

The Truth Matters

PRO TIP
Download other grades for alternate activities!

CONNECTIONS TO THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC 369

CCC 2465–2470

MATERIALS

- ▶ [Don't Puberty Blockers. Simply Give Kids More Time to Figure Things Out?](#)
- ▶ [The Call of Jeremiah](#)

SUGGESTED TIME

45–50 minutes

Teacher Background

Every human person is made in God’s image and likeness with the purpose of knowing, loving, and serving Him, and loving our neighbor as ourselves, and is destined to eternal beatitude with God in Heaven. If we do not root ourselves in an authentic Christian anthropology – a true understanding of our origin, nature, and destiny – then our foundation is not true and everything else about how we understand ourselves will fall apart and be meaningless. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and He invites us to know the truth, which will set us free.



HOW DOES THIS LESSON HELP INOCULATE STUDENTS AGAINST GENDER IDEOLOGY?

Proponents of puberty blockers describe them as a harmless way to “buy time” for those children who believe they are the opposite sex. But the truth is that God made each of us as male or female, and the gift of our sex is good because God willed it. The use of drugs to suppress the body’s natural and healthy development does both physical and spiritual harm to a person. God calls us as men and women to know, love, and serve Him, and to love our neighbor as ourselves rooted in a foundation of truth.

Activity

Background/Homework

Prior to today’s lesson, assign your students to read for homework [Don’t Puberty Blockers Simply Give Kids More Time to Figure Things Out?](#) together with their parents and have them answer the critical thinking questions together.

A. Begin by writing the following four questions on the board:

- What is it?
- What is it made of?
- Who or what made it or caused it to happen?
- What was it made for?

- B.** Explain that the most brilliant philosophers in history, such as St. Thomas Aquinas and the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, believed that a thing (any thing) could be fully explained by answering these four basic questions about it.
- C.** Next, select an object in your classroom, such as a desk, chair, or clock, and call on a student to answer the four questions on the board for that object. Repeat the activity a few more times with different objects. *Accept reasoned answers, such as, for a chair.*
- What is it? *A chair.*
 - What is it made of? *Wood, metal, plastic, atoms, and so forth.*
 - Who or what made it or caused it happen? *The chairmaker, the person who invented "chairs," the person who drew up the blueprint/design for the chair, and so forth.*
 - What was it made for? *Sitting.*
- D.** After practicing answering the four questions a few times, have students turn to a partner and discuss the four questions as they apply to a human being.
- E.** After a few moments, debrief as a class and lead students to answers similar to those below. Let students know that you will continue to discuss these ideas later in the lesson, including what happens if they think they disagree with one or more of these answers.
- What is it? *A human being, made in the image and likeness of God.*
 - What is it made of? *A physical body and a spiritual soul.*
 - Who or what made it or caused it to happen? *God created the person's soul, and his or her parents cooperated with God's creative power to bring forth life. (Parents do not produce their child's soul).*
 - What was it made for? *To know, love, and serve God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.*
- F.** Then write the term *Christian anthropology* on the board and define it for students as "the study of the origin, nature, and destiny of mankind."
- G.** Explain that a proper anthropology — a proper understanding of the origin, nature, and destiny of mankind — is essential to understanding our purpose as human beings. But what if one or more of the answers to the four questions we've been contemplating were different? What if the answer to what a human being is was different? Or if the answers were different to the questions "What are we made of?" or "What are we made for?"
- H.** Ask your students what it would mean if someone did not believe that God made each human being. Why would that matter? *Allow for a few moments of reasoned discussion without offering too much correction or direction.*
- I.** After a few moments of discussion, ask your students whether or not the truth matters and why they think so. *Again, allow for a few moments of reasoned discussion.*

