

THE CASE OF THE PROMISED BABY

Bible Basis: Luke 2:1–20 (the birth of Jesus)

Memory Verse: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

Bible Point: Throughout the Old Testament, or the first part of the Bible, God promised his people that he would send someone to save them. They called this man the Messiah. When Jesus came, he was that Messiah. I can believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior promised in the Old Testament.

Related Sources: *The Case for Christ*, chapter 10: “The Fingerprint Evidence”; *The Case for Christ for Kids*, chapter 3: “Messiah: Did Jesus Fit the Picture?”

MASTER SUPPLIES LIST

- ☐ Letter-sized manila envelope
- ☐ Thick marker
- ☐ Bibles (one per student)
- ☐ Case Letter (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)
- ☐ Prophecy Puzzle Cards (one set per student or pair of students; see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)
- ☐ Large magnifying glass
- ☐ Three posters (Prophecy Poster, Messiah Poster, Evidence Poster)
 - For the Prophecy Poster, write the following on a piece of poster board with a thick marker:

Definition of prophecy: A prophecy is a God-inspired prediction of the future. Only God can make prophecies through people he chooses.

- For the Messiah Poster, write the following:

Definition of Messiah: The promised and expected deliverer of God's people.

- For the Evidence Poster, write **EVIDENCE** across the top of the poster board; then list the numbers 1–6 down the side of the poster board.

- ❑ Small spiral-bound notebooks and pens
- ❑ Family Page (one per student, see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)

SIMPLIFY / ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

Make three posters (Clues Poster, Messiah Poster, Proof Poster) to replace the posters for grades 4–6:

- ❑ For the Clues Poster, write the following on a piece of poster board with a thick marker:

What is a clue? A clue is a secret or a special message that God told to his people about the future.

- ❑ For the Messiah Poster, write the following:

What is a Messiah? A Messiah is someone God promised to send to save his people.

- ❑ For the Proof Poster, write **PROOF** across the top of the poster board; then list the numbers 1–6 down the side of the poster board.

Note: Each week you will add another piece of evidence. Keep these posters, as you will use them in future lessons. You can always use media equipment (projector, screen, and/or document camera) instead of making posters.

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

The Optional Supplies you need depend on the Investigation option you choose in **Step 3: Investigate the Evidence**.

- ❑ Pencils and Code Worksheets (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)
- ❑ Blue card stock; wide wooden craft sticks; fine-point markers; glue; scissors;

felt sheets in light blue, white, and skin-tone colors; shredded paper or short pieces of hay

- ☐ Music player and selected songs

STEP 1: AGENTS REPORT TO HEADQUARTERS

Supplies: Letter-sized manila envelope, marker, Case Letter (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson), Prophecy Puzzle Cards (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)

PREPARATION

- ☐ **Write CONFIDENTIAL** on the envelope.
- ☐ **Photocopy** or print the Case Letter and put it inside the envelope.
- ☐ **Photocopy** the Prophecy Puzzle Cards onto card stock (or regular paper). Cut them out and put them into the manila envelope.
- ☐ **Recruit** a messenger to deliver the *CONFIDENTIAL* envelope to your class. Give the messenger these instructions: “Come into the classroom when I am finishing the discussion and interrupt me by saying, ‘This is supposed to be delivered to your class.’ Then hand me the envelope and quickly walk out.”

SIMPLIFY | ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

- ☐ **Write TOP SECRET** (instead of **CONFIDENTIAL**) on the envelope.
- ☐ **Read** the Case Letter for grades 1–3 (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson).
- ☐ In place of the Prophecy Puzzle Cards, **photocopy** the Proof Puzzle Cards for grades 1–3 (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson) onto card stock (or regular paper). **Cut** them out and put them into the manila envelope.

INTRODUCTION

- **Welcome** the students and make announcements.
- **Ask:** What are your favorite detective books or movies in which people crack cases and solve mysteries? (*Nancy Drew, Encyclopedia Brown, Percy Jackson, Magic Tree House*)
- **Cue** the messenger to deliver the envelope marked *CONFIDENTIAL* or *TOP SECRET*.
- **Take** the envelope and act as though it's distracting you from what you are saying.
- **Open** the Case Letter inside the envelope. Read it out loud to the class.
- **Say:** Okay! It's time for us to think like detectives. Let's figure this out by doing a Bible Background Check.

