

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C—Advent 3
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
RCL Old Testament Readings—Track One

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Background: This is the third Sunday of Advent, the four weeks that prepare us for Christmas. Advent means “coming” and the One who is coming is the messiah, Jesus. We remember and celebrate Jesus’ birth and we make ourselves ready for the time that Jesus will come again, when God will make all things new. The stories we hear in this season are from the prophets, who bring us messages of great hope and deep joy as we wait and watch and wonder.

A Notation for This Week’s Reading: God’s compassion for all the marginalized will be complete.

Theme: Rejoice! God Will Care for God’s People

Before Class: You will need brightly colored pipe cleaners, jingle bells, ribbons and beads. You may wish to have a CD player and a CD with joyful music to play.

Beginning: Prepare your gathering/prayer space with a cloth of blue or purple, whichever color your church uses in Advent. For the four weeks of Advent and two weeks of Christmas, you will need an Advent wreath and a Christ Candle, or four votive candles and a pillar candle, matches and a candlesnuffer. A chime is helpful to mark transitions but not necessary.

Opening Prayer: In this season of Advent, we light candles to remind us that Jesus, the light of the world, is coming. Holy God, help us get ready. Let our love of Jesus shine brightly in all that we do. Amen.

The Story: Zephaniah 3:14-20

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah:

Sing as loud as you can, O daughter of Zion!

Go ahead and shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,

O daughter Jerusalem!

God has taken away everything and everybody that could hurt you. God is right beside you and you don’t have anything to be afraid of or worry about anymore.

God has won the day.

He will rejoice over you with gladness,

He will renew you in his love;

He will join you in singing loud and long.

God says: I will take care of the disasters,

*and I will deal with the people who want to put you down.
I will save those who can't keep up with you
and gather the people who are on the fringes of your community,
and I will change their shame into praise and make their name famous over all the
earth.
I will bring you home, and make you special among all the people.*

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder who needs to hear the good news of God taking away everything and everybody that can hurt us or make us afraid?
- I wonder what God's singing might sound like? What would it sound like if we joined God's song of rejoicing?

Activity: Allow the children to choose several pipe cleaners. Set out plates with jingle bells and beads. The children will string the bells and beads onto the pipe cleaners and make wristlets. Tie several colored ribbons at intervals between the beads and bells. Choose a favorite piece of music to play for the children to dance to, or a song they know to sing along to. It would be wonderful if they could share this song with another group: the elderly, or the babies in the nursery?

Getting Closure: While we wait to hear and sing God's song of rejoicing, we can help those who are sad, scared and lonely. Make a list of the ways that the children think of to help and share it with their parents.

Closing Prayer: Ask the children to repeat after you:

Dear God, (Dear God,
We thank you for the prophets (we thank you for the prophets)
Who give us words (who give us words)
Of hope and joy (of hope and joy)
As we wait (as we wait)
For the coming of Jesus. (for the coming of Jesus.)
Amen. (Amen.)

*Scripture from "God's Word, My Voice: A Lectionary for Children" by Lyn Zill Briggs.
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