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## LEARNER GUIDE – Week 1

**Series Title:** *here. – God With Us*

**Session Title:** *Fulfilled Promises of His Presence*

**Scripture Passage:** *Isaiah 7:14; 9:6–7*

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### Overview

In this Advent study, “*here. – God With Us*,” we are reflecting on the beauty and complexity of the story of Jesus’ arrival. Too often, we only focus on the joy and celebration of His birth, but this series invites us to also look at the **problems, processes, and promises** that were part of God’s plan. From the fear of Mary and Joseph to the flight to Egypt, and even to the ancient prophecies centuries before Jesus’ birth—God was present. The message of Advent is not just about a baby in a manger; it’s about a **God who keeps showing up**.

In Week 1, “*Fulfilled Promises of His Presence*,” we explore Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6–7 to see how **God’s presence was always the plan**. These promises were made during seasons of fear, war, and uncertainty. Yet, God declared hope through the voice of a prophet. Long before the angels sang and the shepherds came running, God told His people, “*I’m coming. I will be with you.*”

This lesson reminds us that God doesn’t show up randomly or reactively—He moves with **intentionality, faithfulness, and timing**. Advent proves that God fulfills His promises, even when it takes generations. And just as the people of Israel had to wait, so do we. But we wait with hope, knowing that every promise of God is backed by His presence.

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### Introduction

It’s easy to associate Advent and Christmas with lights, joy, and celebration. But for the people of Israel, waiting for the Messiah wasn’t festive—it was full of longing and survival. In the Old Testament, particularly in Isaiah’s time, the people were facing war, exile, and the threat of destruction. And yet, in that chaos, God spoke a word: “*The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and call Him Immanuel.*” Then later: “*Unto us a child is born...*”



These were not just poetic lines—they were **promises of presence**. They reminded the people that God had not abandoned them, and that He was not a distant deity, but a God who would be *with* them.

Today, we still need to hear that same promise. God is not far. God is not passive. **God is here**. The same God who planned to dwell among His people in the past, still desires to dwell with us today. That's the hope of Advent: **God has always been planning to be present**.

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## Bible Study Content

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### Point One: God's Presence Was Always the Plan

- Isaiah 7:14 was spoken in a time of political fear. King Ahaz was panicking about enemy nations.
  - God gave a sign through Isaiah—not to impress, but to **assure**.
  - God's promise of Immanuel (*God with us*) came long before the manger.
  - **Takeaway:** God never reacts—He plans. And His plan has always included **you**.
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### Point Two: God's Promises Are Timeless and Trustworthy

- Isaiah 9:6–7 describes the child who would come with divine names: *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*.
  - These names reflect what God would **be** to His people—not just what He would do.
  - Though the prophecy took 700 years to be fulfilled, God kept His word.
  - **Takeaway:** Delay does not mean denial. God is never late, but always **on time**.
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### Point Three: Jesus Is the Fulfillment of Every Promise

- Matthew 1:23 confirms Isaiah's prophecy: the child born of Mary would be **Immanuel**—God with us.
- This wasn't just symbolic—Jesus literally **dwelt** among the people, embodying God's love, justice, and nearness.
- **Takeaway:** Jesus is not just the answer to prophecy. He is the **presence** of God made real.



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## Digging Deeper

In both Isaiah 7 and 9, the promise of God's presence comes at moments of deep fear. Ahaz didn't want a sign—he wanted safety. But God gave him something better: **presence**. And in Isaiah 9, the promise isn't just a child—it's a ruler, a king whose kingdom will never end. These prophecies became real in Jesus, who didn't come with military power or political dominance, but with *presence*. This shows us that sometimes, what we want is rescue—but what we need is *relationship*. And God promises both.

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## Did You Know?

The name **Immanuel** is only used a few times in the Bible, but its meaning—"God with us"—is central to the entire gospel story. In ancient Israel, names were more than labels. They carried prophetic and personal meaning. "Jesus" was the name given to Mary and Joseph to reflect what He would do: "*save His people from their sins.*" But "Immanuel" reflects **who He is**—the God who comes near.

This naming tension is significant in Black tradition. Enslaved Africans were often renamed by slaveholders to strip them of identity. But within the community, they were renamed based on character: *healer, prophet, deacon, mother*. That's what "Immanuel" reflects—**what the community calls Him after experiencing Him**. He is "Jesus" by assignment, but He is "Immanuel" by *encounter*.

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## Live It!

Think of a moment where you felt completely alone. Now think of the shift that happens when someone shows up—not even with answers, just with presence. That's what God did through Jesus. He showed up—not just to solve problems, but to **walk through them** with us.

This Advent, take time to reflect on where you need to be reminded of God's presence. Maybe it's in grief. Maybe it's in doubt. Maybe it's just in the exhaustion of trying to hold everything together. Let this week be a reminder that God is not absent. He is not unaware. He is not late. **He is here.**

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## Question and Paragraph

Where in your life do you need to experience God's presence?

Write 3–4 sentences reflecting on a place in your life—past or present—where you've needed to be reminded that God is with you. How does knowing He is “Immanuel” change how you see that situation?

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## Application Points

1. **Expect God's promises to be fulfilled—even if they take time.**
2. **Look for God's presence, not just His power.**
3. **Remember that Jesus is not just a name to believe in—He's a presence to live with.**

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## STUDENT FILL-IN-THE-BLANK OUTLINE



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## Fulfilled Promises of His Presence

Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6–7

**Main Theme:** God is **here**, because God has always been planning to be.

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**1. God’s presence was always part of His \_\_\_\_\_.**

Isaiah’s prophecy shows us that Jesus’ coming wasn’t a reaction—it was preparation. From the beginning, God intended to be **with** His people.

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**2. God’s promises are not always \_\_\_\_\_, but they are always certain.**

The people who first heard Isaiah’s words wouldn’t see the fulfillment in their lifetime. But delay is not denial. God’s Word does not return void.

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**3. “Immanuel” means “\_\_\_\_\_.”**

Jesus fulfilled this name. He didn’t just come to save us from sin—He came to dwell among us. God doesn’t just send a Word; He becomes the Word **in flesh**.

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**4. The names in Isaiah 9:6 reveal Jesus as more than a child—they reveal His \_\_\_\_\_.**

Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. These titles remind us that God’s presence comes with power, wisdom, and peace.

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**5. The fulfillment of prophecy proves God is \_\_\_\_\_ to His Word.**

Advent is not just about nostalgia. It’s about the **faithfulness** of God. He promised He’d be here—and He came.

5. faithful to His Word  
4. nature / character

3. God with us  
2. immediate

1. plan