

# 1

## Special Announcement: Good News!

ISAIAH 9:6; 61:1-2a; LUKE 4:16-21



### GOAL

The children hear Isaiah's words of hope and good news, connect it with good news that Jesus is and brings to the world, and are empowered to be bearers of this good news to others.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



### PRAYER

Loving God, open my heart to be transformed in new ways by these familiar words so that I might embrace this good news and share it as I lead today. Amen.

### THIS SESSION

As we begin this *Go Tell* unit, we must go back to before the angels and the stable and the tiny baby, to the prophecies of the Old Testament. Children might be surprised to hear that these words, so familiar to the text of this story, were actually written about 700 years before the birth of Christ! So, as we hear these words of proclamation, the theme of waiting joins, and is in tension with, the imperative *Go Tell!* This feels even more appropriate if you are leading this unit in the season of Advent.

### THE BIBLE STORY

These two passages of Isaiah have become familiar to many through their inclusions in hymns and other music, and in the narration of beloved Christmas pageants. The final chapters in the book of Isaiah relate to the return of Israel from exile and a repair of God's people from the inside out and the bottom up. Jesus announces the fulfillment of the ancient words of the prophet in Isaiah 61:1-2a as he preaches in the synagogue in Luke 4. Jesus did indeed bring this good news to the oppressed, and our job as Christ's followers is to continue to tell the good news.

### CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

So many aspects of this text resonate with children. There is intrigue in the prediction of something both mysterious and game-changing. There is good news of one who will help those in need. There is a sense of expectation and excitement that comes with a special announcement! In the Advent season particularly, children who have experienced one or several cycles of the church year have both knowledge and anticipation of what is happening.

### SESSION PREPARATION

- "Telling the Good News" (p. 8): Write the words to the responsive reading on a sheet of newsprint. Use a black marker to write your lines and a different color marker to write the children's lines, which are shown in bold in the reading.

Depending on the choices you make:

- "All about Anointing" (p. 10): Obtain two or three essential oils such as vanilla, cinnamon, rosemary, orange, or lavender.
- "Searching for Good News" (p. 11): Obtain worship bulletins from one or more recent worship services.



## GETTING STARTED

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- Pens or pencils
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

### A MESSAGE OF GOOD NEWS! A

Greet the children as they arrive and provide copies of Resource Page 1 and coloring supplies. Invite the children to write or draw a picture about a piece of good news from the week in the speech bubble on the page. Explain that the good news can be about themselves, their community, or the world to share with the group as an announcement. Set aside for “Sharing Our Good News” (below).

- Prepared newsprint with responsive reading

### TELLING THE GOOD NEWS

Invite children to participate in a responsive reading with you using the beginning of the refrain to the song “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Display the prepared newsprint with the responsive reading on it and invite them to read the lines written in a color other than black.

Go tell it on the mountain,  
**over the hills and everywhere.**  
 Go tell it on the mountain . . .  
**Wait, go tell what?**  
 Jesus brought good news.  
**Jesus brought good news.**



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- Children’s papers with good news from “A Message of Good News!” (above)
- Tape or pushpins

### SHARING OUR GOOD NEWS C

Introduce this unit, *Go Tell*, explaining that the focus of it is on ways that we proclaim the good news of God through the birth of Jesus. Tell the children that, each session, they will begin by sharing good news in their lives or the world, dreams for the future, and things that bring us joy in a way that specifically relates to this practice of *proclamation*. Invite the children to share the good news they wrote or drew about in their speech bubbles from “A Message of Good News!” (above).

Begin a mural wall or bulletin board where you can display all of the good news that is generated during this unit.



## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

- Resource Page 2
- Bibles

### A GOOD, OLD STORY C

Tell the children that today’s Bible story is actually three stories, two from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, which are connected with one another. Explain that the first two stories are from the book of Isaiah, one of the major prophets of the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures. Ask the children what a prophet is. Comment, if necessary, that a

prophet is a person who speaks messages from God to God's people. Explain that a prophet is not a person who could tell or predict the future, but God's message would often come to pass in unexpected ways. Tell the children that the third story is from the Gospel of Luke, one of the four books in the New Testament that tell about the life of Jesus.

Read aloud the adapted Bible stories from Isaiah 9:6; 61:1–2a; Luke 4:16–21 on Resource Page 2. Then distribute Bibles. Encourage children who may need assistance with reading to partner with those who are confident readers. Tell the children they will hear the announcements the prophet and Jesus made again. Have the children turn to Isaiah 9 and invite a volunteer to read verse 6 aloud to the group. Then have the children turn to Isaiah 61 and have a volunteer read verses 1–2a, stopping at “the year of the LORD's favor.” Finally, have the children turn to Luke 4 and invite a volunteer to read about Jesus' actions and words from verses 16–21.

