

The Servant Songs

Isaiah 53:5

QUESTIONS

AGES 3–5

1. What comforting words did God tell His people through Isaiah? *"Comfort, comfort my people."*
2. What did Isaiah say a coming King and Teacher would do? *Teach people to follow God and reign as King.*
3. What happened to the Servant that Isaiah wrote about? *He was hurt (pierced) because of our sins.*
4. Why did the Servant let Himself be hurt? *So that we could be forgiven and healed.*

AGES 6–8

1. Why couldn't the exiles trust in idols to save them? *Idols are made by human hands and are completely powerless—they can't see, hear, speak, or save anyone.*
2. What comforting promises did Isaiah give to God's people before they were even taken captive to Babylon? *That their punishment would end, that God's promises would still be fulfilled, and that the LORD was still their God, Shepherd, and Redeemer.*
3. Who is the "Servant" that Isaiah describes in the Servant Songs? *A specially chosen person sent by God—Jesus—who would suffer for others and save them from their sins.*
4. According to Isaiah 53, what happened to the Servant, and how did it help us? *He was "pierced for our transgressions," and "with his wounds we are healed." He took our punishment on Himself so that we could be forgiven.*

AGES 9–11

1. What are the four Servant Songs, and what do they show us about the Messiah? *A divinely chosen, Spirit-empowered Servant who brings justice and light (Isaiah 42); One whose ministry will restore Israel and be a light to the nations (Isaiah 49); One who obediently endures abuse in the LORD's service (Isaiah 50); and One who suffers and dies as a substitute for sinners (Isaiah 52–53).*
2. What specific language in Isaiah 53 shows that the Servant's suffering was a substitutionary sacrifice for sin? *Phrases like "crushed for our iniquities," "cut off...stricken for the transgression," and "bore the sin of many" show that He suffered and died in the place of sinners, not for anything He had done.*

3. What are the three sections of Isaiah's "Book of Consolation" (Isaiah 40–66), and what marks the division between them? *Historical deliverance from Babylon (Isaiah 40–48), salvation from sin through the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 49–57), and future restoration (Isaiah 58–66). Each section ends with the refrain, "There is no peace, says the LORD, for the wicked."*
4. How does Isaiah's promise of "a king" who would "reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 32:1) connect to God's covenant with David, and when will it be completely fulfilled? *It fulfills God's covenant promise to David of a son who would reign forever (2 Sam 7); it will be fully and finally accomplished when Jesus Christ reigns at His second coming.*

INTRODUCE

AGES 3–5

COMFORT, COMFORT

Bring a sad-looking stuffed animal or puppet. Let the children take turns hugging it and saying something kind to comfort it. Explain that God's people were sad because of their sin and troubles, and God sent a message through Isaiah: "Comfort, comfort my people." God cared about His people and wanted to comfort them—and He still comforts us today.

WHO MADE THAT?

Show the children a small homemade "idol"—a figure made of clay, sticks, or paper. Ask it to stand up, talk, or help you. Of course, nothing will happen. Explain that some of God's people were tempted to trust in idols like this instead of trusting the real, living God, but idols can't hear, can't see, and can't help anyone at all.

AGES 6–8

FALSE GODS CAN'T HELP

Set a small statue or toy figure on the table and ask for a volunteer to request its "help" with something simple, like handing them a book. When nothing happens, discuss why. Explain that Isaiah mocked the foolishness of trusting idols people made with their own hands (Isa 44:9–20). Our God is the true God who can hear and act, which is infinitely better than a lifeless statue.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT RIDDLE

Give the children a few mystery clues without naming who they're about: "He was despised and rejected...He was wounded for what other people did wrong...He didn't fight back, like a lamb being led away quietly." Let them guess who this describes. Reveal that these are words the prophet Isaiah wrote about a Servant of the LORD—hundreds of years before Jesus was even born.

AGES 9–11

WRITTEN BEFORE IT HAPPENED

Ask the class: how impressive would it be if someone accurately predicted very specific details about a person's life, death, and burial 700 years before that person was born? Explain that this is exactly what Isaiah 53 does. Isaiah wrote centuries before about a Servant who would be pierced, crushed, and buried with the rich, which matches Jesus' crucifixion and burial in striking detail.

GUILTY, BUT SOMEONE ELSE PAID

Describe a scenario: someone owes a huge fine for something they did wrong, but a friend who did nothing wrong steps in and pays the entire fine in their place. Ask the class how that would feel. Explain that Isaiah 53:6 says, "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all"—the innocent Servant took the punishment that guilty sinners deserved, in their place.

ILLUSTRATE

AGES 3–5

THE SERVANT WHO WAS HURT TO HEAL US

On butcher paper, draw a simple figure of the Servant with a few small "ouch" marks (representing His wounds), and next to Him draw children who are smiling and well. As you tell the lesson, explain simply that the Servant was hurt so that we could be healed and made right with God—He took our injuries (our sin) so we wouldn't have to.

COMFORT AND THANK JESUS

This week, practice being a "comforter" like God asked His people to be and say something kind to someone sad. Also thank Jesus in a simple prayer for taking away our sin so we can be healed.

AGES 6–8

MATCH THE PROPHECY

Make simple two-part matching cards: one set with short phrases from Isaiah 53 ("pierced," "wounded," "silent like a lamb," "buried with the rich") and another set with matching pictures or short descriptions of Jesus' life ("nailed to the cross," "beaten by soldiers," "did not argue at His trial," "buried in a rich man's tomb"). Let the children match them up. Explain that this prophecy, written hundreds of years earlier, described Jesus so exactly because God knew exactly what would happen.

TRUSTING GOD AND THANKING JESUS

Challenge the children to notice this week if they're tempted to trust in something that can't really help them (like luck, money, or popularity) instead of trusting God, who really can save and help. Encourage them to thank Jesus specifically for taking the punishment for their sin, as the Suffering Servant.

PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT CHART

On the board, make a two-column chart. In the left column, write phrases from Isaiah 53: "despised and rejected" (v3), "pierced for our transgressions" (v5a), "like a lamb...so he opened not his mouth" (v7), "with the rich in his death" (v9). In the right column, have the class find and write the matching New Testament event (e.g., Jesus rejected by His own people, nailed to the cross, silent before Pilate and the council, buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb). Discuss how remarkably exact this fulfillment is, and that it proves the reliability of God's word.

READ AND SHARE JESUS' SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE

Ask the students to consider: have they personally trusted in the Servant's substitutionary sacrifice for their own sin, or are they still trying to make themselves right with God on their own? Challenge them to read Isaiah 53 this week and share with a friend or family member how this detailed, centuries-old prophecy points directly to Jesus.