Prophets Foretold the Birth of Jesus Christ (Christmas)

Lesson

46

| **Purpose** | To strengthen each child's testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ's birth. |

| **Preparation** | 1. Prayerfully study:
| | • Isaiah 7:14—Isaiah prophesies that a pure young woman will give birth to God's son. |

1. Prayerfully study:
   - Isaiah 7:14—Isaiah prophesies that a pure young woman will give birth to God's son.
   - Matthew 1:18–23—Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled.
   - Isaiah 9:6—Isaiah prophesies that Jesus Christ will come as a baby; Jesus is described by several names.
   - Micah 5:2—Micah prophesies that Jesus will be born in Bethlehem.
   - Matthew 2:4–6—The scribes knew that Bethlehem was the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah.
   - 1 Nephi 11:18–21—Nephi prophesies that the Son of God will be born to a virgin.
   - Luke 1:26–31—A virgin named Mary will be the mother of Jesus Christ.
   - Alma 7:9–10—Alma prophesies that Jesus will be born to Mary.
   - Luke 2:4–7—Jesus is born.
   - Helaman 14:1–6—Samuel the Lamanite prophesies of the signs at Jesus' birth.
   - 3 Nephi 1:4–21—On the night of Jesus' birth, there was no darkness in America and a new star rose.
   - Matthew 2:2—A new star appeared in Israel.

2. Study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account (see "Preparing Your Lessons," p. vi, and "Teaching from the Scriptures," p. vii). Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will best help the children achieve the purpose of the lesson.

3. Materials needed:
   a. A Bible and a Book of Mormon for each child.
   b. The chart "Prophets Foretold the Birth of Jesus Christ" (at the end of the lesson).
   c. Simple props, such as scarves and a doll, for a Christmas nativity scene (see the attention activity).
   d. Pictures 6-49, Isaiah Writes of Christ's Birth (Gospel Art Picture Kit 113; 62339), and 6-50, The Birth of Jesus (Gospel Art Picture Kit 200; 62116).

Suggested Lesson Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Choose several children to make a Christmas nativity scene using simple props. You should have someone represent Mary and Joseph and have a doll to represent the baby Jesus. Other children could be angels, shepherds, and wise men. Allow the class members to tell the things they remember about Jesus Christ's birth. Ask them how they know about this important event. Explain that even

though it happened nearly 2,000 years ago, we have the account of Jesus' birth recorded in the scriptures.

Tell the children that Joseph and Mary knew about this event before it happened. From the time of Adam, Heavenly Father promised through prophets to send his Son to be the Savior of the world. Many prophets prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ. They knew Heavenly Father would keep his promise, and they looked forward anxiously for the Savior to be born.

Scripture Account   Using the scriptures listed in the "Preparation" section, teach the prophecies of Jesus Christ's birth and how they were fulfilled. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see "Teaching from the Scriptures," p. vii.) Display the chart located at the end of the lesson, which depicts the prophets who foretold the Savior's birth. Show the pictures at appropriate times.

Discussion and Application Questions   Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading and discussing the scriptures with the children in class will help them gain personal insights.

- Who did Isaiah prophesy would be the mother of Jesus Christ? (Isaiah 7:14. Explain that *virgin* means a pure, unmarried woman. Note that Isaiah lived about 740 B.C., which means before the birth of Christ.) To whom was the angel Gabriel sent to announce the news that Jesus was about to be born and to testify of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy? (Luke 1:26–31; Matthew 1:18–23.)

- How did Isaiah say Jesus would come? (Isaiah 9:6; as a baby.) What other names did Isaiah use to describe Christ? What do these names tell us about Jesus Christ? (See enrichment activity 6.)

- Where was Jesus to be born? (Micah 5:2.) When King Herod asked the priests and scribes where Jesus would be born, how did they know it would be in Bethlehem? (Matthew 2:4–6; explain that these men had read the prophecies in the scriptures.)

- Whom did Nephi see in a vision? (1 Nephi 11:18–21; point out that Nephi lived about 600 B.C.) Help the children understand that the Nephites had the brass plates, which contained many of the ancient prophecies. But they also had their own prophets who foretold the birth of Jesus Christ. Whom did Alma prophesy would be the mother of the Son of God? (Alma 7:9–10; point out that Alma lived about 80 B.C.)

- What signs did Samuel the Lamanite prophesy would come at the birth of Jesus? (Helaman 14:2–5; these prophecies occurred five or six years before the birth of Jesus Christ.) What did the people who did not believe Samuel's prophecies do? (3 Nephi 1:6, 9.) When Nephi prayed in behalf of the righteous people, what comfort was he given? (3 Nephi 1:11–13.) How were Samuel's prophecies fulfilled? (3 Nephi 1:15, 19, 21.) How do we know a new star appeared in Israel also? (Matthew 2:1–2.)

Enrichment Activities   You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Display the chart located at the end of the lesson, which shows the ancient prophets Isaiah, Micah, Nephi, Alma, and Samuel the Lamanite. The children could take turns reading the prophecies that foretold the birth of Jesus Christ.