STEP 2: BIBLE BACKGROUND CHECK

Supplies: Prophecy Puzzle Cards (1 set per student or per pair of students, in your manila envelope), Bibles, Prophecy Poster, Messiah Poster, Evidence Poster, thick marker, large magnifying glass

THE LESSON

- **Say:** Our mission for the day is to figure out who Jesus is! This is going to be great! Is everyone ready to use their detective skills? Let's begin by figuring out what some of the words in our directions mean. As I remember, there are two difficult words in there. First, this letter calls Jesus the Messiah.
- **Show** the Messiah Poster.
- **Ask:** What is a messiah? (*Take responses.*) Well, those are good answers. *Messiah* means "savior." When the Bible uses the word *Messiah*, it specifically refers to someone who is the promised and expected deliverer or savior.
- **Ask:** What does this person deliver or save people from? An army? A disease? (*Take responses.*) In some cases, yes.
- **Say:** The Jewish people were expecting a king to come and lead them to victory over their enemies. But God had a MUCH bigger purpose for sending a savior. This savior would deliver people from sin—from its power and its punishment! Winning a war is one thing, but stopping people from ever fighting again is God's plan to save us from sin.
- **Ask:** What is sin? Who has an idea? (*Take responses.*) With a show of hands, how many of you have ever done anything wrong?

- **Say:** Well, the Bible tells us that everything we do, think, or say wrong is called sin. Every time we disobey God, we are sinning. Since God is holy and good, sinful people cannot be with him. That poses a BIG problem! We are separated from God and need to be delivered or saved from our sin! This is where the Messiah comes in!
- **Ask:** Who remembers what Messiah means? (*Take responses.*)
- **Say:** God promised to send someone, the Messiah, to save us. He promised this thousands of years ago, and we can read about his promises in the Old Testament books of the Bible. The people who lived during that time were always on the lookout for this person who would save them!
- **Hold Up** the magnifying glass as if you are looking for clues around the room.
- **Say:** They were looking for clues as to who this Messiah would be. Where do you think they would find the clues? (*Hold up a Bible.*) Yes, God gave people clues in the promises about the Messiah, and these are found in the Bible. These special clues actually have a name. They are called prophecies. (*Refer to the Prophecy Poster.*) The word *prophecy* is the other big word I wanted to explain to you from our letter of direction. A prophecy is a promise God makes about the future. Only God can make prophecies because he is God and he knows everything! God used people such as Isaiah and Micah to be his prophets to tell others his words—his messages and his promises. These men wrote down God’s words in books that are now part of the Bible. Now we can all read the prophecies, even *you*!
- **Ask:** So were God’s prophecies about the Messiah true? Did they really happen? What do you think? (*Take responses.*)
- **Ask:** Let’s take a look at just the true story about the birth of Jesus. Listen carefully as I read it. When I am done, I’m going to give you some of those prophecies from the Old Testament and see if they match up to the truth of history!

BIBLE HISTORY

- **Read** Luke 2:1–20. You can also have students find Luke 2:1–20 and follow along or mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a student volunteer(s) can read the Scripture passage.
- **Say:** Now that we know the story, let’s do the puzzle activity from our envelope to see if the Old Testament prophecies match with the birth and life of Jesus.

Tip: If you are asked what *virgin* means, you can simply state that it usually refers to a young, unmarried woman.

SIMPLIFY | ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

Read the Bible history from an illustrated children's Bible.

ACTIVITY: PROPHECY PUZZLE CARDS

- **Split** the class into small groups of two to four students each. If you don't have enough students to split into groups, then have them do the Prophecy Puzzle Cards activity individually.
- **Instruct** each group or student to get a puzzle piece, look up the verse, and write it down on the puzzle piece.
- **Say:** You need to find the group or person with a matching puzzle piece and read them together. When everyone is done, I am going to call the matching sets to come up front one at a time and report their findings.
- **Give** the students approximately 5–10 minutes to complete the activity.
- **Instruct** the Old Testament group to read their card and the New Testament group to read theirs.
- **Ask** each group: Was the prophecy right? (Yes) Was Jesus the answer to this prophecy? (Yes)

SIMPLIFY | ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

- **Use** the Proof Puzzle Cards.
- **Instruct** students to find the puzzle piece that matches their own.
- **You** or an older helper can read and explain the verses referenced on their puzzle pieces.

BIBLE VERSE

- **Say:** This leads us to this week's Bible verse, which is Luke 2:11: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord."
- **Repeat** the verse together a few times.

