

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

Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-16

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: A child will be born

Supplies Needed: Cloth for prayer space, advent wreath, Anglican prayer beads (if made by the older group during week 1), matches for the candles or batteries if candles are electric. For option 1 – prepare by checking with your clergy and/or altar guild for options for nativity set. For option 2 – bible and hymnal.

Prepare: Prepare your 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 who remembers what season we are celebrating in Church?
- What season are we preparing for? How do you get ready in your home?

We are still in the season of waiting and listening, the season of Advent.

- What is one thing that you have heard during this season of Advent?

Opening Prayer: Prior to the class, decide if the children will be able to take their prayer beads home, or if you will keep them for another season.

Light all of the candles on your advent wreath. Have the children each pick a strand of prayer beads. If they take them home you may want to print out and send some prayer ideas home. (See week 1 for online resources for additional prayers)

- At the cross – say, “Let us pray.”
- For the Invitational beads – say, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”
- For the first Cruciform bead – have the children say out loud or in their hearts something they have to wait for.
- For the first seven beads – repeat the line “Help us to wait, Lord.”
- When you reach the second Cruciform bead – have the children say out loud or in their hearts something they want help for.

- For the second seven beads – repeat the line “Guide us, Lord.”
- When you reach the third Cruciform bead – have the children say out loud or in their hearts something they want to pray for.
- For the third seven beads – repeat the line “Be with us, Lord.”
- When you reach the fourth Cruciform bead – have the children say out loud or in their hearts something they have to wait for.
- For the fourth seven beads – repeat the line “Help us to wait, Lord.”
- When you reach the first Cruciform bead again – have the children say the Lord’s Prayer together, ending with 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.

You should use a translation of the bible that is used within your own parish.

Isaiah 7:10-16 (New Revised Standard Version)

Here is one of the stories Isaiah told the people –

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.

Then Isaiah said: ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

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Questions:

- I wonder what it was like for the young woman to get ready for her baby? Who do you think that young woman might be?
- I wonder how do you get ready for a long trip? What do you need to bring along with you? What would you have to take if you were getting ready for a baby?
- I wonder how Mary got ready for Jesus? What do you think she took with her to Bethlehem?

Activities

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

Option 1: Preparing for Christmas

Prior to the class, work with your clergy or altar guild to determine if your congregation has a nativity set. Ask if your class could prepare the set for Christmas. The children then can be involved in carrying various pieces to the designated area. During the setting of the crèche, you can discuss how we wait to place the baby Jesus until Christmas. You can encourage the children to look for the baby when they return for Christmas services. If you have more children than pieces of the crèche, include rocks, moss, etc. for the setting. Children can be involved in creating the entire scene.

Option 2: Tell the Christmas Story

Enjoy telling the story of Jesus' birth with song and readings.

Read each reading to the children and sing together the first verse of each hymn.

- Read Luke 2:1-4, then sing – O, Little Town of Bethlehem, Hymn #78
- Read Luke 2:5-7, then sing – Silent Night, Holy Night, Hymn #111
- Read Luke 2:8-14, then sing – Go, Tell it on the mountain, Hymn #99
- Read Luke 2:15-20, then sing O Come. All Ye Faithful, Hymn #83

End by saying together - God is with us - Immanuel

Gather/Ending: Gather the children together in a circle.

If you would like sing use Hymn #101 from The Hymnal 1982 – *Away in a Manger*.

Closing Prayer: Place the lighted wreath in the middle of your circle. Turn off the lights of the room. Ask the children if there is anything or any prayer they would like to say to the light.

Conclude your time by saying the prayer:

Lord Jesus you continue to do great things for us, give us your gift of peace, as we await your coming. Amen.

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