

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Luke 1:26-38**

**Background**

Advent means “coming.” The coming of the baby Jesus, God among us in human flesh. The coming of Christ again “the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. In between those two great comings is God’s constant longing for each of us to come to God, to love God, and to let God love us. “Be alert.” Notice. Listen. Watch. For what? For the ways God will choose to get our attention this season. For those moments when we notice that our ways are not in alignment with God’s ways. For those shimmering glimpses of the Kingdom of God.

**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

A message, directly from God, sent by an angel! No wonder the angel had to begin with “Do not be afraid.” And for whom is this message? A very young girl, engaged but not yet married. The message: “You are to bear a child, the Son of the Most High.” The angel makes a compelling case, the young girl chooses to risk accepting, and God is choosing to come among us as a human being – the word made flesh.

**Theme: Do Not Be Afraid**

**Before Class:** Bring in white paper, glue, crayons, markers, and glitter.

**Beginning:** Greet each child. Listen as they tell you what decorations they have noticed this past week – lights, etc. And, if there are any signs within our church of the coming of Christmas (some churches do put up Christmas decorations on the Fourth Sunday of Advent), see what they have noticed.

Gathering around the Advent wreath, state that today we get to light all four candles in our wreath because the message is: someone is coming VERY SOON. Who is coming? When?

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you decided to send your son, Jesus, as a little baby. Thank you for all the fun things we will do at Christmas to celebrate Jesus’ birth. Amen.

**The Story: Luke 1: 26-38**

This Luke's account of the Annunciation, when the angel tells Mary she will bear a child. You can read the story from a children’s Bible or tell it like this:

Maybe you remember that last week we had a story about a messenger. Today, we have a story about a different kind of messenger. This messenger is an angel.

Mary was a young girl about to get married. One day she was all by herself in her house when suddenly there was an angel right there in front of her. Now, I have seen lots of pictures of angels, and they always look so soft and pretty. But almost the first thing this angel said was

"Don't be afraid!" The angel told Mary that God needed her to be the mother of a very special baby. And the baby should be named Jesus. Mary was very surprised, but she believed the angel and said she would do what God wanted her to do.

**Reflection Questions:**

The angel said, "Don't be afraid!"

- Why would anyone be afraid of an angel?
- Would you be afraid if an angel suddenly appeared?

**Angel Activity:** Give each child a piece of white paper and markers and ask them to draw a picture of the angel appearing to Mary. Glitter and some glue to apply it would be great for angel wings. In this way, they can reflect on the story. Another way to do this would be to let them act out the story, taking turns being Mary and the angel. You may choose to do both.

**Getting Closure:** Sing the first verse of Silent Night.

**Closing prayer:** Loving God, thank you for your servant, Mary, who listened to the angel and said yes. Thank you for the birth of baby Jesus and the love Jesus brought to us all. Amen.

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Luke 1:26-38**

**Background**

Advent means “coming.” The coming of the baby Jesus, God among us in human flesh. The coming of Christ again “the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. In between those two great comings is God’s constant longing for each of us to come to God, to love God, and to let God love us. “Be alert.” Notice. Listen. Watch. For what? For the ways God will choose to get our attention this season. For those moments when we notice that our ways are not in alignment with God’s ways. For those shimmering glimpses of the Kingdom of God.

**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

A message, directly from God, sent by an angel! No wonder the angel had to begin with “Do not be afraid.” And for whom is this message? A very young girl, engaged but not yet married. The message: “You are to bear a child, the Son of the Most High.” The angel makes a compelling case, the young girl chooses to risk accepting, and God is choosing to come among us as a human being – the word made flesh.

**Theme: Do Not Be Afraid**

**Before class:** You will need: copies of the reading or script for today, a large roll of paper or a couple of sheets of newsprint taped together, and markers. If you have access to a length of gold tinsel bring it in, along with some glue and other art supplies to help create the angel.

