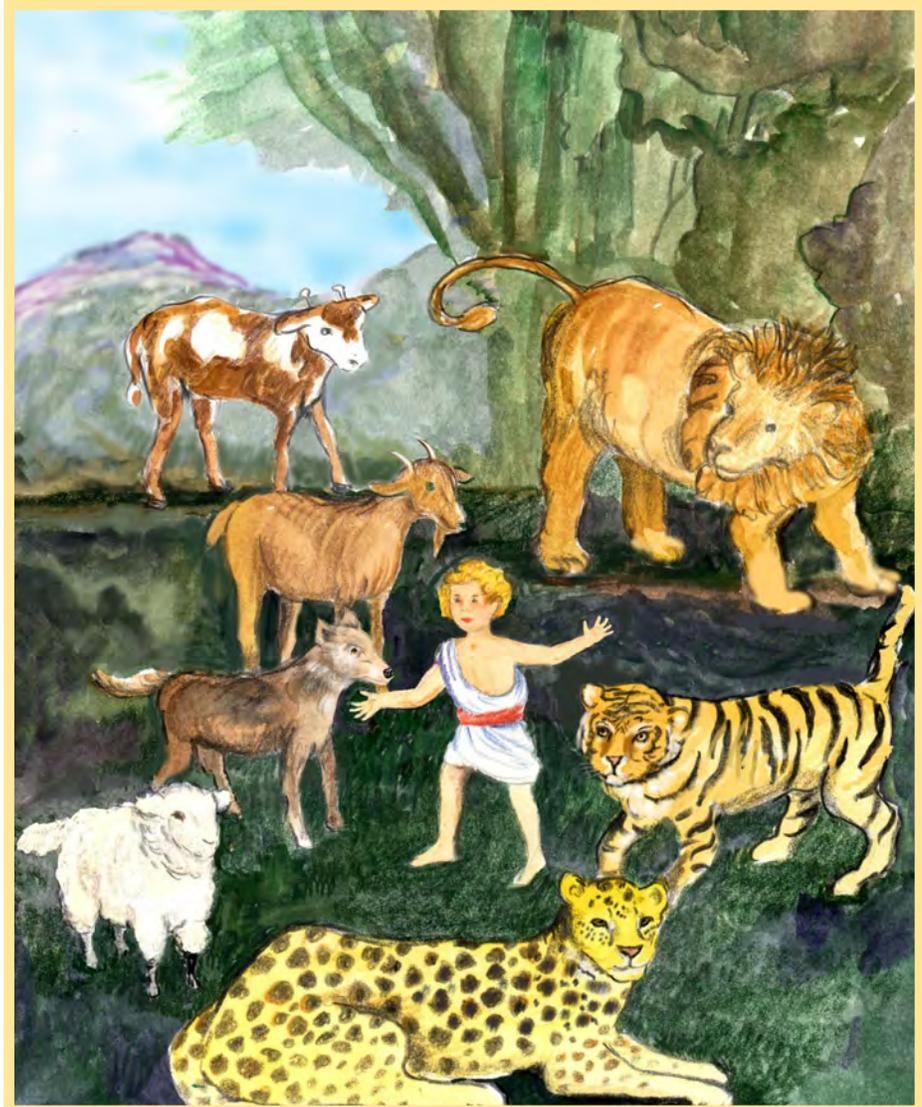
There were many prophecies that told of things that were going to come



long before they happened. Isaiah, one of the prophets, gave many important messages to the people. The book of Isaiah is found in the Old Testament. Let's read one of the prophecies foretelling the coming of the Lord. Listen carefully for the kinds of animals mentioned.

Read Isaiah 11:6.

Did you notice that gentle animals and fierce ones were mentioned together? What was the first pair of animals? (Wolf and lamb.) The wolf is normally an enemy of lambs. This prophecy foretells that the wolf and the lamb will live together. What other



fierce animals are mentioned? (Leopard and lion.) It is said that they will dwell together with animals they would normally prey upon, young goats and calves. This unusual scene pictures a time of peace, doesn't it? It must be especially peaceful because the last sentence foretells that a little child shall lead them.

What do you think the Hebrew people learned from this prophecy? They were looking for an earthly king. Sometime in the future there would come a time of peace, when there would be no enemies to fear. They also learned to look for a little child to come as their leader. This is one of the prophecies that was told to generation after generation as they looked for the Lord to come on earth to save them. It was important for the people to be looking for the Lord, and it is important for us today to prepare for Him also.

