

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – First Sunday of Advent
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-5

Advent begins with darkness. In the days of the prophets, the Israelites looked to God for hope and promise. The prophets began to speak of the hope and light that would be coming to the people of God. Today we continue to share the stories of the prophets to remind us that we have been given this hope and light through the birth of Jesus Christ. During this time in the calendar year our days are getting shorter, and we wait for the light of Christ to shatter this darkness. In Advent we are encouraged to stop and listen and hear what the prophets are saying.

Theme: Come let us walk in the light.

Supplies Needed: Cloth for prayer space, Bible (with a translation used in your parish) advent wreath, a path (see preparing the space), supplies for making Anglican prayer beads (hemp yarn and pony beads work well for young children) if using Option 1, paper and colored pencils for Option 2. If using Option 3, a copy of the 25 days for each child, scissors, glue, tape or stapler.

Prepare: Prepare your prayer/gathering space with a small table, or space with a piece of cloth, it could be burlap, purple or sarum blue depending on your traditions. On this cloth put a small Advent wreath. The wreath can be something you have prepared together as a group or 4 small votive candles with greenery.

Welcoming the children: Gather the children together at the prayer table and ask some wondering questions –

- I wonder why the days are getting shorter?
- What are some things that remind you of the dark?
- What do you like/dislike about the darkness?

Remind the children that we have entered a new season in the church. What changes have they noticed in the room? What colors should they look for in the main Church? We are now in the season of waiting and listening, the season of Advent.

- What can help us if it is dark?

Opening Prayer: Each week we will add to the light by lighting one more candle. Light the first candle on your Advent wreath. Have one of the children lead the prayer with the others repeating each line of the following:

God in the night (God in the night)
God in the darkness (God in the darkness)
God in my heart (God in my heart)
As I wait (As I wait)
Keep me in the light (Keep me in the light)
Amen. (Amen.)

After the gathering/opening prayer time, you can move to another space in the room for storytelling. It allows the children to move and stretch and renew their focus on the story.

Gather together for your story.

The Story: In the Bible we hear stories from special people called prophets, they said things to many people for God. One of the prophets was Isaiah, he wanted people to know more about God, and begin to tell people about what would happen.

Ask one or two children to read the passage – Isaiah 2:1-5 aloud. The version listed is New Revised Standard. You should use a translation of the bible that is used within your own parish. With older children they can take turns looking up the verses and reading them aloud.

Isaiah 2:1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD!

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Questions: When the children have read this aloud, ask the wondering questions:

- I wonder where the Lord's house might be?
- I wonder what God wanted to us know about by teaching his ways?
- I wonder how we can live in peace with others?

When Isaiah continued by asking people to walk in the light of the LORD.

- I wonder what the light is?
- I wonder how we can walk in the light of the Lord?

Activities

These options can be done within your same space or a separate craft area. Encourage movement after the storytelling.

Option 1: Your group will create Anglican prayer beads for themselves and the younger class as well. These Anglican prayer beads will be used for prayer time throughout the season of Advent. Remind the children that these are to be left in the room, and will help us in our waiting during Advent. They will be able to take them home at the end of Advent.

Online Resources for Anglican prayer beads

<http://kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm>

http://www.trinitychurchelmira.org/MYP_Rosary.pdf

When they are finished you can continue with option 2 and/or or conclude with the final gathering.

Option 2: Invite the children to draw a path or road – the path that they are walking with God. Once their road is completed have them add themselves to the picture. On the back of the picture, ask them to write where their path is leading. Ask them to also name anyone who is helping them on this path. Some may want to write a prayer about the path. Encourage the children to draw or write depending on their comfort level.

Option 3: Using the 25 Days sheet found at the end of this lesson plan, print one copy for each child. Have the children cut them into strips to create an Advent Chain Calendar. The strips can be glued, taped or stapled in connecting rings. Then as they wait during Advent for the light of Christ, they should take off one ring each day. This can be done as an individual or as a family.

Gather/Ending: Gather the children together in a circle in your prayer area.

Optional: sing use Hymn 490 from The Hymnal 1982 – *I want to walk as a child of the light*.

If time allows, the children can share their pictures. Place the lighted wreath in the middle of your circle. Turn off the lights of the room. Ask the children if there is anyone who helps them on their path that they would like to ask for prayers, or if there is anything that they would like to say to the light.

Closing Prayer: God of Light and Life, Help us to walk in the light, help us to see our path. Amen.

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25 Days Advent Chain Calendar

Read Proverb 17:17a – memorize it!
Make a bookmark with your favorite bible verse for a gift for someone
Sing a Christmas Carol
Bring two cans of food to church – put them by your door to remember
Pop some popcorn and leave some outside for the birds to eat
Draw a picture of Bethlehem. What did it look like when Jesus was born?
Say a prayer for someone who has sent a Christmas card today.
Leave an empty chair at your table – for Jesus – remember those that might not have a warm home to be in this holiday season.
Read John 13:34 – memorize it
Pick one of the figures from the Nativity story. Share why that person is important to you.
Stand outside – listen and look and thank God for all you see and hear.
Read Luke 1:26-38
Read Luke 1:39-45

Read Luke 1:57-66
Read Luke 2:1-7
Read Luke 2:8-20
Listen to your favorite Christmas song.
Look at the Christmas lights in your neighborhood – remembering the light of Christ that is coming into the world.
Find your baby picture – think about Mary and the baby in the stable. What must it have been like for them?
Make cookies for someone and deliver them.
Send a letter or a card to someone.
Give a gently used toy or book to a charity.
At mealtime share your hope for the holiday season.
Make a snow angel – remember the angels that came to Mary and the Shepherds. Say a prayer.
Invite a friend to join you at church on Christmas.

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