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ➔ What announcements of good news did you hear?
- ➔ Isaiah's words were spoken to people hundreds of years before Jesus was born, to give the people at that time hope and promise of a new world. What do you know about Jesus that gives hope and promise of a new world?
- ➔ How do you think people today are continuing the work that Jesus was sent to do?

## FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

### UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN



Show the children the YouTube video “For unto Us a Child Is Born—Children's Choir and Orchestra” ([bit.ly/FMForUntoUs](https://bit.ly/FMForUntoUs), 2:07). Wonder if the words sound familiar and where the children have heard them. Tell the children that this song is part of George Frideric Handel's eighteenth-century choral work, *Messiah*. Explain that *Messiah* is a composition of vocal and instrumental music that has fifty-three movements in three parts (forty-seven, using a different system that doesn't count some of the shorter pieces as separate movements). “For Unto Us a Child Is Born” is movement number twelve in the first part of the story of Jesus, which covers the prophecy of Jesus and his birth.

Tell the children that the second part of the story of *Messiah* is about Jesus' death and resurrection, ending with the “Hallelujah Chorus,” which is a glorious song about God's victory in Jesus Christ and is often sung at Eastertime. Comment that, a few years ago, there was a humorous video made of silent monks holding up the words to this song. Show part or all of the YouTube video “Silent Monks Sing the Hallelujah Chorus” ([bit.ly/FMSilentMonks](https://bit.ly/FMSilentMonks), 3:40) so the children see the idea of the signs.

Tell the children that they are going to make a video in the same manner as the silent monks with the song “For Unto Us a Child Is Born.” Distribute the twenty card-stock copies of Resource Page 3 among the children, doubling up as necessary. Assign the following words or phrases for the children to write in large capital letters on their megaphones (one assignment per megaphone):

- Internet-connected device
- 20 card-stock copies of Resource Page 3
- Poster markers
- Smartphone, tablet, or other recording device (optional)



Record the children holding up their signs with the music and share the video in worship or on your church's website as appropriate and your church's policies permit.

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|------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ● FOR      | ● AND THE         | ● COUNSELOR       |
| ● UNTO     | ● GOVERNMENT      | ● THE MIGHTY GOD  |
| ● US       | ● SHALL BE UPON   | ● THE EVERLASTING |
| ● A CHILD  | ● HIS SHOULDERS   | ● FATHER          |
| ● IS BORN  | ● AND HIS NAME    | ● THE PRINCE      |
| ● A SON    | ● SHALL BE CALLED | ● OF PEACE        |
| ● IS GIVEN | ● WONDERFUL       |                   |

Have the children line up with their cards. Show the YouTube video “Handel—For unto Us a Child Is Born lyrics by Voice Types” ([bit.ly /FMForUntoUsLyrics](https://bit.ly/3FMForUntoUsLyrics), 3:59) for the children to use as prompts to hold up their signs since it shows the lyrics as they are sung. Note that the song is pretty fast and words are repeated quickly at times. This may be a challenge for the children. Encourage them to have a good time with this activity!

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- Two or three essential oils such as vanilla, cinnamon, rosemary, orange, or lavender
  - Small bowls or plates
  - Cotton balls
  - Ziplock plastic bags

## ALL ABOUT ANOINTING



Recall that the Isaiah 61 text that Jesus proclaims talks about anointing: “The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, / because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news. . . .” Explain that, historically, *anointing* has been an important practice, used in different faith traditions for everything from blessing leaders, to baptisms, to rituals around healing and burial. Comment that, more recently, essential oils have been used for wellness and relaxation, often in air diffusers or incense. Explain that the word *anoint* means “to smear or rub with oil as part of a religious ceremony.” Wonder together:

- ✦ Why would the bearer of good news be anointed?
- ✦ What do you think that means that Jesus says he is anointed?
- ✦ What might that mean that, as Christians, followers of Jesus, we are anointed to bring good news?

Tell the children that, as a reminder of being ones who can share the good news about Jesus, they will be anointed. Explain that this means that they will have a tiny bit of an essential oil (oil that carries the fragrance of what it is from) placed on the back of their hand or, if they choose, to have a cotton ball dipped in the oil and placed in a ziplock plastic bag.