- **Say:** The word *Christ* is another word meaning “Messiah.” This week, work to memorize this verse as a reminder that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. He was the one God’s people had been waiting for!

CLOSING

- **Say:** We see that Jesus fulfilled five of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. It’s amazing that just one person could fulfill all five of these prophecies. You might say, “Well, it could all be a big coincidence.” But listen to this—Jesus actually fulfills at least 60 Old Testament prophecies. That makes it a lot less likely that this is a coincidence, doesn’t it? In fact, a science professor named Dr. Peter Stoner used lots of fancy math, and he figured out the chances of one person fulfilling just *eight* of the prophecies was one in a hundred million billion (*The Case for Christ for Kids*, p. 41). I think this proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that all those Old Testament prophecies point to Jesus.
- **Say:** So, we have our first piece of evidence. The Old Testament prophecies fit Jesus. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies about the Savior who was coming.
- **Write** the first piece of evidence on your Evidence Poster. At number one, write: *Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies.*

STEP 3: INVESTIGATE THE EVIDENCE

Leaders **CHOOSE** at least one of the following Investigations:

INVESTIGATION 1: CODE WORKSHEETS

Supplies: Pencils and Code Worksheets (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)
Students crack the code to reveal the memory verse.

SIMPLIFY | ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

Supplies: Pencils and Code Worksheets (see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)

- **Say:** Use the code provided to discover the missing words in the lesson memory verse. (Help students as necessary.)

INVESTIGATION 2: PREDICTION GAME

The Prediction Game not only reinforces the key point of this lesson, but it also helps the students in your class get to know one another.

- **Split** the students into pairs. Make it clear that you expect them to pair up with someone they don't know very well. (You may need to redo some of the pairs, as good friends will try to stay together.)
- **Say:** This game will show us how difficult it really is to predict something about someone else. I will read a question, such as, "What is your partner's favorite fruit?" You each need to make a prediction—tell each other what you think the other person's answer will be. Then, tell each other if your predictions were correct and what the actual answer is.
- **Read** the following questions, leaving time for the pairs to interact: What is your partner's favorite cereal? What is your partner's favorite book? What is your partner's birthday? How many siblings does your partner have, and what are their ages? What is your partner's favorite movie? What toppings does your partner like on pizza? What does your partner want to be when he or she grows up?
- **Say:** After seeing how difficult it is to predict someone else's answers to simple questions, you can see how amazing it is that the Old Testament prophets were so accurate.

Tip: If you have extra time, switch partners and play again, making up your own questions.

INVESTIGATION 3: PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Supplies: Music player and selected songs

- **Sing** a few Christmas carols (even if it's not the Christmas season), such as "Silent Night" or "Away in a Manger."
- **Remind** the students that these carols are meaningful because Jesus' birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies.

SIMPLIFY / ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

INVESTIGATION 4: MANGER CRAFT

Supplies: Blue card stock; wide wooden craft sticks; fine-point markers; glue; scissors; felt sheets in light blue, white, and skin-tone colors; shredded paper or short pieces of hay

Preparation: Make an example of this craft.

- **Instruct** students to use the supplies to create manger scenes. Cross the craft sticks and glue them to the paper to create a manger. Cut a felt circle for the baby's head and draw a face on it. Cut a felt oval for the baby's body. (Optional to include Mary and Joseph as well.) Glue the hay on top of the manger as bedding and glue the baby on the bedding. Have students write the memory verse on the card stock or write it for younger students.
- **Say:** Hang up this manger craft in your room this week, and when you look at it, remember how amazing it is that this little baby fulfilled at least 60 Old Testament prophecies.

Tip: For the youngest students, have the felt cut out and the faces drawn beforehand. Allow older students to be creative and do their own cutting.

STEP 4: AGENT DEBRIEF

ACTIVITY: EVIDENCE NOTEBOOKS

Supplies: Small spiral-bound notebooks and pens, Family Page (one per student, see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)

Each student will create an Evidence Notebook. Students will leave these notebooks in the classroom. Each week, they will write the date and the day's new piece of evidence.

- **Hand Out** a notebook and pen to each student. Have them write *Evidence in the Case for Christ* on the front. Also on the front, they can write their Agent Code Name, which is the word *Agent*, plus the four digits of their birthday month and day. For example, if a student's birthday is January 9, the Agent Code Name would be "Agent 0109"; if a student's birthday is November 24, the Agent Code Name would be "Agent 1124."
- **Say:** Today's evidence is "Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies."
- **Instruct** students to write today's date and evidence.