The Writings help us understand this prophecy as it applies to us. We learn that even though a child may be thought of as weak and small, a child has something very powerful within. That

powerful thing is innocence. Innocence means being willing to let the Lord guide you. All the angels in heaven look to the Lord to guide them.

The angels in the highest heaven appear at a distance like little children, but they are the most powerful of all angels. No evil spirit can approach them. Their innocence protects them. Their complete trust in the Lord, their dependence on Him, and the love of being led by the Lord in everything they do, causes them to be surrounded by Divine power. The security and peace that this protection brings is pictured in the prophecy of Isaiah.

Jesus Christ Is Our Good Shepherd

The Lord God Jesus Christ was born on earth as a little baby. He came to earth to lead us to heaven, as our Good Shepherd. The evil spirits would like to destroy us, but the Lord protects us, His lambs, from every evil. If we are willing to be led by the Lord, the safety and peace of heaven will be ours.



Discussion Questions

- How does your family prepare for Christmas?
- In what ways does preparing for an event add to our enjoyment of it? (The more we know about something, the more we can anticipate it or look forward to it. We will notice more and therefore enjoy it more, if we know what to look for.)
- How can innocence, or being willing to be led by the Lord, protect you when you are afraid? (Thinking of the Lord, His love for you and His great power, helps dissolve fearful thoughts and feelings. Prayer and reading the Word help us focus on the Lord and His care for us.)

Activity Overview | Christmas: A Little Child Shall Lead

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will *be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Luke 2:8-14

Song

O Come Little Children

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-o-come-little-children/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | The Wolf and the Lamb Shall Dwell Together
- Activity 2 | Peaceable Kingdom Tree Ornaments
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Arrange stuffed animals in a row to form a peaceable kingdom “parade.”
- Put a lamb by your copy of the Word.
- Watch the story of *The Annunciation to Mary*. The story illustrations include a scene representing the peaceable kingdom. Watch at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-annunciation-to-mary/>

Activity 1 | The Wolf and the Lamb Shall Dwell Together

Discuss the characteristics of gentle lambs and fierce wolves. Bring home the idea that if we follow the Lord we can become gentle, like the lambs. If everyone followed the Lord the world would be a peaceful place. Talk about ways we can cultivate the virtue of following the Lord so fierce emotions and thoughts can no longer hurt if they attack us, and we can live in peace.

Materials

crayons, colored pencils or markers
Wolf and Lamb Templates printed on stiff paper
larger piece of paper for mounting the wolf and lamb
scissors

Directions

1. Color the lamb and the wolf on the *Wolf and Lamb Templates*.
2. Cut out all of the finished pictures being careful to cut around the “handles” at the bottom.
3. Gently bend the larger piece of paper near the middle. Cut in a straight line from the middle of the page to approximately 1” (3cm) from the edges of the paper.
4. Insert the handles attached to the lamb and wolf through the slit. Position the animals at opposite ends of the slit.
5. Discuss situations in which we become angry and attack, like a wolf, and how we can turn to true ideas we know to bring the influence of heaven back into our lives and find peace. E.g. wanting to be first, not wanting to share with others, wanting to lie to cover up something we have done. As you discuss what true ideas can help us, move the lamb and the wolf closer to each other through the slit.



Wolf and Lamb Templates



Activity 2 | Peaceable Kingdom Tree Ornaments

Make ornaments for your Christmas tree or for a special display to remind you of ways you might let the Lord's love be born into your life by doing what He teaches.

Materials

paints, colored pencils, markers, special pens
Peaceable Kingdom Tree Ornaments page printed on stiff paper
ribbon or gold thread to hang ornaments
scissors
tape

Directions

1. Color the *Peaceable Kingdom Tree Ornaments* pictures on the next page. Be sure to make them look beautiful!
2. Cut the ornaments out. It's not necessary to cut precisely on the lines. To make cutting easier, leave some white space around the figures.
3. Cut ribbon or thread into 9" (23cm) lengths. Fold the lengths in half to create a loop and tape to the back of the ornaments.
4. Hang the ornaments on a Christmas tree, in a window, etc. to remind you of what the Lord can do when you invite Him to be born into your life.

Peaceable Kingdom Tree Ornaments

