

First Sunday of Advent – year A

Preparation

Read [Isaiah 2:1-5](#) and [Matthew 24:36-44](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/adventa1.htm>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/oldtestament/isaiah.htm>:

this one will be good for the whole season

http://www.sermons4kids.com/prepare_advent_A1.htm

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/prophec.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/advm1les.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/1Advent-a/A-1Advent-a.html>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_4242_ENG_HTML.htm

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Advent Wreath – 3 blue or purple, one pink and one white candle in the centre
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Blue or purple cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Feet shapes made with construction paper and markers
- Blue tack

Trace your own foot or someone else's on to construction paper and cut it out. Make at two for each child. Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the blue/purple cloth on the table. Have them help you place the Advent wreath and the Bible on the cloth. Light the first candle. Pray the following prayer together:

Loving God of new beginnings, be with us today.

Loving Jesus of new light, be with us today.

Loving Spirit of new hope, be with us today. Amen.

Blow out the candle. Today we start a new year for the church. It is the season of Advent. Today we start a new journey. *Give each child two of the feet shapes.* Ask the children to name something in the world that needs God's attention – have them print or help them to print it on one of their feet shapes. Ask the children to name someone they know who needs to know God's loving care – have them print the name or help them to print it on the other foot shape. Explain to the children that the new journey we are on is one that will help to show how God's love and care are working in the world. *With the children put up the feet on a wall with the blue tack.*

Story Time

Instructions

- Teach the children the following chant to be used throughout the story:

Let us walk in the light of the Lord

Jesus was with his closest friends. They were together in Jerusalem. As they were walking together some of Jesus' friends asked him how they would know when God's kingdom was coming to the world.

Jesus remembered what the prophet Isaiah had to say about God breaking into the world. Here is what Isaiah said:

(remind the children that a prophet of God is someone who had a message from God and shared it with the people of God)

In the days to come God's house will be on the highest mountain. Everyone will want to come to God's house. They will want to come so that God can teach them how to walk in the ways of the faith. God will be the judge for everyone. Everyone will live in peace.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Jesus said to his friends, "No one knows the day or hour when God's kingdom will be here. You need to pay attention. You need to walk with God at all times."

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Jesus continued speaking to his friends, "Remember that no one knows when God's kingdom will be here. People will continue to get married. People will continue to work. People will continue to have families. People will continue to eat together. No one will know the day or the time."

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

"So here is what you need to do," said Jesus. "You need to keep awake. You need to pay attention to what is going on in the world. You need to be ready. You need to walk with God at all times. You need to work for the coming of God's kingdom."

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Response

Project Idea 1: Advent Pathway

Advent is a journey to the star of Jesus' birth. This pathway will act as a reminder for the children of that journey and help them to countdown the days to Christmas and the gift of Jesus.

Materials needed

- blue or purple construction paper
- tape
- pathway images (at the end of the lesson)
- pencil crayons or markers
- star stickers
- scissors
- glue
- small resealable plastic bags

Instructions

Copy the images at the end of lesson – make a set for each child. Tape two pieces of construction paper together for each child along one of the short sides. Give each child a set of images and have them colour in with the pencil crayons or markers. Have them carefully cut them out and set to one side. Have each child count out 28 stars and place them in the resealable plastic bag. Explain that there are almost four weeks in Advent and then there is Christmas. Explain that they are going to make a pathway that will lead them from today to Christmas. Give each child the blue or purple construction paper pieces. Have them glue the candle image (the one for this Sunday) onto the far left side of the construction paper. Have them put one star beside that image. Have the children glue the John the Baptist image about halfway along the first piece of construction paper and up towards the top. Then have them glue the rose image about the centre of the two pieces of paper, then glue the angel image about halfway along the second piece of construction paper and down towards the bottom. Glue the star image towards the far right side of the construction paper. Explain to the children that they should put up their Advent Pathway at home where they will see it everyday and to add a star along the path for each day until they can put one up for Christmas beside the star on the path.

Project Idea 2: Advent Wreath

One of the ways we mark the coming of the light of the world, Jesus, is to increase our light in the world. This Advent Wreath will be a way for children and their families to participate in this coming of the light.

Materials needed

- paper plates
- green, pink, white *and* yellow construction paper
- blue *or* purple construction paper
- scissors
- stapler with staples
- tape

Instructions

Give each child a 2 or 3 pieces of green construction paper. Have them trace their hands about 6 times. Have them cut them out. Then give them a paper plate and have them lay out their hands with the fingers going out from the centre (the green hands make the greenery for the

wreath). Staple the hands onto the paper plate. Cut the blue (or purple), pink, and white construction paper in half. Give each child three blue (or purple) piece, one pink piece and one white piece of construction paper. Have them roll the five pieces to make tubes with each of them. Tape them up along the side to hold them together – these will be the candles. Cut a small slit on each side of the tubes and flatten them out and then staple them onto the paper plate – putting the white one in the middle and the other four in the outside of the circle – just like a real wreath. With the yellow construction paper, draw five small flame shapes and have the children cut them out – have them tape the first one onto one of the blue (or purple) candles. Invite the children to put a ‘flame’ on each of the outside candles for the next 3 Sunday’s with their families and then put the ‘flame’ on the white candle on Christmas Day to celebrate the coming of Jesus.

Project Idea 3: Ornament – Jesus’ Manger

Advent is a reminder to us of how we are to act in the world, with our families, with our communities and with the world. This activity will help the children to not only pay attention to how they are acting but how others in their family are acting as well.

Materials needed

- small plastic containers or small cardboard boxes
- yellow yarn
- scissors
- brown construction paper
- glue or tape
- star stickers
- small resealable plastic bags

Instructions

Copy the Jesus’ Manger Message at the end of the lesson and make sure each child has one. Cut the yarn into 10-15 cm lengths. Give each child a small plastic container or cardboard box. Help them to cover the container with a piece of brown construction paper by either gluing or taping it on. Explain as they are doing this that they are going to make a manger for the Baby Jesus and that everyday through Advent that they notice someone else in their family doing a good deed they are to add a piece of yarn to the manger. By the time they get to Christmas they should have a nice bed in which to put Baby Jesus. Have the children decorate their mangers with some star stickers and then have them put a piece of yarn in the manger to get started. Give each child a resealable plastic bag and have them put a good amount of yarn into the bag to be used at home. Give them the message for home that was copied and help them to tape it to the outside of their plastic bag. Suggest to the children that if they can to find a small doll that can be added to the manger on Christmas Day.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**O God renew our hearts with love
As we journey to Bethlehem
O Jesus guide us in our dreams of hope
As we journey to Bethlehem
O Spirit give us visions of joy
As we journey to Bethlehem. Amen.**

Advent Pathway Images

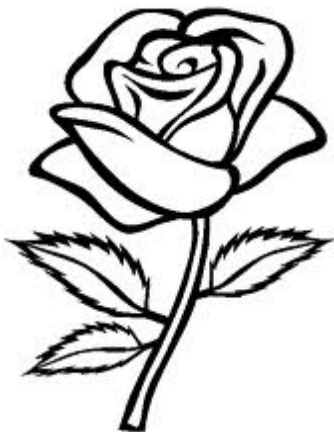
Candle



John the Baptist



Rose



Angel



Star