- **Give** students time to write (or draw) more about what they learned about prophecies that Jesus fulfilled.
- **Collect** the notebooks and pens when they are finished so you can use them again next week.

SIMPLIFY / ADAPTATIONS FOR GRADES 1 – 3

ACTIVITY: PROOF PADS

Supplies: Small spiral-bound notebooks/pads and pencils, crayons, and/or markers; Family Page (one per student, see **Lesson 1 Resources** at the end of this lesson)

Each student will create a Proof Pad. Students will leave these pads in the classroom. Each week, they will write the date and write or draw the day's new piece of proof.

- **Hand Out** a notebook/pad and pencil to each student with the words *Case for Christ Proof Pads* on the front. On the front, have them or help them write their names.
- **Say:** Today's proof is "The secrets and clues about Jesus came true when he was born."
- **Instruct** students to write today's date and write or draw the day's proof. For example, they might draw a picture of a star, a manger, or baby Jesus.
- **Give** students time to write or draw more about what they learned about words that came true about Jesus.
- **Collect** the Proof Pads and pens when they are finished so you can use them again next week.

CLOSING

- **Gather** the students back together.
- **Review** this week's memory verse and piece of evidence.
- **Take** prayer requests and spend time with students praying for one another.
- **Give** a Family Page to each student to take home.

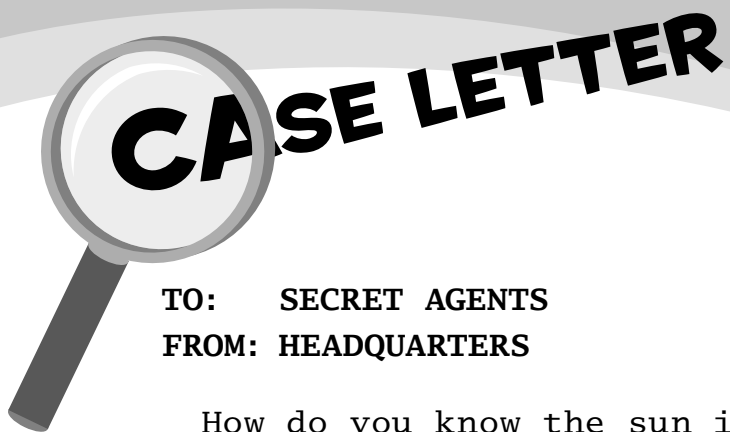
CASE LETTER

TO: SECRET AGENTS
FROM: HEADQUARTERS

We live in a world where many people don't believe in God. Many people don't believe in Jesus. We are surrounded by so many different religions and philosophies. How do we know for sure that Jesus is the Son of God? The Messiah? The Christ? The Promised One who came to save us? Over the next six weeks, you are going to look at the evidence for yourselves. You are going to study the man Jesus—eyewitness accounts of him, prophecies about him, miracles he performed, and his resurrection. Now, it's time for you to get into detective mode, because you have been assigned to THE CASE FOR CHRIST.

Today, you will study prophecy. Could Old Testament prophets really predict the future? Is it possible that they knew baby Jesus would be born? Could they really pinpoint tiny details, like the name of the town where he would be born? Use the puzzle pieces in this envelope to investigate the truth.





TO: SECRET AGENTS
FROM: HEADQUARTERS

How do you know the sun is real? You can see it and feel it, right? Today, many people don't believe in things that they can't see, taste, touch, feel, or hear. And since we can't see God, people have trouble believing in him. Many people don't believe in God's Son, Jesus. How do we know for sure that Jesus is the Son of God—that he is the one God sent to earth to save us?

Over the next six weeks, we are going to look at the *proof*—the things you can see, taste, touch, feel, and hear—that Jesus is God's Son. You will hear from people who hung out with him when he was on earth over two thousand years ago! You will study secrets people told about him before he was born that actually came true. You will read about amazing stories—or miracles—that Jesus did. But most of all, you will learn about how much Jesus loves each and every person on earth, including you.

Now, it's time for you to get into detective or spy mode, because you have been assigned to THE CASE FOR CHRIST.

Today, you will study clues and secrets. Could people really know stuff about the future because God told them? Is it possible that they knew where and how baby Jesus would be born? We'll use the puzzle pieces in this envelope to find out the truth.