Pour a small amount of each oil in a small bowl or onto a small plate. Invite the children to smell the oils. For any children who would like to be anointed on the back of their hand, dip your finger into the oil they choose and make a cross on the back of a child's hand, saying, “(Name), God loves you and calls you to go, tell the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.” For children who would prefer a cotton ball, dip it in the oil they choose, giving them the same blessing. Place the cotton ball in a plastic bag.



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

### SEARCHING FOR GOOD NEWS



Tell the children that worship is a time when the good news of Jesus is proclaimed. Wonder in what ways that may happen. Suggest, if necessary, that the good news can be proclaimed through prayer, song, Scripture, and things like announcements and special recognitions. Have the children form pairs or triads, making sure children who need assistance with reading are in groups with more confident readers. Distribute copies of recent worship bulletins and yellow, pink, and blue highlighters. Give the following directions:

- Highlight in yellow the places where good news is shared.
- Highlight in pink the places where concerns for the brokenhearted, oppressed, or imprisoned are lifted up.
- Highlight in blue each time the name *Jesus* appears.

Gather as a large group and invite the children to share their findings. Wonder if the children may remember any other instances from a worship service that may not be printed in the worship bulletin.

Suggest that the children bring highlighters to worship and make similar notations in the worship bulletin, paying attention to when good news is shared, when concerns are lifted up, and when Jesus' name is mentioned.

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- Copies of recent worship bulletins from one or more past worship services
  - Yellow, pink, and blue highlighter markers

### WHO NEEDS GOOD NEWS?



Remind the children that the passages from Isaiah 61:1–2a and Luke 4:16–21 talk about people who need this good news. Review the meaning of the following words, using the definitions provided if needed:

- the *oppressed*—people who are treated badly, discriminated against, or treated as less than by people who have more power
- the *brokenhearted*—people experiencing deep sadness, disappointment, or grief
- *captives*—people who are held against their will, such as a slave
- *prisoners*—people who are held in prison, usually as punishment for a crime, or people who feel confined or trapped by a situation

Brainstorm people or groups of people who might fit into these categories today. Write suggestions on a sheet of newsprint. Encourage the children to think beyond their own community or nation and consider people around the world, such as those in the news. Together imagine what form good news might take for them. Ideas might be equality, comfort, freedom, release and so forth. Add these suggestions to the newsprint.

Write the following statement on the newsprint:

The spirit of God sent Jesus to bring good news to \_\_\_\_\_  
by \_\_\_\_\_ and proclaiming God's love for the world!

Invite the children to create posters for the “Good News” area created in “Sharing Our Good News” (p. 8) using the statement above.

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- Newsprint
  - Large construction paper
  - Markers, crayons, colored pencils
  - Tape or pushpins



