

Immanuel God With Us

Isaiah 7:14 | Leader guide and study notes

Purpose: Study the passage in context, explore its Christian connection with Jesus, and invite a thoughtful personal response. These notes support group leaders and individual readers.

A simple session plan

Allow 5 minutes for the introduction and Old Testament reading, 10 minutes for questions 1–4, 15 minutes for questions 5–8, and 10 minutes for reflection and prayer. Ask participants to read the context beforehand if time is short.

Understanding the passage

Isaiah 7 opens during the reign of Ahaz. Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel threaten Judah and intend to replace its king. Isaiah's message therefore concerns both immediate danger and the future of David's royal house. Read verses 15–17 as part of the sign, not as an unrelated appendix.

Matthew 1:22–23 explicitly identifies Jesus' conception and birth as fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. The study follows this Christian reading while allowing readers to notice Isaiah's original audience. Christians differ over whether the sign includes an initial fulfillment in Isaiah's time or points directly to Jesus; do not present one explanation of the near-term details as universally agreed.

Translations differ over the Hebrew word *almah*, commonly discussed as young woman or virgin. Matthew's Greek wording explicitly uses virgin, and Matthew 1:18–25 separately describes conception by the Holy Spirit before Mary and Joseph come together. Explain the vocabulary carefully rather than claiming the Hebrew term alone settles every interpretive question.

Suggested responses to questions 1 through 4

1. Syria and Israel threaten Judah; Ahaz and his people tremble. Identify Israel here as the northern kingdom, distinct from Judah.
2. God calls for calm and faith. Ahaz refuses to request a sign, saying he will not test the LORD. Isaiah's response shows that this apparently pious refusal does not resolve the problem of trust.
3. Isaiah addresses the house of David. The Lord himself will give a sign involving conception, a son, and the name Immanuel.
4. Immanuel means God with us. Verses 15–16 relate the child's development to the disappearance of the two threatening kings; verse 17 also warns of Assyria. Let readers recognize these contextual details before discussing proposed explanations.

Connecting the passage with Jesus

Suggested responses to questions 5 through 10

5. Matthew says Mary's pregnancy is from the Holy Spirit and quotes Isaiah as fulfilled. Jesus is named because he will save his people from their sins; Immanuel explains his significance. Matthew does not require Immanuel to be his everyday personal name.
6. Gabriel says the Holy Spirit will act, the child will be called the Son of God, and he will receive David's throne and reign without end. Luke supports the birth narrative but does not explicitly quote Isaiah 7:14 here.
7. Jesus promises to be with his disciples always. This echoes the theme introduced by Immanuel at the beginning of Matthew; it is a thematic connection, not another quotation of Isaiah.
8. Look for an answer that respects the threatened house of David and Matthew's explicit application to Jesus. The full Christian significance comes from reading the passages together.
9. Applications may include prayer, seeking wise counsel, and obeying God amid uncertainty. God's presence does not promise freedom from every difficult circumstance.
10. Accept a brief personal summary. Invite voluntary prayer without requiring anyone to disclose a private situation.

Questions for deeper discussion

How does Ahaz's response compare with Joseph's obedience in Matthew 1:24? Why does Matthew give both the names Jesus and Immanuel?

Teaching notes

Keep the historical setting visible. Explain translation differences without making the worksheet a vocabulary test. Distinguish Matthew's explicit fulfillment statement from broader thematic connections.

Related collection: This study explores themes in entries 131–137 of the 301-prophecy collection. Distinguish the biblical wording from explanations and applications.

Scripture source: World English Bible, public domain. <https://ebible.org/engwebp/ISA07.htm> The passages named in the worksheet provide the primary readings.

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