

First Sunday of Advent – year C

Preparation

Read [Jeremiah 33: 14-18](#) and [Luke 21: 25-36](#) over. 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/yearc/adventc1.htm>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-cwag.htm#ad1>: lectionary puzzles

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/waiting-and-watching.html>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/adv1les.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/adv1bd.htm>

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

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Advent Wreath – 3 blue candles, one pink and one white in the centre (for an idea on how to make one check out this site at [Domestic Church](#) or this one from [Christian Crafters](#))
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Blue cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Poster board
- Blue, white, green, purple and red construction paper
- Glue

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. With the children place the blue 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:

**For endings and beginnings, we thank you God;
For learning and love, we thank you Jesus;
For strength and courage, we thank you Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Lay the poster board out in front of the children. Ask the children if they noticed anything different in the church or on their worship table – hopefully they will have noticed the change in the colour of the cloth and the addition of the Advent Wreath. Print the word **Advent** on the poster board and put a piece of blue construction paper beside it. Ask them if they know what is coming soon – they will likely tell you Christmas as there are lots of signs in the community and on TV that it is coming. Print the word **Christmas** on the poster board and put a piece of white construction paper beside it. Ask the children if they know who comes to see Jesus and his family after he is born – shepherds and the magi. Print the word **Epiphany** up

on the poster board and put a green piece of construction paper beside it. Ask the children if they can remember where Jesus went after he was baptized in the Jordan river for 40 days – the desert. Print the word **Lent** up on the poster board and then put a purple piece of construction paper beside it. Then ask the children what they remember happened to Jesus at the end of his life – Palm Sunday, Last Supper, the cross. Print the words Holy Week up on the poster board and then put a red piece of construction paper beside it. Ask the children what happened after Jesus had been in the tomb – resurrection. Print the word **Easter** up on the poster board and place a white piece of construction paper beside it. Explain to the children that after Jesus had risen from the dead and gone to be with God, something exciting happened to Jesus' friends. Ask them if they can remember what happened – the coming of the Holy Spirit. Print the word **Pentecost** up on the poster board – place a red piece of construction paper beside it and then just under it a piece of green construction paper. Say to the children that each year we go through all the seasons of the church year and that we are now at the beginning of a new year in the church. You may want to glue the construction paper pieces onto the poster board and then place it up where you can refer to it again and again.

Story Time

Materials needed

- A small bell with a clapper in it

Ring the bell to get the children's attention. Then ask them:

What is special about a bell? It gets our attention. It tells of good news. It can be heard over other noise. What is special about this time of the year? Christmas is coming – presents, singing, good food. Jesus will be born.

Ring the bell again. Then ask them:

How do we make room for Jesus when everyone and everything around us is so busy getting ready for Christmas? Be still, pray, listen. Let's listen to what the prophet, a messenger from God, Jeremiah had to tell us about getting ready for Jesus.

Ring the bell again.

Jeremiah lived a long, long time ago. He listened carefully to God. He told the people of Israel what God wanted them to hear. Many times the people didn't like listening to what Jeremiah had to say.

He told them that God wanted them to live better lives. He told them that God wanted them to hear the signs.

Ring the bell again.

Jeremiah told them how much God loved them.

God's people in Israel were going through a very difficult time. They had been taken over by another country. They didn't like the people who were ruling over them. They wanted God to do something about it.

At that time God told Jeremiah of a special promise. God told Jeremiah, the prophet, the messenger from God, to share this promise with the people in Israel.

Jeremiah told them this:

God says, “The days are coming when you will see my promise. I will raise up from among the people a branch of justice from the house of David. He will bring justice and mercy to my people. He will show the kingdom of God to my people. The people will live in my love and be safe. Jerusalem will be a place of peace and safety.”

Ring the bell again. Then ask the children:

How do you think we need to be getting ready for Jesus as we get ready for Christmas?

Take some time to listen to their responses before moving into the Response section.

Response

Project Idea 1: Advent Signs Poster

This is a group response that will help the children to look outside of their own families for the signs of God coming into the world.

Materials needed

- poster board
- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- markers
- glitter

Instructions

Print in the middle of the poster “**The days are coming when we will see God’s promise.**” Invite the children to look the magazines for pictures that show acts of justice and acts of mercy and acts of peace and then have them cut them out. Together choose how to show them off on the poster. You may choose to decorate the pictures with the glitter to show them off more clearly. Once they are done have them decide where they can put their poster to share with others as a way of illustrating how we can prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Project Idea 2: Advent Calendar Chain

This response is one that will assist the children and their families in journeying through Advent together.

Materials needed

- blue construction paper
- scissors
- glue sticks
- Advent Calendar from end of lesson
- star stickers

Instructions

Copy the Advent Calendar from the end of the lesson so that there is one for each child. For younger children cut the calendar into the individual days and let the older children do this themselves. Cut the blue construction paper into strips on the vertical that are 5 cm (2 in) wide.