J. Then explain that, for our foundation in life to be solid and reliable, it must be based on the truth. True things will always be true, and two true things cannot contradict each other. The truth is, well, trustworthy: you can count on it to be true at all times and in all places. Because truth matters. Think of math. Before you can do complex problems, you must master the basics, including the truth that $2+2=4$ and not 5. If you get that foundation wrong, your answers to complex problems will be way off. If you are using those numbers to plan a journey, like NASA aiming a spaceship at a planet, being off by just a little bit in the beginning will result in going thousands of miles off course. So why does it matter whether God created you or not? Because truth matters. It matters if Jesus died for our sins or not. Everyone, at some point in this life must decide, “Is God real?” and “Is Jesus the Son of God who died for our sins?” The answers to those questions literally change everything else. Just as $2+2$ cannot equal both 4 and 5, the truth on which we base our understanding of the human person – our foundation – affects everything about who we are and how we should live our lives. So, why a Christian anthropology? Because it is true. And we need to root our understanding of the human person in real truth; otherwise, everything else about how we understand ourselves will fall apart and be meaningless. A Christian anthropology is vital to knowing where we came from, who we are and why we are the way we are, and where we are going. Without answering these questions correctly about ourselves as human beings, we cannot hope to live as we ought with our foundation firmly planted in the truth.

K. Continue to explain that an important part of our identity as human beings is our sexuality, that is, being male and being female. Our sex not only includes our physical, psychological, and emotional characteristics as male and female, but also our attitudes, and our need for love and friendship. The *Catechism* teaches that “Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, willed by God . . . “Being man” or “being woman” is a reality which is good and *willed* by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator” (369). Therefore, to live in the truth of being human, we must accept the sex God has willed and gifted to us. Being male or being female as God has designed each of us, is not incidental to who we are, rather, it is a fundamental part of our identity as human beings made in God’s image and likeness.

L. Then go over students’ answers from their homework reading and critical thinking questions from **Don’t Puberty Blockers Simply Give Kids More Time to Figure Things Out?** using the answer key to guide your discussion.

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Don't Puberty Blockers Simply Give Kids More Time to Figure Things Out?

Directions: Read about the meaning of suffering and how Jesus has redeemed our suffering. Then answer the critical-thinking questions in class and/or with your partner.

It is often suggested by supporters of the transgender movement that children experiencing body and identity-related distress should be put on puberty-blocking drugs to give them “more time” to figure things out, or to prevent them from going through what they call “the wrong puberty” to this or that. (Is any puberty blockers actually safer? Does this approach really just buy time to “figure things out?”)

The answer to all these questions is a resounding “no.” In fact, of all the children who are put on puberty blockers, 90% of them go on to be put on cross-sex hormones. In other words, far from simply buying time to “figure things out,” taking puberty blockers off our children is close to a long process that leads to and is invasive and irreversible surgery and/or lifetime of ongoing medical treatments.

Some children do actually need puberty blockers. For example, some children experience puberty at age 8 or 9 (a condition called precocious puberty). Left untreated, this condition can stunt a child’s growth. Puberty blocking drugs were designed to treat this disorder and work by suppressing the release of the body’s natural gonadotropin hormones.



Children in the Garden by Wikimedia Commons (CC-BY)

These hormones cause the pituitary gland to secrete additional hormones that, in males, cause the testicles to make testosterone, and, in females, cause the ovaries to make estrogen and progesterone.

Indiscriminate use of puberty blockers, especially past the age of puberty, carries significant risk, particularly for bone health. Thus, the standard of practice is to discontinue use of puberty blockers by the age of 12, unless taken without a true physiological purpose or other the age of pubertal onset. Puberty blockers can cause great harm to a child’s health, literally.

M. Next, read aloud **John 8:31–32**:

Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

N. Jesus tells us that if we keep His commandments, we will know who we are and be set free to choose the good and reach our eternal destiny of Heaven. Discuss how the Holy Spirit has spoken the truth through the prophets. A prophet is one who speaks for God — or one who speaks the truth. God called many prophets in the Old Testament to stand up for and speak the truth to His People. Let's take a look at God's calling to one of these Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah, and consider what we can learn about our own calling to the truth of what it means to be human.

O. Distribute [The Call of Jeremiah](#) and have your students work with a partner to read about God's call to Jeremiah and answer the questions.

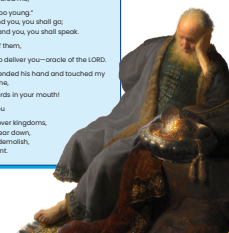
P. When they have finished, call on students to share and discuss their answers.

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God Calls Jeremiah

Directions: Read about God's call to Jeremiah. Then answer the critical thinking questions.

JEREMIAH 14–19
The word of the LORD came to me:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.
"Ah, Lord GOD!" I said,
"I do not know how to speak. I am too young!"
But the LORD answered me,
"Do not say, 'I am too young.'
To whomever I send you, you shall go,
whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you—oracle of the LORD.
Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my
mouth, saying to me,
"See, I place my words in your mouth!
Today I appoint you
over nations and over kingdoms,
to uproot and to tear down,
to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant."



