

Focus: Be Ready

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
Advent Wreath-and flames
CD-Little Lit Advent Cycle C
Gospel: In Lesson Plan
Red/Green Cards

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Jesus being the King of love and truth. This week we hear about how we should be ready for Jesus to come again.*

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 C

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.

- *What do you think it will be like when the kingdom of God is fully established on earth?*
- *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

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 said:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars.

[Point to the sky]

The sea and waves will roar.

[Make big waves with hands]

The heavens will shake.

[Raise wide open shaking hands]

People will be frightened.

[Look frightened, bite fingernails]

Then the Son of Man, Jesus, will come on a cloud.
[Raise hands towards heaven, palms up]
With power and glory.
[Strong arms]
When you see this,
[Point to eyes]
Stand tall and raise your heads
[Stand tall with head high and praying hands]
Because the Redeemer, Jesus, is near.
[Point heavenward]
Keep God in your heart.
[Lay your hands on your heart]
You don't want to be surprised.
[Look surprised]
Be ready when the time comes.
[Cross hands on heart]
Pray for the power
[Praying hands]
To make the right choices and to stand before the Son of Man.

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Where will there be signs that Jesus is coming?*
- *What will happen when Jesus comes?*
- *What do we need to do in order to be ready for the coming of Jesus?*

Reflection on Reading:

A few weeks ago we heard a similar Gospel story and Jesus told us that only God, the Father, knows when he will come again.

When Jesus was born on the first Christmas a great new star appeared in the sky to lead people to Jesus. We don't know what form these signs will take, but we trust God to take care of that.

We need to be ready to greet Jesus when he comes again. We should stand tall and raise our heads to show Jesus we are ready to help him in God's Kingdom. This will be a time of peace and justice. We don't need to be afraid, but stand up tall and show Jesus we are ready.

We can prepare for Jesus' coming by praying, loving God, working for justice and fairness and caring for each other.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

We are in the season of Advent (means "coming"). Do you know what's coming? Of course, Christmas 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. We are waiting for Christmas, but we are also waiting for something else. We are waiting for Jesus' return. He told us that he would come again and he told us to watch and be ready for him. What should we do while we are waiting? We should worship and praise him, love and serve him and share his love with others. When we are doing those things, we will be ready for his return, and we will find joy in waiting.

What can we do to make this time of waiting for Christmas a time to help us prepare for Jesus coming again? We can think about the true meaning of Christmas. We can think about Jesus and his love. We can make sure we give instead of only receiving. We can enjoy all of beautiful music and the decorations of the season and spending time with our family. When we do those things, we will find joy in waiting for Jesus.

Let's practice making good choices that help us get ready for the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

All good things come from God. Without God there is no goodness. Who would want to live in a world without goodness? Those who love God are filled with his love and goodness.

Even the simplest prayer or smallest kindness to someone else, if it is done in the name of Jesus, becomes an act of love for God.

Let's play a game to see if we know how to be kind to someone else.

Red Light-Green Light

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own. (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down)

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- You give your unused toys to the homeless shelter
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- You help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.
- There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- Before you go home from a play date you help clean up
- Listen to your parent when they tell you it's time to clean up your room

- You don't pay attention at the grocery store and you hit someone with a shopping cart
- You run or skate around inside a store
- Visit someone in a nursing home
- Make a card for a sick friend
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister

Activity 2:

Waiting Game-

Rapidly call out directions for everyone to follow. For example: Hands on head—Touch your toes—Rub your tummy—Sit down—Stand up—Do Jumping Jacks....

Then call out "WAIT!" When this happens everyone freezes in position while the group slowly counts to 5. Then continue another round of actions. Talk about waiting. Is it hard to wait sometimes? Waiting is one way that God teaches us patience and thankfulness

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 sent us Jesus to show us the way to live in peace?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who will come again in glory to reign with fairness, peace and kindness?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to make the right choices as we wait for Jesus to come again?

Sending Forth

Say: *While we wait for Jesus, remember to that we should help others when they ask us and take care of those who are sad or hurt.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Change My Heart O' God.*" track 2 from Little Lit Advent Cycle C 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.