

Fourth Sunday of Advent – year A

Preparation

Read [Isaiah 7:10-16](#) and [Matthew 1:18-25](#). 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.kidssundayschool.com/Gradeschool/Lessons/1birthchrist02.php>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_4242_ENG_HTM.htm

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/adventa4.htm>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-awag.htm#ad4> – word puzzles

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

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/advm4les.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/4Advent-a/A-4Advent-a.html>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Advent Wreath
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Blue or purple cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Baby doll with clothes or a picture of a baby

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 three purple candles and the pink 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 candles. Show the children the baby doll or the picture of a baby. Ask the children what families need to do to get ready for a new baby (*clothes, diapers, set up a room, choose a name are some possible answers*).

Family and friends often hold a party to help the new family get some of the things they need to care for their new little one. We all do different things to get ready for the new baby.

Tell the children that in today's story they will hear how Joseph and Mary are getting ready for the birth of their special baby.

Story Time

Instructions

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

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

There once was a couple of people. Their names were Mary and Joseph. They were going to get married soon. They were both very excited about this. They were both looking forward to their future together.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

One day an angel came to Mary and told Mary that she would have God's son. That this son would be Jesus. That this son would bring God's love in the world. The angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come and give her this child.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

Now when Joseph heard this he got very upset. He thought Mary had done something very wrong. He could not believe what she told him. That she was going to have God's son. Joseph thought Mary was lying to her.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

Joseph decided that the best thing would be to put Mary somewhere where no one would find out what had happened. Joseph decided that he would not get married. Joseph thought that he was going to do the right thing.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

Joseph went to sleep that night. The most amazing thing happened in his sleep. Joseph had a special dream. In that dream an angel of God came to Joseph. The angel had a special message from God for Joseph.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

The angel said to Joseph, "Don't be afraid Joseph to Mary as your wife. The child she is going to have is God's son. The Holy Spirit came to her and she is now going to have a baby – a very special baby. You are to give him the name of Jesus, for he will save people from their sins."

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

This reminded Joseph of what the prophet Isaiah had said many, many years ago. The prophet Isaiah said this:

God will give you a sign. A young woman will have a son. He shall be called Emmanuel – which means God will be with us.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

When Joseph woke up he went to Mary. He did what the angel told him to do. Joseph took Mary to be his wife. Together they got ready for this new baby. Together they dreamed God's dream and helped to bring it into the world.

A young woman will have a son and God will be with us!

Response

Project Idea 1: Dream Catcher

Messages come to us from God in a variety of ways – over the season of Advent the children have heard about prophets like Isaiah and John the Baptist – today they learn about God coming to Joseph in a dream. This dream catcher will help them to remember that message.

Materials needed

- round plastic lids from margarine or ice cream tubs
- sharp knife, scissors
- ribbon, yarn of different colours
- plastic darning needles
- beads, feathers
- awl or punch
- clear strong tape

Instructions

Explain to the children that they are going to make dream catchers to hang up in their bedrooms. Explain that in First Nations cultures the dream catcher is used to keep out bad dreams and let in the good dreams. Like Joseph we all need to be open to God speaking to us through our dreams. Take the plastic lids and cut out the inside of them, leaving just the rim with about 2.5 cm of the lid around the edge. Using the awl or punch make holes around the edge that are about 2.5 cm apart. Give each child a prepared rim and a plastic darning needle and have them thread a length of yarn through the needle. Tie a knot in the long end of the yarn. Have the children choose a spot on the rim to start and then go across the rim and crisscross with the yarn through the holes to make a web like structure. Every now and then have the children add a bead to the yarn as they are crossing the circle of their dream catcher. When they have finished making their web across the rim assist them to tie off the yarn as tightly as possible – so that the whole web is tight. Give each child a lengthy piece of ribbon and tape one end to the edge of the rim and then have the children wrap the ribbon around the edge of the rim so that the whole edge is wrapped up. When they get to the end, have them tape it down with a piece of clear strong tape. Tie some feathers onto 15 cm/6 inch pieces of yarn and then tie this onto a piece of the web that is close to the edge of the dream catcher – the children might want to make a couple of these to hang from their dream catchers. Cut a piece of ribbon long enough to make a loop to tie onto the opposite end of the dream catcher, so that it can be hung up at home.

Project Idea 2: Angel Christmas Card

The angel brought a special message to Joseph that God would be with him and Mary through this time and that Mary would be having God's son.

Materials needed

- angel image at end of lesson
- card stock
- crayons, markers
- white glue, glitter glue or glue & glitter

Instructions

Copy the angel image – cut it out and trace onto the card stock. Make one for each child and cut them out. Give the children a cut out angel shape and a piece of folded card stock (folded for a

card). Show them how to put the angel shape on top of the card and rub the side of a crayon over the sides of the angel and onto the card – when they lift the angel shape up they should see the outline of the angel. If they have room on their card they can do more than one and even overlap. Doing them in different colours will also be creative. When they are done with the angels have them print on the inside ‘**God will be with us! Merry Christmas!**’ Let them decorate their angels using the glitter glue or by outlining inside of angels with white glue and shaking the glitter on it. Shake off the excess glitter into another container so that you can reuse it. Encourage the children to think about who they want to give their cards to so as to share the good news of Jesus’ birth.

Project Idea 3: Ornament – Angel

This is the last of the ornaments for the children to make. The angel will help them to remember God’s promise to be with us in a special way.

Materials needed

- construction paper
- card stock
- doilies or tissue paper
- glue, glitter,
- markers staples and stapler

Instructions

Cut the construction paper in half horizontally. Cut circles that are 5 cm/2 inches in diameter out of the card stock for the angel heads – you will need one for each child. Give each child a half sheet of construction paper. With the children make cones out of the construction paper halves – using the stapler to connect the edges of the cone. Fold the doily (if using) in half and glue or staple it to the back side of the cone. If using tissue paper, take a piece and shape it by scrunching it up to make wings for the angel – glue or staple it to the back side of the cone. Have the children draw a face on the circle with the markers. They may want to use the glitter to decorate the top of the head. With the glue or the stapler attach the head to the top of the cone. If there is time spread some glue onto the cone and the doily and then sprinkle glitter on them to make them sparkly.

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.**

Angel Image

