

Focus: Be Ready

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
Advent Wreath-and flames
CD: Advent CD Cycle B
Bible: Black Binder- reading in lesson
Oh the Places You'll Go cover picture-
Gifts from God
Gift bag with activity cards

Gathering (children sit on carpet/floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. From last week: Did any one attend the Children's Mass last week? What did you learn about Jesus? Did you learn that he is our King of love and kindness and when we are kind to others we are showing our love for Jesus? This week is the first week of Advent. the time of year we get ready for Jesus' birth. Today we will learn about being ready for Jesus.

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.

Let us pray.

Father in heaven, Jesus told us to be watchful and ready for his coming. Help us to prepare while we are waiting until he comes again in glory. We pray this through Jesus, your son.

Amen.

Today is a special day because it is the first day of the Church year. It's not the same as New Year's Day. This is the day the church starts a new cycle of stories that tell us more about Jesus. The new church year starts with 4 special Sundays called Advent. During Advent we hear stories about how we can be followers of Jesus and get ready to welcome God into our lives. We have an Advent Wreath that will help us count the weeks until we will hear the stories of Christmas. Today we light the first candle (a purple one) this is the candle of Hope. We are waiting in Hope that Jesus will come again to make God's reign complete. Hope is a feeling that something big is about to happen. We know that Jesus will come again, it will be a surprise so we must always have our eyes on Jesus so we will be ready.

Prayer: Lord, as we light the candle of Hope, we thank you for sending Jesus to us to show us the way to you. Help us remember to wait patiently and make good choices so we are ready for you to come again. Amen.

Song/Movement

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, track: 1, from Advent Cycle B

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Chorus:
I got your hope, peace, joy and love
The best gifts come from above

I got your hope, peace, joy and love
in my heart
(Repeat)

Hope is a light in the darkness,
shining brightly on Bethlehem town
The Messiah is born; he's our king
and our lord; the promise of hope
we have found

Glory to god in the highest; peace
on earth and good will to all men
Take the star in the east to the
prince of peace who will someday
be coming again.

Repeat chorus 2x

An angel appeared from the
heavens, bringing news to the
shepherds that night.
Good tidings of joy, in the birth of a
boy, born to give us forgiveness and
life.

Jesus Emmanuel Savior; little baby a
gift from above
He loved us so much he gave his
only son, the gift of hope, peace,
joy and love.

Repeat Chorus 4x

Memory Verse

Say: Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.

Jesus will come again in glory.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: The kingdom of God that Jesus started when he lived on earth is here with us but it is not here completely. We know this whenever we see crying and hurting in the world. We look forward to the end of time, when Christ will come again in glory to put an end to all pain and sadness and bring the completion of the kingdom of God on earth.

During the season of Advent we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus and the end of time when the reign of God will bring peace to all the earth. We believe that we have a responsibility to work for fairness and peace now with the help of God's grace so that we are ready when Jesus comes again.

- *Where do you see the peace and love of Christ in the world around you?*
- *How can you bring the peace and love of Jesus into the world around you?*

Gospel Story

Play CD: Track 2-“Stay Awake-Be Ready” from Advent CD

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

Read: None, pp. N/A,

Jesus told his disciples:
 [Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]
“Be Watchful!
 [Hold eyes open wide with fingers]
Be Alert!
 [Cup hands behind ears]
It’s like a man traveling far away.
 [Point into the distance]
He leaves each servant in charge of his own work.
 [Point to the children, one by one]
He orders the gatekeeper to keep watch.
 [Hand over eyes, searching]
You too must watch.
 [Hold eyes open wide with fingers]
You don’t know what time the Lord is coming.
 [Tap wrist (watch)] or [clock on cell phone]
May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.
 [Rest head on arms]
I say it again:
 [Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]
Watch!”
 [Hold eyes open wide with fingers]

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *What does the traveling man tell his servants?*
- *Why does he give them each their own job? –We each have special unique gifts.*
- *Who keeps watch?*
- *Why do we need to keep alert and awake?*
- *Who is coming?*
- *When is Jesus coming?*

Reflection on Reading:

Jesus tells us to keep watch 3 times in this Gospel story. What do you think would happen if the man in the Gospel story came back and found that no one was watching, no one got their work done? He would be disappointed. Jesus would be sad if he came back and found that we were not doing the work of the Lord in the world.

During the season of Advent the message in the scripture readings is to prepare for the coming of Jesus. We remember Jesus being born as a baby and we also get ready for Christ to come again in glory. The gospel for this First Sunday of Advent tells us to be alert and ready for Jesus’ Second Coming.

We need to keep doing the things Jesus has taught us to do all the time so we can be ready whenever Jesus comes again.

What does Jesus teach us? Be kind to others, take care of the sick and injured, help those who have less than you.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Has anyone heard of the book: "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" Dr. Seuss talks about a place called "the waiting place." He describes it as a useless place where people are just waiting.

*Waiting for a train to go
or a bus to come, or a plane to go
or the mail to come, or the rain to go
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow
or waiting around for a Yes or No
or waiting for their hair to grow.
Everyone is just waiting.*

We spend a lot of time waiting, We wait in line at the grocery store, the doctor's office, for lunch to be ready, for recess time at school. Do you like waiting? Not many people do, but in today's gospel Jesus tells us to Wait and Be Ready. We all have to spend some time in this "waiting place" that Dr. Seuss talks about, but I don't think it has to be a useless place. While we are waiting, life goes on, and we must make good use of our time. What can we do?

We are in the season of Advent. Advent means "to come." Do you know what's coming? Of course, Christmas-Jesus is coming. This is an exciting time, but it may also be a difficult time of waiting -- especially waiting for the day when you can open the gifts that you see under the tree. What can we do to make this time of waiting for Christmas more than just a useless time in the waiting place? Well, we can think about the true meaning of Christmas. We can think about Jesus and his love. We can think about all the gifts we have from God. Jesus is the biggest, best present but we have lots of others gifts from God.

Open the boxes one at a time to reveal the gift-have them guess what it represents. Open as many as time allows.

1. A jar full of sand with a seashell - The beach/oceans.
2. A box full of paper hearts - love (emphasized as the most important gift of all).
3. Plastic or real flowers - nature/plants.
4. A set of paints - creativity; our mind; individuality
5. Plastic food-Food to eat
6. Box of small toy animals - God gave us animals
7. Box of real ugly plastic bugs - God even gave us these!

Dear God, Thank you for all the gifts of creation. Help us to remember that Jesus is the greatest gift of all. Amen.

Activity 2:

Preparing for Jesus to come again isn't something we do once and we are done. We work on it every day. He wants everyone to live with him forever so we must be ready when he comes.

We are going to play a little game. I will read a description of something someone could do and if the action is something we should do to prepare for Jesus we will clap our hands, if it is not something we should do we will stomp our feet.

Use cut slips of paper-

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who loves us so much he sent his son to be with us?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who came to show us how to be ready when he comes again?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to be ready to receive Jesus when he returns?

Sending Forth

Say: We all want to be ready when Jesus comes. We can get special blessings when we come to church. When our family goes to the altar to receive communion you can receive a blessing. Cross your arms over your chest. (Show an example and have them mirror you). Then raise your face to the minister or priest and they will give you a blessing.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Tell me the Story of Jesus" track 3 from Advent CD Cycle B while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.