

# OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Isaiah 9:1, 5-7

The People in Darkness ... A Child is Born

The prophet Isaiah in this first section of the Book of Isaiah is speaking in 8<sup>th</sup> century BC Jerusalem. "A light has shone" (verse 1). The poetic image of light and darkness is sublime poetry and appropriate for a northern hemisphere Advent and Christmas where it is dark and wintry. Hence we focus on light as a decoration at Christmas time. "There is a child born for us" (verse 5). Here Isaiah is referring to a child born into the royal Davidic family of his day (8<sup>th</sup> century BC) with the hope that this child will be a great ruler. The prophets are very much persons of their times. They reflect on the signs of their time and direct people how best to live the covenant relationship with God. This passage is a statement about the exalted position of the Davidic dynasty and ruler from that family. The Davidic house had been promised eternal existence in the second book of Samuel – 2 Samuel 7:8-16. Isaiah is not consciously writing about Jesus. He is writing for the people of his own time. However, the early Church quickly identified Jesus in this and other Messianic texts. This is possible as the author, text and readers are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Hence, this prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus. The passage is used during Advent and Christmas because it is a messianic prophecy and applies to Jesus. This passage speaks both of the prophet's own historical age and of all ages.

## YOU WILL NEED :

- to darken the room
- class Easter candle
- bedside lamp, night light or torch
- 3D figures of people from the Bible who waited for the Messiah (eg Abraham, Sarah, David, Isaac, Isaiah, John the Baptist), infant Jesus, Mary and Joseph

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you. Begin by saying...*

**Have you ever woken up in a dark room? Sometimes during the night when you wake up from your sleep, you turn on the light to see where you are.**

*Turn on bedside lamp or night light and continue...*

**Perhaps when you were really little, you slept with a light beside your bed. Someone left the light there to help you feel safe.**

**If you needed to get out of bed, that little light would show you the way.**

*Turn off the light and continue...*

**Long before Jesus was born, the people of Israel waited and hoped for a great leader to become their King. They waited and hoped for many years.**

*Place Easter Candle in the middle of the story circle. Place some of the figures in a circle around the unlit Easter Candle.*

**This leader would be like a wonderful light in the darkness. God would anoint him to lead Israel. Under his leadership there would be justice and peace.**

**People lived and died – many generations passed, but this leader did not appear.**

*Place other figures in the circle around the unlit Easter Candle.*

**However, Israel continued to wait. The great leader would lead them out of darkness into the light of a new world.**

**Finally this great leader did come as a little baby in Bethlehem.**

*Pick up infant Jesus and hold him for all the class to see and say...*

**Do you know who this great leader is? Allow for children to respond. Jesus is this great leader.**

*Place Jesus, Mary and Joseph standing at the Easter Candle and light the candle as you say...*

**Jesus is our light. He shows us how to follow God. When we live as God shows us there will be a new world. There will be great peace everywhere and all creation will live in harmony.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*