2. Suggest that in preparation for Christmas the class members individually or with their families read the following scriptures, which prophesy of Jesus Christ's birth:

> Micah 5:2
> Isaiah 7:14
> Isaiah 9:6–7
> Alma 7:9–10
> Helaman 14:1–6
> 1 Nephi 11:18–21

The children could write these references on a note card to take home, or you could prepare a handout with the references for each child.

3. List key words on the chalkboard (or show pictures illustrating these items) from prophecies of Christ's birth such as *Bethlehem, star, Mary,* and so on. Have the children listen for these words as you read or retell the Christmas story from Luke 1:26–38 and 2:1–19. Discuss with the children the feelings Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds might have had as they participated in the fulfillment of the prophecies of Christ's birth.

4. Help the children understand and memorize the ninth article of faith. During the discussion point out that we are living in a time when prophecies and revelations are being fulfilled, and invite the children to name some of these prophecies. Share your feelings about being part of a church with continuing revelation and being a witness to the fulfillment of prophecies in your own lifetime.

5. Discuss how the Savior's birth, life, and Atonement are the greatest gifts we will ever receive. What gift can we give Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ at this special season of the year? Challenge the children to give the gift of love to others. You may want to tell the following story as an example of how one young boy gave his father a gift of love.

> A few days before Christmas, when Rob was fifteen years old, he overheard his father say to his mother, "Mary, I hate to call Rob to milk the cows in the mornings. He's growing so fast and he needs his sleep. . . . I wish I could manage alone."
>
> These simple words made Rob fully realize something for the first time: his father loved him!
>
> The family was poor. Rob had bought his father an inexpensive tie, but as he lay thinking on the night before Christmas, it didn't seem enough. With growing excitement he decided on a better gift. He would get up early and milk the cows before his father got up. He laughed to himself in anticipation of his father's surprise.
>
> The task went more easily than he had ever known it to go before. Milking for once was not a chore. It was something else—a gift to his father, who loved him.
>
> His task finished, Rob returned to his bed just moments before his father called him. He knew his father would go to the barn ahead of him to get started and in only a few minutes would discover the two big cans standing in the milk-house, filled. Breathlessly, Rob waited for his return.

After what seemed an eternity, Rob heard his bedroom door open, heard his father laughing, a "sobbing sort of laugh," and heard his father say, "Thought you'd fool me, did you?"

"It's for Christmas, Dad!" In the morning darkness, he found his father and clutched him in a great hug. Rob's heart was "bursting with love."

"Son, I thank you," his father said. "Nobody ever did a nicer thing. . . . The best Christmas gift I ever had, and I'll remember it, son, every year on Christmas morning, so long as I live." (Adapted from Pearl S. Buck, "Christmas Day in the Morning," in *Colliers,* 23 Dec. 1955, pp. 10–11.)

6. If possible, bring a recording of "For unto Us a Child Is Born" from Handel's *Messiah.* After you have listened to the music, you might have the children compare the words of the song with the prophecies of Isaiah.

7. Sing or read the words to "When He Comes Again" (*Children's Songbook,* p. 82), "Samuel Tells of the Baby Jesus" (*Children's Songbook,* p. 36), or "Away in a Manger" (*Children's Songbook,* p. 42).

Conclusion

Testimony	Share your feelings about the divinity of Christ's birth and your gratitude for this wonderful gift that Heavenly Father has given to each of us.
Suggested Family Sharing	Encourage the children to share with their families a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with their families the "Suggested Home Reading."
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 at home as a review of this lesson.
	Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

Prophets Foretold the Birth of Christ
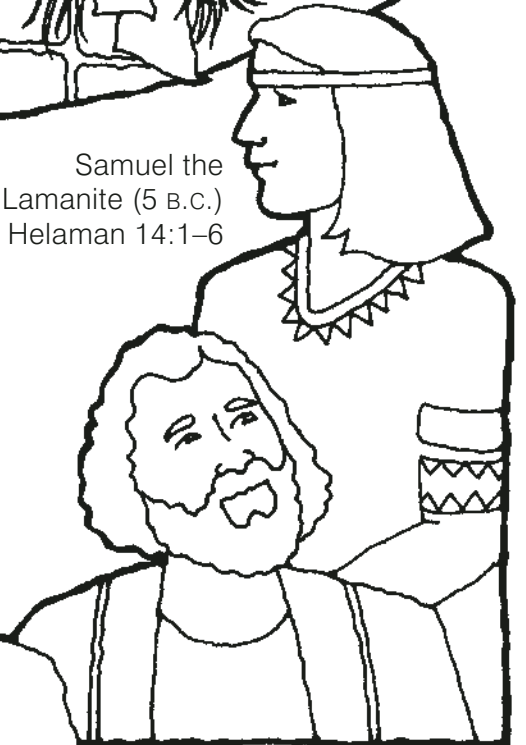

Isaiah (740 B.C.)
Isaiah 7:14; 9:6

Samuel the
Lamanite (5 B.C.)
Helaman 14:1–6

Micah (720 B.C.)
Micah 5:2

Alma (80 B.C.)
Alma 7:9–10

Nephi (600 B.C.)
1 Nephi 11:18–21