

Sunday, December 6, 2009

Advent Two – St. Nicholas Day

Preparation:

Read [Malachi 3: 1-4](#) and [Luke 3: 1-6](#) the readings for this Sunday over. You may also want to look at this [art](#) selection and these [prayer](#) suggestions as you get ready to prepare this lesson. Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yearc/adventc2.htm>

<http://www.stnicholascenter.org/Brix?pageID=38> – a great site with lots of stuff about St. Nicholas

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/Curr173.pdf>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/johnbaptist.htm>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/fanfare-for-a-king.html>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/adv2/art.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/c/2Advent-c/A-2Advent-c.html>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/john.htm>

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

Advent Wreath/Candle

Candle lighter

Bible & Bookmark

Blue cloth

Newsprint and markers

Bell from last week's lesson

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the blue cloth on the table. Have them help you place the Advent Wreath or candle, the bell from last week and the Bible on the cloth. Light two candles on the wreath or the single candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

For endings and beginnings, we thank you God,

For learning and love, we thank you Jesus,

For strength and courage, we thank you Spirit.

Amen

Blow out the candles. Ask the children how the first week of Advent has gone for them and their families. Ask the children what they do to get ready for a special event – do they dress up really nice? do they make sure that everything is ready for the event? When God was getting the people living in Israel ready for the coming of Jesus a special person was sent to get them ready. Ask them to listen to today's story carefully for how we need to get ready for the coming of Jesus.

Story Time:

Materials needed: a bar of soap

Instructions: Unwrap the bar of soap and lay it where you can get your hands on it.

Teach the children the following chant – you may want to add hand claps as you are doing the chant:

Clean up! Clean up!

God wants us to clean up!

There were once two prophets, messengers of God, that had words to speak to the people that came from God. As we get ready for Christmas these are the messages that we need to hear.

Clean up! Clean up!

God wants us to clean up!

The first prophet was named Malachi. Malachi lived long, long before Jesus was born. Malachi lived long, long before any of us were born. Malachi was given a message by God. Let us listen to the words from Malachi:

God says: I will send a messenger who will prepare the way. Then suddenly the messenger of the covenant will come to the temple. Who can put up with the day of God's coming? For God will be like a bar of soap (*hold up the bar of soap*) and clean everyone. For God will be like a fire that makes silver and gold pure and clean everyone. Then the people will be able to walk with God and follow in God's way.

Clean up! Clean up!

God wants us to clean up!

The next prophet was named John the Baptist. John the Baptist lived long, long before any of us were born. John the Baptist lived at the same time of Jesus. John the Baptist was given a message from God. Let us listen to the message from John the Baptist:

John was wandering in the desert when the word of God came to him. He was living at the time that the Romans were in charge of the people of Israel. John went all around the land telling people that they needed to get clean (*hold up bar of soap*), ask God to forgive them for all the things that they had done wrong and get baptized to show that they wanted to follow in God's way. John knew that he was getting the people ready to hear an even bigger message from God.

Clean up! Clean up!

God wants us to clean up!

Let us listen to God's messages and get ready for Christmas by cleaning up ourselves.

Clean up! Clean up!

God wants us to clean up!

Response:

Idea #1: Message Cards

The message of today's lesson is not what we expect to hear during the Advent season. It is a message that are all encouraged to share. These cards will be a way that the children can share it with others.

Materials needed: card stock, fine line markers, seasonal stickers, old Christmas cards, glue sticks, scissors

Instructions: Fold the card stock in half. Print the following on the outside of the card **HEAR THE MESSAGE** and on the inside of the card **PREPARE FOR GOD'S COMING INTO THE WORLD**. Give each child a prepared card and have them read the message on the card. Ask them what message people need to hear. Then get the children to read the message on the inside of the card. Invite the children to decorate their cards with pictures from the old cards, the stickers and markers. As they are decorating their cards have a discussion with the children about who they will give their cards to and what they will tell them about the message that God wants us all to share. Encourage the children to share their cards as soon as they can.

Idea #2: Soap Gift

Prophets use interesting images or metaphors to get our attention. This soap gift will be unusual enough that a conversation about the coming of Jesus will happen with whoever the children decide to give the soap to.

Materials needed: plain bars of soap, toothpicks or large plastic needles (like the ones used for craft projects) sharpie permanent markers, small clear plastic zipper bags, seasonal stickers

Instructions: Give each child a bar of soap and invite them to take it out of the paper wrappings. Remind them what prophet Malachi had to say to the people of God and what the prophet John the Baptist had to say to the people of God. Invite them to think of an image or word that they could draw or write onto the bar of soap. Give them a toothpick or plastic needle to draw the image or to write the word into the bar of soap. You may want to suggest that they go fairly deep into the soap so that it will last while being used. Once they are completed their drawing or writing, give each child a plastic bag. Have them print on the outside of the bag, with a sharpie marker, **PREPARE FOR GOD'S COMING INTO THE WORLD**. Let them use the stickers to decorate the outside of the bag as well. As they are doing the decorating invite them to think about who they are going to give their soap to and who they will tell the story of God's prophets to. When they are done decorating their bags have them put their soap into the bags, so that they can give them to the person they have been thinking about.

Idea #3: Candy Cane Wreath

This is the decoration response for this week. It will be important to share with the children that St. Nicholas was a prophet of his day who spoke out about poverty in his community and that we are encouraged to speak out in our day as well.

Materials needed: pipe cleaners of various colours, yarn, strong tape, scissors, green poster board, scissors, glue guns and their glue sticks, website about St. Nicholas

Instructions: Check the St. Nicholas website out that is in the links at the beginning of the lesson. Draw 30 cm/12 inch circle on the poster board and then draw a circle 5 cm/2 inch smaller inside the first circle. Cut out the inside circle. Make a circle for each child. Give each child a prepared circle. Invite them to make candy cane shapes by twisting two different coloured pipe cleaners together and then bending the top to make a crook. Tell the children that the candy cane reminds us of the shepherd's crook and is the shape that bishops use for their crosiers or crooks and that St. Nicholas who we remember today was a bishop in the early church. When they

"Virtual Church School -- Anglican Church of Canada, Council of the North ... <http://dioceseofkeewatin.ca/virtual-church-school>"

feel that they have enough candy canes made help them to glue them onto their wreaths. Cut the yarn so that it is long enough to make a hanging loop for the wreath. Using the strong tape attach the yarn to the back of the wreath. Encourage the children to hang their wreaths at home for their families to enjoy at home.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Place the soap from the story time on the worship table. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Bless our Advent journey loving God,

Bless our preparations loving Jesus,

Bless our hearts loving Spirit.

Amen.