© SOPHIA INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS GRADE 10, THE GIFT OF OUR IDENTITY 7

Don't Puberty Blockers Simply Give Kids More Time to Figure Things Out?

Directions: Read about the meaning of suffering and how Jesus has redeemed our suffering. Then answer the critical-thinking questions in class and/or with your parents.

It is often suggested by supporters of the transgender movement that children experiencing body and identity-related distress should be put on puberty blocking drugs to give them “more time” to figure things out, or to prevent them from going through what they call “the wrong puberty.” Is this a good idea? Are puberty blockers actually safe? Does this approach really just buy time to “figure things out?”

The answer to all these questions is a resounding “no.” In fact, of all the children who are put on puberty blockers, 90% of them go on to be put on cross-sex hormones. In other words, far from simply buying time to “figure things out,” taking puberty blockers all but commits a child to a long process that tends to end in invasive and irreversible surgery and a lifetime of ongoing medical treatments.

Some children do actually need puberty blockers. For example, some children experience puberty at age 8 or 9 (a condition called precocious puberty). Left untreated, this condition can stunt a child's growth. Puberty blocking drugs were designed to treat this disorder and work by suppressing the release of the body's natural gonadotropin hormones.



Children in the Garden
by Władysław Podkowiński (1892).

These hormones cause the pituitary gland to secrete additional hormones that, in males, cause the testicles to make testosterone, and, in females, cause the ovaries to make estrogen and progesterone.

Prolonged use of puberty-blockers, especially past the age of puberty, carries significant risk, particularly for bone health. Thus, the standard of practice is to discontinue use of puberty blockers by the age of 12. When taken without a true physiological purpose or after the age of pubertal onset, puberty blockers can cause great harm to a child's health, literally

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY



Saint Joseph and the Christ Child
by Guido Reni (1640).

poisoning the child and preventing his or her body from developing normally. The synthetic high-dose hormones stunt bone growth, pose risks to heart and metabolic health, and the loss of natural hormones carries a risk of dementia. The FDA has warned of brain swelling and vision loss in minors using puberty blockers.

As already noted, virtually all children who begin taking puberty-blocking drugs — many after the age of 12, when the standard practice is to discontinue use of these drugs — go on to take high-dose cross-sex hormones. The risks of cross-sex hormones, which induce an artificial “puberty,” are also high, and they induce irreversible physical changes in the body. Females who take high-dose testosterone will develop facial hair, acne, baldness, and will experience vaginal atrophy. Males who take high-dose estrogen will increase breast size, put on weight, and will also experience genital atrophy. The risks, including infertility, pulmonary embolism, metabolic syndrome, coronary disease, and cancer, continue even when these drugs are only used for a short time. Significantly, these high doses of hormones

must be taken *for life* if someone is to maintain the appearance of the other sex while suppressing their natural hormones. There is no long-term data yet available on what effect long term use of cross-sex hormones will have later in life when given to children and teens.

In light of these significant risk factors and the many unknowns associated with the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, many European countries, where, for decades, gender-affirming treatments and sex reassignment surgeries have been more socially tolerated than in the US, have begun to turn away from these pharmaceutical interventions for children experiencing body and identity-related distress in favor of therapy. In March 2024, for example, England’s publicly funded National Health Service (NHS) prohibited the prescription of puberty blockers for children experiencing “gender dysphoria” or “gender incongruence,” stating that, “there is not enough evidence to support the safety or clinical effectiveness” of these drugs.

It is important to remember that a person’s feelings can change, sometimes dramatically, in very short periods of time. This is also true of children experiencing body and identity-related distress. Basing decisions of life-altering importance on feelings alone, especially during such a vulnerable and often confusing time of life as childhood and adolescence, places a disordered overemphasis on the role of feelings in our lives. We can and must choose how to act on our feelings, or not to act at all. In the overwhelming majority of cases, children who feel like they are the other sex, with the help of responsible therapy, grow out of this feeling, when they get older.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

Critical Thinking Questions:

- 1 What is the typical result for children experiencing body and identity-related distress who are put on puberty blockers?

