

BELONG

Starter Questions: What's something you're really glad you don't have to do by yourself? Ask your students if they would like to share their highs and lows from the week.

Become Challenge Check-In: Last week, you were challenged to pray for someone in your circle who may not know Jesus and look for an opportunity to share the good news with them. How did that go? Did God give you an opportunity to have a conversation?

BELIEVE

Scripture: Isaiah 53:2–12

Main Idea: Jesus suffered in our place to save us.

Focus Question: What am I trusting in to save me?

Context:

Isaiah was a prophet who delivered God's messages to the people of Judah hundreds of years before Jesus was born. In the later chapters of Isaiah, God speaks several times about someone He calls His **Servant**. The passage we are studying begins in Isaiah 52:13 and continues through Isaiah 53. As you read, pay attention to what Isaiah reveals about this Servant.

Summary:

Isaiah describes a Servant who is rejected, suffers, and dies. But as the chapter unfolds, we learn that there is much more happening than it first appears. Isaiah explains why the Servant suffers and what His suffering accomplishes for others. Later, we'll look at the New Testament to help us understand who this Servant is.

Read Isaiah 53:2–3 • Rejected

→ **Bible Study Tip:** Pay attention to how a person is described. Descriptive words can help you understand how others viewed and treated that person.

- What do you notice about the way people viewed and treated the Servant? (*He was not impressive in the ways people expected. He was despised, rejected, and avoided. People did not recognize His true worth.*)

Read Isaiah 53:4–6 • A Surprising Exchange

→ **Bible Study Tip:** Pay attention to repeated pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *he*. Ask who is doing what and who experiences the result.

- Make two lists from these verses. What do you learn about the people, and what do you learn about the Servant? (*The people have gone astray and turned to their own way. The Servant carries their suffering and is pierced, crushed, and punished because of their rebellion and sin.*)
- Verse 6 says we have all “turned to our own way.” What does that help us understand about sin? (*Sin is more than individual wrong choices. At its heart, sin is turning from God and choosing our own way. Isaiah includes everyone: “We all went astray.”*)
- What is surprising about who has sinned and who suffers in these verses? (*The people are guilty, but the Servant suffers because of their sin.*)

Read Isaiah 53:7–9 • Innocent

- How does the Servant respond to the way He is treated? What stands out to you about His response? *(He is oppressed and afflicted, but He does not open His mouth to defend Himself or retaliate. Isaiah compares Him to a lamb led to slaughter. He does not resist what is happening to Him.)*
- Put verses 4–6 and 7–9 together. What makes the Servant's suffering so surprising? *(The Servant is innocent, yet He willingly suffers for people who are guilty. He does not suffer because of His own wrongdoing. He suffers because of theirs.)*

Read Isaiah 53:10–12 • What His Suffering Accomplished

→ **Understanding the Text:** We learn in these verses that the Servant's suffering is part of God's plan to save. When verse 10 says the LORD was pleased to crush Him, it does not mean God enjoyed His suffering. God chose to accomplish His saving purpose through it. He was pleased to save. A guilt offering was a sacrifice made because of sin. Though the Servant dies, Isaiah describes Him afterward as alive and accomplishing God's purpose.

- After everything the Servant suffers, what do these verses say He accomplishes for others? *(The Servant bears their sin, makes many righteous, and intercedes for rebels. His suffering and death accomplish God's plan to save.)*

Read 1 Peter 2:22–25 • Who is the Servant?

- What words or ideas from Isaiah 53 do you recognize in Peter's description of Jesus? What does that help you understand about the Servant Isaiah described? *(Students may notice that Jesus committed no sin or deceit, bore our sins, suffered wounds that bring healing, and that people are described as sheep who had gone astray. Peter uses Isaiah's words to show that Jesus is the Servant Isaiah described.)*

Reflect

- What are you trusting in to save you? Have you trusted Jesus and what He has done for you, or are you depending on something you can do for yourself? *(Give students time to think privately.)*

→ **Leader Note:** Students may trust in being good, going to church, being baptized, having Christian parents, or trying harder. Help them understand that salvation is received through faith in Jesus, not earned. For students who already follow Jesus, remind them that their confidence still rests in what Jesus has done. Make space after group for students who want to talk about trusting Jesus.

BECOME

Circle of Impact Challenge: Take time this week to think honestly about what you are trusting in to save you. If you have never trusted Jesus, talk with your small group leader about what it means to put your faith in Him. If you already follow Jesus, thank Him for taking the punishment you deserved, and look for an opportunity to tell someone in your circle what Jesus has done for you.