

Sunday, December 20, 2009

Advent Four

Preparation:

Read [Micah 5: 2-5a](#), [Luke 1:26-38](#) and [Luke 1: 39-55](#) the readings for this Sunday over. You may also want to look at this [art](#) selection and these [prayer](#) suggestions. 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/adventc4.htm>

http://ecusa.anglican.org/50534_50556_ENG_HTM.htm

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/Curr165.pdf>

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/Curr166.pdf>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/adv4es.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/adv4!art.htm>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/gift-of-love.html>

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

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

Advent Wreath/Candle

Candle lighter

Bible & Bookmark

Blue cloth

Newsprint and markers

Bell, bar of soap and stone from previous weeks.

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, the bar of soap, stone and the Bible on the cloth. Light four 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. Tell the children that you are going to tell them the story right away today as it is a really important one to hear.

Story Time:

Materials needed: angel ornament

Instructions: Have the angel ornament nearby to bring out during the story.

Bring out the angel ornament. Ask the children if they know what this is – explain to the children that angels are sent directly by God to give special messages to some people.

There once was a young woman named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. She loved Joseph. She loved God and tried hard to do all the things that God wanted everyone to do. One day an amazing thing happened to Mary.

Mary was at home. She was having an ordinary day. All of a sudden a bright light came into the room. *Show the children the angel ornament again.* An angel came into the room. The angel was named Gabriel. Gabriel greeted Mary by saying, “Hello Mary. God has sent me to you with a special message.”

This made Mary step back. She really didn’t know what Gabriel was talking about. Gabriel could see that Mary was feeling confused. He told her, “Don’t be afraid Mary. God is with you. You are going to be the most blessed of all women. God is going to give you a son. He will be great and will be called the Son of God. He will be called a king and his kingdom will be forever.”

Mary looked even more confused at this point. She asked the angel, “How can this be? Joseph and I aren’t even married yet?”

Gabriel told her, “The Holy Spirit is going to come upon you and you will get pregnant. The child you are going to have will be holy and will be the Son of God. You should know that your cousin Elizabeth, who everyone thought couldn’t have a baby is now 6 months pregnant. Remember nothing is impossible with God.”

Mary told Gabriel, “Here I am, God’s servant. Let it happen just like you have told me.”

At that point Gabriel left. Mary decided that she needed to go and see her cousin Elizabeth. She travelled up from Nazareth to the hill country. She greeted Elizabeth when she came into the house. When Elizabeth heard Mary her baby leaped inside her and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She declared to Mary, “You are blessed among women. Your child will be blessed as well. How is that the mother of the Son of God should come to see me? As soon as I heard your greeting my baby leaped for joy! You are blessed for believing what God will do for you.”

Mary then shared with Elizabeth her joy. *You may want to read the next section slowly and carefully for the children.*

“My soul gives God the glory and my spirit is full of joy in God my saviour.

God has looked on grace on me, the servant of God.

From now all people of faith will call me blessed, for God, the Mighty One, has done great things for me and holy is God’s name.

God’s mercy is upon all those who follow the way of truth.

God has been strong for those who needed it and has raised up those who are poor and downhearted. God has filled up the hungry with good things and sent away the rich ones.

God has remembered Israel and remembered the promises made to the people.”

Response:

Idea #1: Angel Christmas Card

This response will allow the children to share the message of the angel with their families in a concrete manner.

Materials needed: card stock, doilies, white tissue paper, tinsel, glue sticks, fine line markers , glitter

Instructions: Fold the card stock in half and give one to each child. Cut the doilies in half. Invite the children to glue down the doily half on the front of the card. Then use the markers, tissue paper, glitter and tinsel to make an angel shape on the front of the card. Invite them to print a Christmas message in the inside of the card. Suggest that they save their cards, if they can, and give them to their families on Christmas Eve. You may want to help them with some possible suggestions. Wish them all a Merry Christmas as they finish up their cards.

Idea #2: Manger Activity

This activity will be a good response for children and their families to do together in this week before Christmas.

Materials needed: small paper tubes, scissors, yarn, markers, small plastic zipper bags, seasonal Christmas stickers

Instructions: Cut the small paper tubes in half the long way. Give one half to each child. Have the children colour the outside of the tube with the markers. Have them cut up the pieces of yarn so that they are slightly longer than the paper tube half. Make sure they cut enough so that the yarn will fill it up during the week. Explain to the children while they are working that during this last week before Christmas they are to put a piece of yarn in the manger (the half paper tube) every time they see someone doing a good act. Hopefully they will have it full before they go to church for Christmas. Have them decorate the plastic bags with the Christmas stickers. When they are done have them put their yarn in the bag. Encourage them to share the idea with their family members and get everyone to put a piece of yarn into the manger when they see someone doing a good act. They are not to say anything to the person doing the good act they are just to put a piece of yarn in the manger. Wish them all a Merry Christmas as they finish up.

Idea #3: Nativity Set

This is the last of the decoration ideas for the Advent season. The children will be able to take home a nativity set that they can share with their families. If you have younger children you may want to ask someone to give you a helping hand today with this response.

Materials needed: pipe cleaners, fabric scraps or felt pieces, scissors, glue sticks, yarn, large beads (if you have them), small paper tubes, markers, tissue paper, glitter and anything else you think might come in handy

Instructions: With the children list all the people and creatures that they can think of that were present when Jesus was born. Have them choose which ones they would like to make ,suggest that they do need to make Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus to have the beginnings of a set, and invite them to look at the craft materials. Let them decide how they want to make their nativity sets. While the children are working ask them where they will set up their nativity sets at home. Suggest that they hold off in putting baby Jesus in until at least Christmas Eve or morning. Wish them all a Merry Christmas as they finish up.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Place the angel from the story onto 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.