Taking puberty blockers all but commits a child to a long process that tends to end in invasive and irreversible surgery and a lifetime of ongoing medical treatments.

- 2 What was the original intended use for puberty blocking drugs? What does the standard of practice for when their use should be discontinued? How does their use with children and adolescents experiencing body and identity-related distress conflict with this standard of care?

The original intended use for puberty blocking drugs is to treat disorders of the endocrine system, specifically precocious (or early onset) puberty. The standard of care is to discontinue their use by around age 12. This is a normal age for onset of puberty, so at that point there is no longer a need to suppress it. Additionally, the risk-factors of their prolonged use outweigh any benefits by that time. Their use with children and adolescents experiencing body and identity-related distress conflicts with this standard of care because they are not being given to treat any bodily illness or disorder, and are often prescribed to children 13 or older.

- 3 Do the risk-factors for improper or prolonged use of puberty blockers surprise you? Why do you think these factors seem to not be noted by the transgender movement?

Accept reasoned answers. The transgender movement downplays or fails to note these risk factors because they contradict the false narrative that our bodies are our own to manipulate and mutilate however we wish based upon our feelings. Accept additional reasoned answers.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

- 4 How have many European countries changed their approach to pharmaceutical interventions for children experiencing body and identity-related? How has England, specifically, adjusted their approach and why?

Many European countries have recently begun to turn away from pharmaceutical interventions in favor of therapy. For example, the UK, as of March 2024, has prohibited the prescription of puberty blockers for children experiencing “gender dysphoria” or “gender incongruence,” stating that “there is not enough evidence to support the safety or clinical effectiveness” of these drugs.

- 5 Why shouldn't we base decisions of life-altering importance on feelings alone?

Our feelings can and do change, sometimes dramatically, in short periods of time. We always have the ability to manage our feelings and choose to act on them or not at all, rather than overemphasizing them and being ruled by them.

- 6 How does the use of puberty blockers for children and adolescents struggling with body and identity-related deny the truth of who God has created us to be as male and female?

God made each of us as male or female. The gift of our sex — being male or being female — is good because God willed it and gave it to use out of His goodness as part of our human identity. Our maleness and femaleness is a fundamental part of what it means to be made in God's image and likeness and how we interact with the world around us and with each other. The use of puberty blockers, while deemed harmless and intended to “do good” by “buying time” by the transgender movement, in truth circumvents the good of our bodies and the purpose for which God created us, and can, in fact, cause great and irreversible harm to the gift of a person's body. Accept additional reasoned answers.

God Calls Jeremiah

Directions: Read about God's call to Jeremiah. Then answer the critical thinking questions.

JEREMIAH 1:4-10

The word of the LORD came to me:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

"Ah, Lord GOD!" I said,
"I do not know how to speak. I am too young!"

But the LORD answered me,

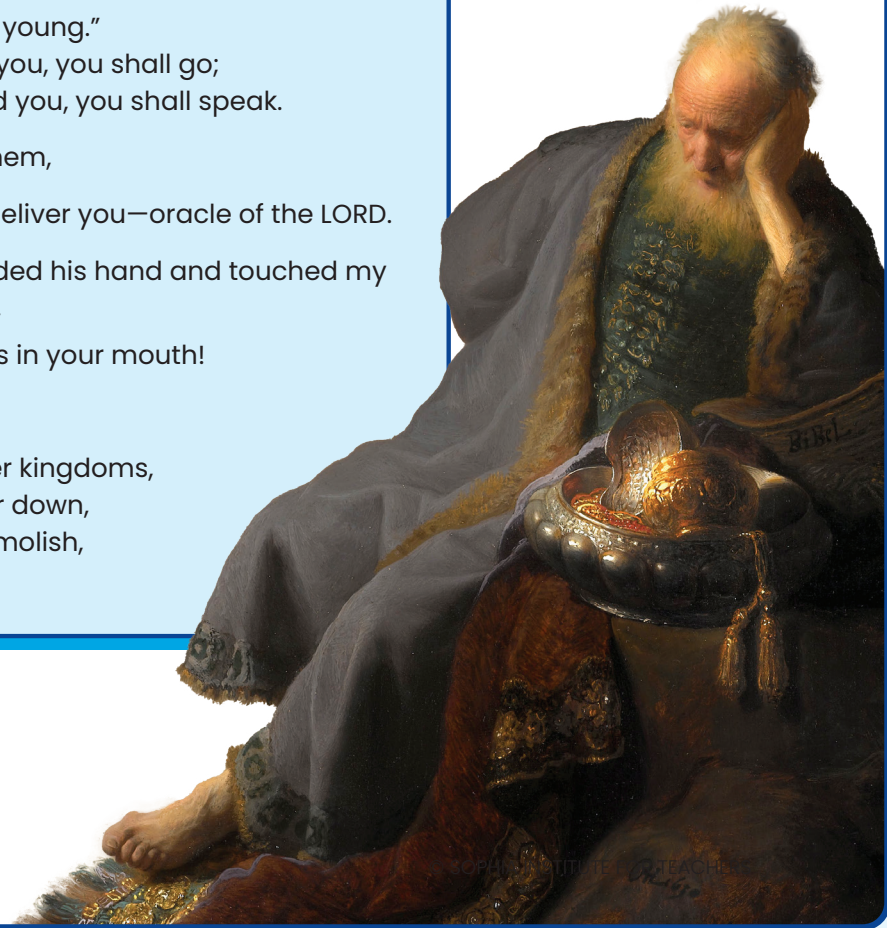
Do not say, "I am too young."
To whomever I send you, you shall go;
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Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you—oracle of the LORD.

Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my
mouth, saying to me,

See, I place my words in your mouth!

Today I appoint you
over nations and over kingdoms,
To uproot and to tear down,
to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant.



STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

Critical Thinking Questions:

1 What did God tell Jeremiah about his origin?

God formed him in the womb and knew him before he was even formed.

2 What did God tell Jeremiah about his nature?

God dedicated him, or filled him with his purpose, to proclaim the truth to the nations.

3 What did God tell Jeremiah about his destiny?

God appointed him a prophet, one who would speak the truth to the world.

4 How did Jeremiah respond? Can you sympathize or identify with his reaction? How so?

He responds that he is too young. Sometimes we feel that we are inadequate for God's calling to us, that we cannot possibly live up to the purpose for which God created us because of our perceived shortcomings. Often, we feel that it might just be easier to do what we want to do and convince ourselves that doing what we want is the right thing to do, even if it is contrary to God's will, and we try to escape from God's will. Accept additional reasoned answers.

5 What assurances did God give Jeremiah?

God tells him to not be afraid because He will be with him and He will place the words in Jeremiah's mouth.

STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

- 6 What lessons can Jeremiah's example teach us about being open to the truth and to God?

Jeremiah's example shows us that, even when we try to avoid accepting God's will and the truth of who we are and why God created us, the truth still remains; we cannot escape the truth. When we accept the truth and God's will and calling to us, even though it may be difficult to do so, God will accomplish great things in and through us, and be with us to help us live out the purpose for which He created us. Accept additional reasoned answers.

- 7 What does a proper understanding our origin, nature, and destiny (Christian anthropology) reveal to us about the meaning of our sexuality – being male or being female?

Being male and being female are fundamental parts of being human. God made each one of us either male or female, as part of His design and purpose for us as our Creator. Our sexuality is a gift and vital truth we must gratefully accept in order to be rooted in the truth in our lives and live authentically as God made us. Accept additional reasoned answers.

The Truth Matters

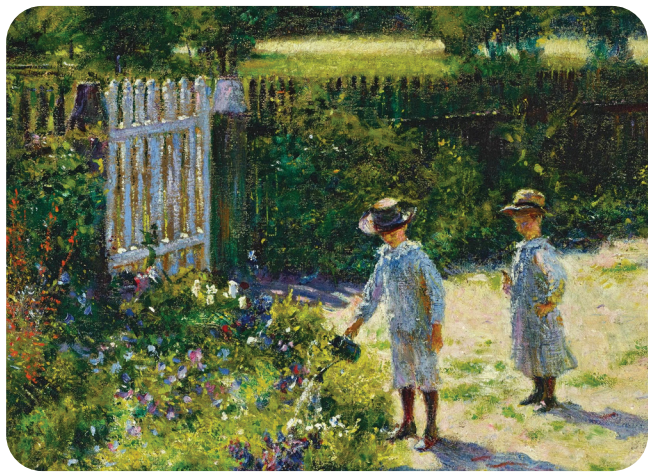
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4 How have many European countries changed their approach to pharmaceutical interventions for children experiencing body and identity-related? How has England, specifically, adjusted their approach and why?