## FOLLOWING JESUS

### REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS

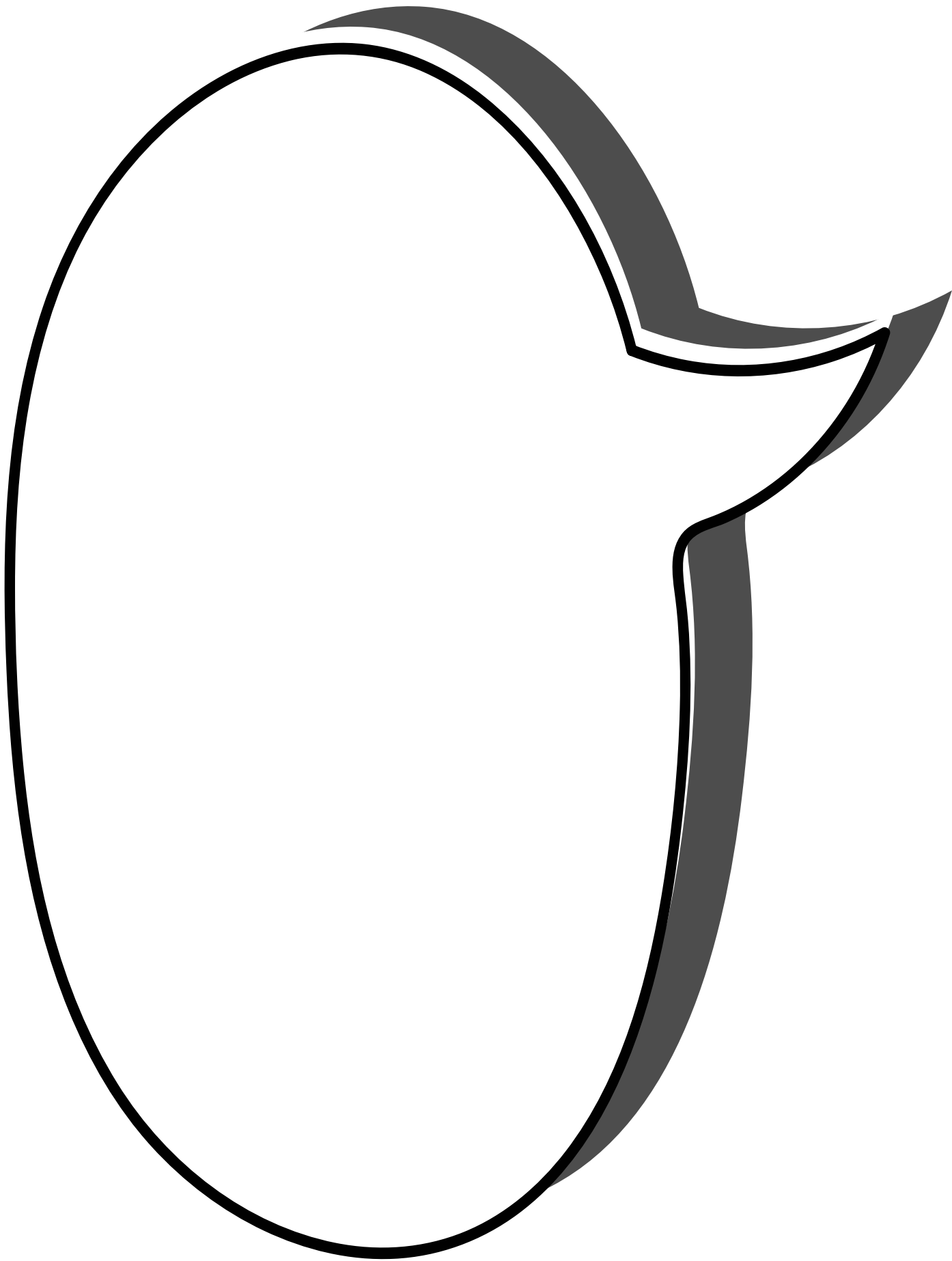
For each session of this unit, you will close by sharing a memory verse from the story. This will be done using the model of the traditional children's game Telephone. Gather the children in a circle and whisper the following verse to the child on your left:

For a child has been born for us . . . and he is named Wonderful  
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Invite that child to whisper it to the person on their left, and continue until it has made its way around the circle. Once the message has traveled around the circle, have the last child say what they heard. Compare that to the original. Invite the children to share words they noticed that got omitted or changed, and also the words that stayed.

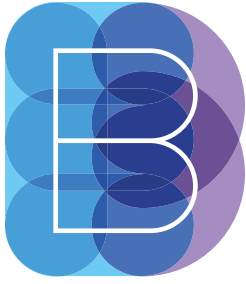
Recite the verse together or say it in phrases, inviting the children to repeat after you. Close with a brief prayer such as the one below or one of your own choosing:

Creator God, your love for us and the gift of your son, Jesus, is such good news! Help us to go and tell, sharing this news and your love with everyone we meet, this week and always. Amen.









## BIBLE STORY

**BASED ON ISAIAH 9:6; 61:1-2A; LUKE 4:16-21**

Long ago, seven hundred years before Jesus was born, a man named Isaiah was a prophet of God during a time when God's people were in exile, captured during war. He spoke words of hope to the people with this announcement:

A child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders,  
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.

In a time of loss and uncertainty, these words held promise for a time when someone young and vulnerable would reign the people with peace and wisdom.

A couple hundred of years later, when God's people returned to Israel from captivity and exile, another prophet, speaking in the way of the first Isaiah, had a message from God that would repair the injustices of the past. The future would be different. This prophet said:

God's spirit is with me and God has chosen me to bring you good news.  
This good news is for those who have been hurt or put down or taken  
advantage of.  
Those whose hearts and spirits have been broken are loved.  
Those held captive and imprisoned are set free.  
I am here to tell you that God's good news is for everyone.

Then several hundreds of years later, Jesus was born, a child, a son. His birth gave hope to many. He was wise and peaceful. One day, when he was beginning his ministry to tell people about God and God's love, Jesus preached in a synagogue in his hometown. He read the ancient words from Isaiah about repairing the injustices of the past and the future being different. He read the words that said:

God's spirit is with me and God has chosen me to bring you good news . . .

After he finished reading the verses, he told the people that he was the one who would bring this good news from God to the world.



