

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Today's Gospel reading is not an easy one for young children to grasp. You may want to talk over some of its vocabulary and background in order to share its message with your child.

Two crucial words in today's reading are *prophet* and *Messiah*. A good way to explain the idea of a prophet for children is to say that a prophet's job is to *tell the people what God plans for them*. This phrasing characterizes the prophet both as predictor of the future and as interpreter of God's will. These ideas overlap, of course, and they are intimately connected in the Hebrew mind. The prophet does not tell us, like a Delphic oracle, what God will inevitably do, whether we accept it or resist it. The prophet tells us God's *desire*, and it is left to us to help bring it about—or, perhaps, to frustrate it utterly. *Messiah*, or “anointed one,” (*Christ* in Greek), is the *special chosen leader that God promised to send to his people*, to save them from their enemies and set them free. Help your child to understand that for many years before Jesus came, the prophets spoke God's plan to the people; their words were written down and collected as one part of the Bible—a part that was already in written form before Jesus was born. We read about Jesus in “the Bible,” but there was already a “Bible”—though a shorter one—when Jesus was growing up.

The hope for a Messiah was the hope for someone who would lead the nation and set it free from its enemies and from its own corrupt and self-destructive ways. The popular image of the Messiah was that of a warrior and king. Long before Jesus, however, some of the prophets understood that it is not aggression and conquest that set us free, but suffering love. The figures on the reverse of this page show varying degrees of power, goodness, aggression, love, and sacrifice. There is no “right answer” as to which one is the most like Jesus. All of them, including the politician and Superman, have some features in common with him; but some come closer than others to what he saw as his mission. Talk with your child about these different models of a Saviour. Together, can you think of any better examples than those given in the pictures?

© 1988 by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard. All rights reserved.

THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

203 - 624-2520 • [www.the-sunday-paper.com](http://www.the-sunday-paper.com)



# THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B  
PROPER 19  
TRACKS 1 and 2

Jesus asked his friends,  
“Who do you think I am?”  
Peter answered,  
“You are the MESSIAH!”

MARK 8:29



**GOD'S PEOPLE WERE WAITING AND HOPING FOR THE MESSIAH!**

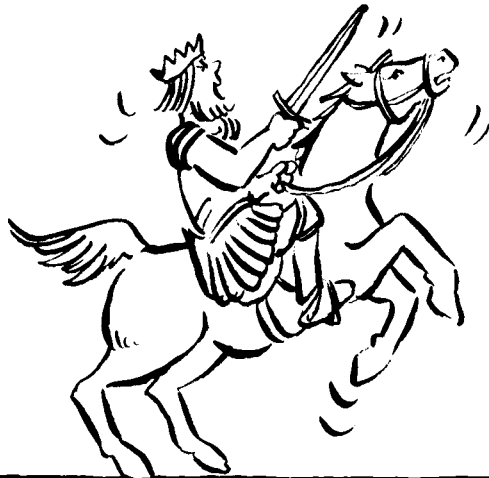
Long ago, the prophets promised that God would send his people a special leader - the MESSIAH.



Many people thought that first God would send a new PROPHET, to say the Messiah was coming.



People hoped the Messiah would be a great king, and smash their enemies.



Jesus said, "The Messiah is coming to show you God's love. The Messiah will die to set you free."



The wonderful things that Jesus did made people hope he was the Messiah or a prophet who could tell them when the Messiah was coming.

Jesus said he was the Messiah. But he said that hardly anybody understood what God wanted the Messiah to do. He was not going to be famous and powerful and smash their enemies. He was going to save them by giving up his life.

Which ones are the most like Jesus?