5 Why shouldn't we base decisions of life-altering importance on feelings alone?

6 How does the use of puberty blockers for children and adolescents struggling with body and identity-related deny the truth of who God has created us to be as male and female?

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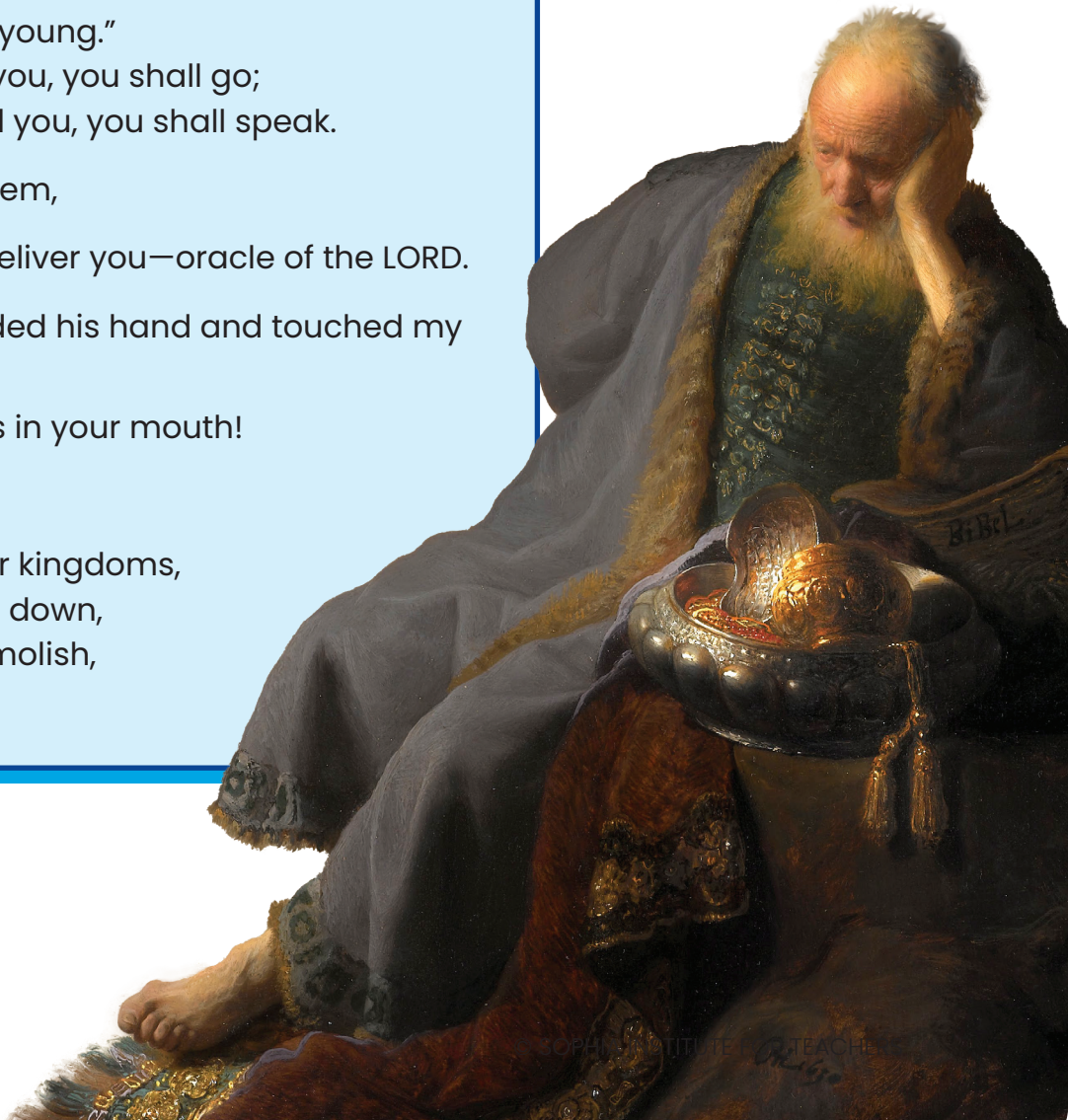
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3 What did God tell Jeremiah about his destiny?

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How so?

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