**Beginning:** Mini-Review.

Today is the last Sunday of Advent – the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We have been looking at things to pay attention to, to get ready for, and be mindful of during this season. The message of Advent is to ‘Stay awake!’ Let’s see if we can remember any of the messages – or the messengers – we have read about – talked about – even acted out. If I said ‘Pharisee,’ what would you say? If I said ‘honey and locusts,’ whom would you remember? Do you remember way back to the First Sunday of Advent and what the disciples were worried about and what Jesus told them?”

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for people who help keep us aware of your coming into the world. Thank you for the friends of Jesus, John the Baptist, the Pharisees, and each one of us here today. We need each other to help keep awake and alert to your presence among us. Amen.

**Opening Reflection:**

The idea of this is not to get the “right answer” but to get them thinking about surprise.

Say to the children: God is a God of Surprise.

If you agree, why?

If you disagree, why?

**The Story: Luke 1:26-38**

Ok, let's see what surprises we can find in the story for today.

You can either read it as the teacher, or you can invite three children to read the parts of: Narrator, Mary, and Angel.

**Reflection Questions:**

- If someone asked you to describe an angel, what would you say?
- Would "scary" be part of your description?
- What did the angel say to Mary, when he noticed that she was pretty scared of him? (Luke 30)
- What other things did the angel say to make Mary feel more confident about saying yes to his strange announcement to her? (Luke 36)

**Angel Creation:**

Invite the class to collaborate on drawing the angel as he might have appeared to Mary. Notice that the angel is referred to as "he" so the angel will not be frilly and feminine. Let the children decide what he looked like and draw him. When they finish, they may choose to hang it where all can see. And if they do not want to share him, that is OK, too.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the children to hang the angel in the class space. Note that the life-sized John the Baptist might have already been hung. These are two characters of Advent who bring us messages. Review the class's New Year's resolutions. You could leave them up for the rest of the year or you could fold them up and bring them back out on the last Sunday of Epiphany (the Transfiguration), which is the Sunday before Lent begins. You could then discuss how they have been following them.

**Closing prayer:** Thank you for the season of Christmas that so very soon will begin. Help us to keep awake to notice the fun we are having and the fun we may be able to make happen for someone else. Amen.

**Luke 1:26–38**

**Narrator:** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,

**Angel:** "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

**Narrator:** But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her,

**Angel:** "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

**Narrator:** Mary said to the angel,

**Mary:** "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

**Narrator:** The angel said to her,

**Angel:** "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

**Narrator:** Then Mary said,

**Mary:** "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

**Narrator:** Then the angel departed from her.

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 1:26-38**

**Background**

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**Theme: Do Not Be Afraid**

**Before:** You will need copies of the script found at the end of this lesson. You may also want to make copies of “Annunciation” and “After Annunciation” found at the end of this lesson so people can take them home.

**Beginning:** Spend your usual beginning time with coffee and tea.

**Opening Prayer: Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (Book of Common Prayer, page 212)

**The Scripture: Luke 1:26-38**

Hear the story read aloud. Invite three people to read the parts of the story: Narrator, Angel, and Mary. Script can be found at the end of the lesson.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What catches your attention, raises questions, stirs your imagination as you listen to this reading? Share in a circle without comments.
- Why do you think the angel had to say, so very quickly, “Do Not Be Afraid”?
- I wonder if we would be afraid if we were in Mary’s shoes?
- What do you imagine Mary’s feelings to be when she heard the entire message?
- How do you understand this story? What implications does it have for you this Advent?
- Why do you think God chose a teenage peasant girl to be the Mother of Jesus?

**Getting Closure:** Read the two poems by Madeleine L'Engle, "Annunciation" and "After the Annunciation" from her book *The Weather of the Heart* (H. Shaw, 1978). After you read them, invite the group to say what stood out for them as we approach Christmas.

**Annunciation**

To the impossible: Yes!  
Enter and penetrate  
O Spirit. Come and bless  
this hour: the star is late.  
Only the absurdity of love  
can break the bonds of hate.

**After Annunciation**

This is the irrational season  
when love blooms bright and wild.  
Had Mary been filled with reason  
there'd have been no room for the child.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for this community of people as we share our thoughts. Continue to awaken our imaginations, especially as we grow in the love you have for us. Keep us open to your spirit. Amen.

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