

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

Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10

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: Everlasting Joy

Note for The Third Sunday in Advent: The third Sunday in Advent is often represented by the color rose or pink. It is called Gaudete Sunday which in Latin is rejoice. This Sunday has a focus on the hope of the coming of Jesus.

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. If your church tradition is to have a pink candle for this Sunday be sure it is a part of your Advent wreath or prayer area. For option 1 – construction paper, crayons, markers, stickers. For option 2 – a cd player or mp3 player. For option 3 – prepared carols.

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. Add a pink candle and something that represents to you as a leader “joy” or “hope” that you are willing to share with the children. Examples – if you enjoy baking you could bring a cookie sheet or muffin tin, a picture of your family, or pictures from a mission trip from your church to represent hope. Place the item in your prayer space.

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?
- Did you notice any color changes in church or our prayer area today? Pink represents the joy we have in our heart for Jesus.

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

- What is one thing that makes you really happy?

Opening Prayer: Light the first and second candle on your Advent wreath. Then light the pink candle. Have the children each pick a strand of prayer beads. Explain that the beads were made by the older children. They will stay in our prayer space for us to use each week during Advent.

- 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:

Bring your item that represents joy/happiness to you to the circle. Show it to the group. Explain why it makes you happy.

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 he also wanted to share the good news and joy that God can bring to each of us.

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

Isaiah 35:1-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

Here is one of the stories Isaiah told the people –

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
 like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
 and rejoice with joy and singing.

Strengthen the weak hands,
 and make firm the feeble knees.
 Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
 ‘Be strong, do not fear!

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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Questions

- I wonder how we can be filled with joy?
- I wonder who Isaiah may be talking about when he says the blind will see? Who does that remind you of?
- I wonder how we can share joy with others? What can you do in your family to share joy?

Activities

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

Option 1: Joy through the Mail

Working with your clergy, get the names of those who are in need of homebound within your congregation. Talk to the children about how they feel when they receive Christmas cards in the mail. How we can share joy with others by making something special for them. Then have the children create cards that will connect with the older children option of making cookies.

Option 2: Joy in Music and Movement

Express joy and happiness through music and movement. One option is to use the song I've got the joy by Go Fish. You can use the YouTube version to play, or have the kids sing along.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ES1RmHEiSW4>

Option 3: Join the older group if you are going to deliver the cookies as a families or groups to practice singing Christmas carols. Decide on which carols to sing prior to the class.

Gather/Ending: Gather the children together in a circle. If you would like sing, use the song 'I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart'.

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 having the children repeat each line after you:

Open my eyes to see your light.
Open my hands to receive your bread.
Open my ears to hear your word.
Open my mouth to speak your love. Amen.

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