PROPHECY PUZZLE CARDS

PAIR 1: BIRTHPLACE

OLD TESTAMENT: MICAH 5:2



NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 2:1



PAIR 2: FAMILY

OLD TESTAMENT: JEREMIAH 23:5



NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 1:1



PAIR 3: BIRTH CONDITIONS

OLD TESTAMENT: ISAIAH 7:14

NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 1:22-23

PAIR 4: BLOOD MONEY

OLD TESTAMENT: ZECHARIAH 11:12

NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 26:15

PAIR 5: GAMBLING

OLD TESTAMENT: PSALM 22:18

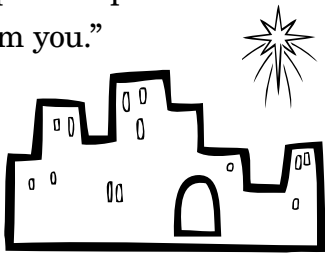
NEW TESTAMENT: MATTHEW 27:35

PROOF PUZZLE CARDS

PAIR 1: WHERE WAS JESUS BORN?

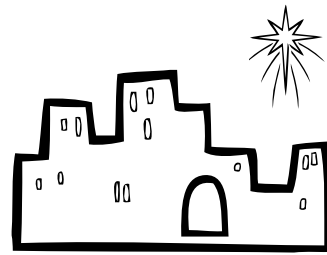
OLD TESTAMENT:

God said, "Bethlehem, you might not be a big town, but a very important person will come from you."



NEW TESTAMENT:

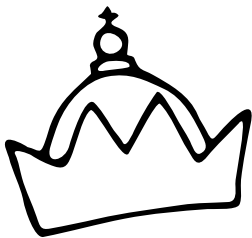
Jesus was born in Bethlehem!



PAIR 2: WHO IS JESUS' FAMILY?

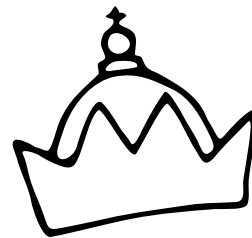
OLD TESTAMENT:

God said, "The Messiah will be a part of David's family and he will be a wise king."



NEW TESTAMENT:

Jesus is born into David's *and* Abraham's family!



PAIR 3: WHAT WAS IT LIKE WHEN JESUS WAS BORN?

OLD TESTAMENT:

God will make a miracle! A young, unmarried woman will have a baby and he will be called "God with Us."



NEW TESTAMENT:

Mary, a young, unmarried woman gives birth to Jesus!



PAIR 4: JESUS IS SOLD TO BE KILLED

OLD TESTAMENT:

The Savior will be sold and killed for 30 coins.



NEW TESTAMENT:

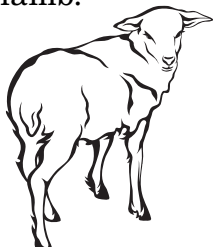
Judas, one of Jesus' friends, got 30 coins for handing Jesus over to people who wanted to kill him.



PAIR 5: SILENT AS A LAMB

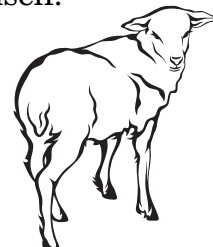
OLD TESTAMENT:

God said, "When the Savior dies for the world, he will be silent as a lamb."



NEW TESTAMENT:

When Jesus died on the cross, he never opened his mouth to stand up for himself.



INVESTIGATION 1 CODE WORKSHEET

Use the code to figure out what the message says.

G l w z b r m g s v

g l d m l u W z e r w z

h z e r l i s z h y v v m

y l i m g l b l f. S v

r h X s i r h g g s v

O l i w.

(2 : 1 1)

(O f p v 2 : 1 1)

KEY

A	=	Z
B	=	Y
C	=	X
D	=	W
E	=	V
F	=	U
G	=	T
H	=	S
I	=	R
J	=	Q
K	=	P
L	=	O
M	=	N
N	=	M
O	=	L
P	=	K
Q	=	J
R	=	I
S	=	H
T	=	G
U	=	F
V	=	E
W	=	D
X	=	C
Y	=	B
Z	=	A

INVESTIGATION 1 CODE WORKSHEET

Today in the town of
David a □ ☆ ▽ △ ✿ ☾ has
been born to you. He
is □ ◇ ☾ △ ▱ ⬠ the ⬡ ✿ ☾ ○.
(Luke 2:11)

KEY



= A



= C



= D



= H



= I



= L



= O



= R



= S



= T



= V

FAMILY PAGE

LESSON 1: THE CASE OF THE PROMISED BABY

Bible Basis: Luke 2:1–20 (the birth of Jesus)

Memory Verse: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

Bible Point: Throughout the Old Testament, or the first part of the Bible, God promised his people that he would send someone to save them. They called this man the Messiah. When Jesus came, he was that Messiah. I can believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior promised in the Old Testament.

