

Hope refreshed

*Isaiah brings a prophecy of hope to the Israelite exiles * in Babylon, promising them that something new is coming.*

Look,' says the Lord God, 'Here is my servant *, my chosen one. I am delighted with my servant, and I have given him my spirit; he will bring about justice *, everywhere in the world.'

'My servant may not be what you were expecting,' says God. 'He won't be loud, crying out or lifting up his voice in the street. Although he may be bruised, he will not break; although he may seem like a sputtering candle, he will never go out. He will, just as I have promised, bring about justice. Until he has done this, he will not faint, or be crushed. Everyone, even those living far away by the coast, will wait eagerly for his teaching.'

This is what God, the creator of everything, says to the servant: 'I am the Lord who called you; I am the one who took your hand and protected you; you are my promise to the world, a light which will show them how to live. You will bring sight to those who cannot see and freedom to those who are imprisoned. You will bring out those who sit in dark dungeons.'

'I am the Lord,' says God. 'Glory is due to me alone; praise is due to me and not to idols *. Look! The old way of doing things is over. I am doing something new, but before this new way springs up I am telling you about it.'

See session outline on p.14

Stop and share

Read the story and pause at the * to share these points with the children.

- * The exiles had been forced to leave their home country (Israel) and were prisoners in faraway Babylon.
- * In the first half of the passage, the servant seems to be a person and many Christians have interpreted this as Jesus; in the second half, God speaks directly to the servant, who now seems to be the nation of Israel.
- * Justice means what is fair and right.
- * Idols are other gods, images of other gods, or anything that takes the place of God in people's lives.