Make enough strips so that each child has a strip for each day in the calendar. Have the children glue a strip from the calendar onto a blue strip of construction paper. When they are all done, start with today's date and have the children glue the ends of the construction paper together, so that the calendar part is on the inside. Then loop the next day through the first loop and glue the ends together, again so the calendar part is on the inside. Continue adding the loops until the whole calendar chain is created. Tell the children that when they take the calendar chain home and open up a chain each day starting with today's date – they may need some help from their parents to remember which one is for today. If there is time have the children use star stickers to decorate the outside of the chain, so that it will look like an Advent decoration in their homes.

Project Idea 3: Blessing Bell

Each week through Advent there will be a decoration response that goes with the lesson which will help to reinforce the story of the day.

Materials needed

- large paper or plastic cups (the largest you can find)
- pipe cleaners
- jingle bells
- tinsel
- sharpie markers
- scissors and glue
- star stickers

Instructions

Poke a hole into the bottom of the cup with the scissors. Take two pipe cleaners – on one of them thread a jingle bell or two and make a loop by attaching the two ends – with the other put the two ends through the hole and then loop it around the one with the jingle bell on it and attach the two ends. Pull the loop that is through the end tight and twist it so that it does not fall through. Decorate the cups with the tinsel and star stickers– however the children want to attach them to the cup. You may also want to print “**Blessing Bell**” on the cup so that the children can remember the blessing coming into the world. Tell the children to take them home and find a place to show it off and ring every now and then to remind their families of the blessing to come.

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:

**Bless our Advent journey, loving God;
Bless our preparations, loving Jesus;
Bless our hearts, loving Spirit.
Amen.**

Advent Calendar

For some days, replace the prayers here for those that fall on specific days (yellow-coloured cells further down on page 7).

Week of Advent 1 – Sunday	Light one candle for the coming of Jesus.
Week of Advent 1 – Monday	Read together Matthew 4: 18-22 and remember St. Andrew (celebrated Nov. 30) by having a snack of fish shaped crackers.
Week of Advent 1 – Tuesday	As we start a new Christian year, reflect on Jesus' life and ministry.
Week of Advent 1 – Wednesday	Take a look at all the toys that are in the house. Are there some in good shape that could be passed on to children who don't have as many? If so, find a place to take them where they will be used.
Week of Advent 1 – Thursday	Enjoy a snack of fruit – cut up apples or oranges – together. Give thanks to God for enough food to eat.
Week of Advent 1 – Friday	Pray for all those who are alone and lonely this time of the year.
Week of Advent 1 – Saturday	Make some Christmas cards and send them to family and friends who are far away.
Week of Advent 2 – Sunday	Light two candles for the coming of Jesus.
Week of Advent 2 – Monday	Pray for all those who don't have any friends. That they will find people who care and even good friends this year.
Week of Advent 2 – Tuesday	Pray for all those who will go to sleep hungry tonight, that people around the world will care for those in need.

- Week of Advent 2 – Wednesday Take a walk around your community. Pray for those who live and work in your community.
- Week of Advent 2 – Thursday Decide as a family what you would like to give to the local Food Bank or Pantry. If possible take the gift down as a family.
- Week of Advent 2 – Friday Read together the story of the angel coming to Mary: Luke 1:26-38.
- Week of Advent 2 – Saturday Bake some or make some Christmas goodies for someone who won't get any or many this year. Take them over together as a family.
- Week of Advent 3 – Sunday Light three candles for the coming of Jesus.
- Week of Advent 3 – Monday Have everyone list one thing that they will do for another member of the family before Christmas. Make time to get the list done for each other.
- Week of Advent 3 – Tuesday Enjoy a snack of some Christmas goodies together.
- Week of Advent 3 – Wednesday Pray for those who are sick at this time of the year and those who will have to spend Christmas in the hospital and for all those who look after the ill.
- Week of Advent 3 – Thursday If you have a family member that lives far away take the time to call them or send them an email to let them know how much you miss them.
- Week of Advent 3 – Friday Watch your favourite Christmas movie together. When it is finished have everyone say what the movie tells us about the coming of Jesus.
- Week of Advent 3 – Saturday Take a walk around your neighbourhood tonight and enjoy all the lights and Christmas decorations that are up. Pray for all your neighbours.

Week of Advent 4 – Sunday	Light four candles for the coming of Jesus.
Week of Advent 4 – Monday	Sing some of your favourite Christmas carols or listen to some together as a family.
Week of Advent 4 – Tuesday	Enjoy time together as a family and remember all those who don't have families to enjoy the coming of Jesus together.
Week of Advent 4 – Wednesday	Pray for those who do not know Christ. That they find the light of Christ this Christmas.
Week of Advent 4 – Thursday	Pray for your Christian community. That it is truly welcoming to visitors and new parishioners, especially on this time of year.

Special Days

December 1 st	Today is World AIDS Day. Pray for all the victims of HIV and people who care for them.
December 6 th	Pray for better love and respect for <i>all people</i> . On this day, we pray especially for women going through difficult times, and we pray that men always show respect to women and treat them as equals.
December 7 th	Find a story about St. Nicholas (whose day it was yesterday) and read it together.
December 23 rd	Take a look at your Christmas tree – have everyone say which of the decorations most remind them of Jesus' birth
December 24 th	Read the nativity story together from a children's book or from Luke 2: 1-20. Enjoy the Christmas Eve worship at church tonight.