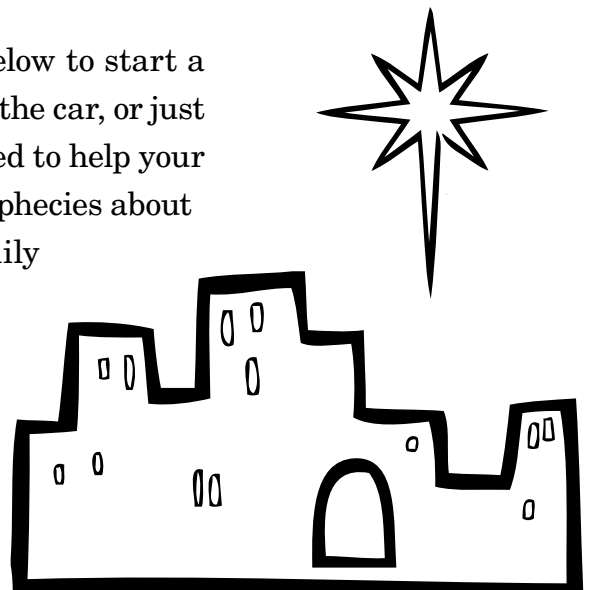
Related Sources: *The Case for Christ*, chapter 10: “The Fingerprint Evidence”; *The Case for Christ for Kids*, chapter 3: “Messiah: Did Jesus Fit the Picture?”

HOW TO USE THIS PAGE

This week, you can use the *Table Talk* questions below to start a discussion around the dinner table, while driving in the car, or just about anywhere. The *Living Faith* activity is designed to help your child know that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. The *Extra Mile* idea will help your family celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Messiah.

TABLE TALK

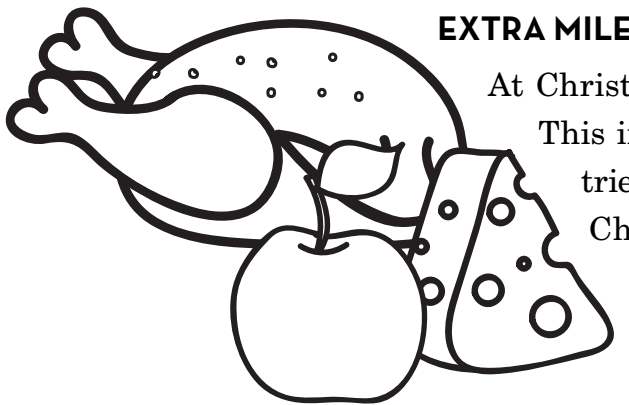
1. What does the word *Christ* mean? (*Christ* means “Messiah,” the promised and expected deliverer of the Jewish people.)



2. You learned that Jesus just might be the Christ—the Messiah. What evidence did you find this week that Jesus might be the Christ? (His birth fulfills Old Testament prophecies—or clues—given before Jesus came.)
3. What is a prophecy? (It is a God-inspired prediction about the future. Only God can give prophecies through people he chooses.)
4. What do we call the time of year when we celebrate Jesus' birth? (Christmas)
5. What are some of your favorite things about our family's Christmas celebration?

LIVING FAITH

- Purchase or borrow a puzzle your family has never seen before. Hide the puzzle box so that no one but you has any idea of what the full picture looks like. Spend an evening as a family working to put the puzzle together. As you put more and more pieces into place, your family will be able to figure out the puzzle picture.
- When you are done, ask the following question: “When you first saw the pieces, what did you think the puzzle would turn out to be?” Give each of your family members an opportunity to respond.
- Say: “All the different prophecies in the Old Testament are like these individual puzzle pieces. Separately, they don't make much sense. But when you put all the pieces together, you get a clear picture of Jesus as the Messiah.”



EXTRA MILE

At Christmastime, we often celebrate by giving gifts. This includes giving to charities, such as food pantries and clothing and toy drives. Why wait until Christmas? As a family, gather lightly used toys and clothes from around your house and donate them to a charitable organization in your area. Or, have each person in the family take some of their own money to the grocery store and purchase items for a food pantry in your area.