

Focus: Getting 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
Nativity Pictures and Felt Board
Book: Who is Coming to Our House?

Gathering (have children sit on floor-Criss-Cross Applesauce)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Last week we heard a story about John the Baptist. John the Baptist told us we need to be ready for Jesus by doing kind things and telling others about Jesus. This week John tells us to share what we have and help those who can't do things for themselves.

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.

Jesus our Light, Fill our hearts with joyful hope, as we wait to celebrate your coming into the world. Guide us each day with the light of your love.

Today is the 3rd week of Advent. We light the pink candle; this is the candle of Joy. We are waiting for Jesus, the bringer of true and everlasting joy.

Let us pray: Loving God, we thank you for the joy you bring us. Through Your Son we have found joy in living as your children. Help us to prepare our hearts for this gift. We ask in the name of your son, Jesus. 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.*

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

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

Say: *John told his followers that he baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Water cleans the body, but the Holy Spirit cleans the heart. We baptize with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Make Sign of the Cross) The water we see and feel reminds us that God, who is invisible and untouchable, is present with us. It symbolizes the washing of our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

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,

Crowds asked John the Baptist:

[Pour imaginary water from your hand]

“What should we do?”

[Wondering hands, palms up]

John answered:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers.]

“If you have two coats, give someone who has none.

[Pull arms in close, and huddle as if cold.]

If you have food, share it too.”

[Put imaginary food in your mouth]

Tax collectors asked what they should do to prepare.

[Wondering hands, palms up]

John answered:

[Chatty hand]

“Take only the money that is owed, no more.”

[Rub imaginary coin between thumb and fingers]

To soldiers, John said: “Tell the truth about who has done wrong,

[Chatty hand]

and be content with what you are paid.”

[Rub imaginary coin between thumb and fingers]

People asked if John was the Christ.

[Chatty hand]

John told them: “ I am baptizing with water.

[Pour imaginary water from your hand]

There is someone coming who is greater than I am.

[Open arms wide and raise toward heaven]

I'm not even great enough to loosen his sandals.

[Bowed head and praying hands]

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit,

[Point heavenward]

and he will gather what is good to himself."

[Spread arms wide and gather them in, crossing hands over heart]

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What does John the Baptist tell the crowd they need to do?*
- *What does John use to baptize the people?*
- *Who does John the Baptist say is coming?*
- *How will the one who is coming baptize the people?*

Reflection on Reading:

John the Baptist told the crowd that they must share what they have with those who have nothing. A person can only wear one coat at a time. If you are warm and someone is freezing it would be selfish not to share your extra coat with them. If you have food and someone else is very, very hungry it would be selfish not to share. (A great woman, Dorothy Day, once said that, there is always enough for an extra person at the table, each person, just takes a little less) Jesus taught us to love each other. We prepare to meet Jesus by showing that love.

A tax collector is in charge of collecting money from the people of the town so that everyone in the community can have what they need. But sometimes the tax collectors in Jesus' time would take more than was owed. That is stealing and John was telling them to prepare for Jesus by treating everyone fairly.

Jesus said that John the Baptist was a great man. John said he wasn't even good enough to help Jesus with his sandals. John was a great man, but he was also humble. Being humble means to think about others needs more than your own. We should make sure that we don't act like we are better than others.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Today we lit the PINK candle on the Advent Wreath. The pink candle means JOY!

We are half way from the beginning of Advent to Christmas Day. Our waiting for Jesus is almost over.

Let's play a game and see if we can remember characters of the Christmas Story.

(Place the pictures (except Jesus) on the table and tell the children to look them over and remember them. Let them have a few minutes to memorize them and then remove them from the table.)

Ask them to raise their hand if they remember a piece of the picture. As they guess a character, put the picture on the board and ask the kids what they know about that character.

- Mary-Jesus' Mother
- Joseph-Jesus' Father, carpenter
- Angel-Told Mary and Joseph they would be Jesus' parents, told the shepherds Jesus was born.
- Star-Guided the kings to the stable
- Stable-Where Jesus was born
- Kings-Came to bring gifts to the baby Jesus, followed the star to Bethlehem
- Journey-A donkey carried Mary to the town of Bethlehem
- Camel-Kings rode camels to see Jesus
- Cow, Rooster, Sheep-lived in the stable where Jesus was born

Put Jesus up last. We always wait until Christmas Day to add Jesus to the Nativity because we are waiting to celebrate his birth. Jesus is always in our hearts. We wait for the day when we will see him in person.

Dear Jesus, help us to wait patiently for your coming. Help us to care for others and share what we have so that everyone will have what they need. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Activity 2:

Read the book "Who is Coming to Our House?"

Review what everyone did to get ready for the visitor.

Remind them of last week's conversation about getting ready for others to come and visit. We clean the house and make the beds. John told everyone what they should do to prepare for Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus is coming again and, just as in the day of John the Baptist, it is important for us to make sure our hearts are clean and ready for the coming of the Lord. We do that by telling God about our mistakes, saying we are sorry and asking God to forgive us. If we will do that, the Bible tells us that he will forgive us and make our hearts clean.

Cleaning house isn't something you can do one time and forget it. It is something that we must do every day. If we kept our house clean all the time, it wouldn't be such a big job to get ready for company. That same thing is true when it comes to keeping our hearts ready for Jesus' return. We must spend time each day in prayer, reading his Word, and asking God's forgiveness for those things that keep us from being ready to welcome Jesus' return.

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 takes care of us and wants us to help others?
Do you believe in Jesus, who comes to baptize us with the Holy Spirit?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who comes to fill our hearts with joy?*

Sending Forth

Say: *Remember Jesus wants us to share what we have and to be kind to others everywhere.*

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.