

Advent Lesson: "The Light Has Come"
John 1:5; Isaiah 9:2, 6; Luke 2

THE BIG IDEA: An Introduction for the Teacher and Liturgist:

For a long time, Christians have celebrated the weeks before Christmas with a season known as "advent." Advent is a word that simply means "coming" or "waiting." For many, many years, God's people were eager to meet Jesus. He was a king and a warrior that was coming to set them free from their sins. The Bible tells us that ever since sin came into the world the whole world has been waiting for Jesus to come and bring redemption both to his people and the fallen world (Romans 8:18-25). The prophet Isaiah describes the fallen world as a place of darkness into which the light of Jesus would come to shine. The good news of advent season is that the one whom the world has been waiting for has come and is coming again.

Today, we will introduce our children to the Light who has come to shine in the darkness, and we will challenge them to look for and wait for him in worship. Here are our keys for this lesson. When the lesson is through, each child will know:

- Advent means "coming."
- Before Jesus came, God's people waited eagerly to meet him.
- Jesus came as a king and warrior to set his people free from sin.
- The world now waits eagerly for Jesus to come again.

WELCOME (5 minutes)—Begin individual windows project.

During the WELCOME portion of each lesson, greet each child warmly as he or she comes into the classroom and encourage him or her to gather at the activity area. Ask the children to help you set up supplies and do "prep" for the art project (instructions will be in your class). Use the following introductory paragraph or a variation of it to introduce each child to the lesson:

Does anyone know what time of year it is? (Pause). That's right, it is Christmas time. For a long time, Christians have celebrated the weeks before Christmas with a season known as advent. Advent is a word that means "coming" or "waiting." When we're really excited about something that's coming, we say, "I can't wait." What are some things we say, "I can't wait," about? (Birthdays, Visitors, Vacations, Presents, Christmas, etc.) Celebrating advent is a way of saying, "I can't wait" for Jesus to come. One way that we celebrate advent is to light candles, lamps, and lights in honor of Jesus. Today, we're going to make window art to celebrate how Jesus' light has come to shine into our dark world.

TELL THE STORY (5-10 minutes): *Don't just read it. Know it and bring it to life!*

9:30 AM—Kelsey Barnes

11:15 AM—Jared Kennedy

5:00 PM—Matt Douthitt

Does anyone know what time of year it is?

For a long time, Christians have celebrated the weeks before Christmas with a season known as “advent.” Advent is a word that simply means “coming” or “waiting.”

For many, many years, God’s people were eager to meet Jesus. He was a king and a warrior that was coming to set them free from their sins. The Bible tells us that the whole world was waiting for Jesus to come, ever since sin came into the world.

When we’re really excited about something that’s coming, we say “I can’t wait.” What are some things we say “I can’t wait” about?

- Birthdays
- Visitors
- Vacations
- Presents

Celebrating advent is a way of saying, “I can’t wait” for Jesus to come.

One way that we celebrate advent is to light candles, lamps, and lights in honor of Jesus.

The apostle John tells us that when Jesus came into the world:

What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out (John 1:5, *The Message*).

Isaiah says it like this:

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:2, 6 NIV).

The whole world was living in a kind of spiritual darkness. They were lost without Jesus, but when Jesus came, it was like someone switched on the lights. Suddenly, in Jesus, we had light, we had truth, we had hope.

Part of what makes Christmas so special is remembering advent – remembering the time of darkness before the light came into the world.

GAME: Light in the Darkness (2-3 minutes)

Let's play a game to celebrate advent. Advent celebrates the light that came to the darkness. So let's pretend that we're in the dark, (lights turned off), we're scared, and we're anxious for hope. Let's all find a hiding place, and we need to be as quiet as we possibly can. Quick go hide!

Now when the lights come on, we need to celebrate that it's GREAT news. So when the lights come on, you need to jump up, bounce up and down, and shout for joy. Ready?

The people walking in darkness have seen a great... LIGHT (lights on)!!!!

1st time – Now is that how excited you'd be on Christmas? Come on let's try again.

(Repeat game)

2nd time – That's a little better, but I need to hear more excitement. One more try.

(Repeat Game)

3rd time – Great Job! Let's gather together over here and sing.

ECHO THE STORY IN SONG (15-20 minutes)

Singers introduce themselves.

Male leader: So what are we celebrating today? (Pause)

Kids: Advent

Female leader: That's right! Advent is the month before Christmas, when we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth. Does anyone know what city Jesus was born in? (Pause)

Kids: Bethlehem

Male leader: Good job! And do you know what kind of building he was born in? (Pause)

Kids: A stable

Female: That's right! Jesus wasn't treated like a king when he was born. He was treated like a servant. But from his humble beginnings, he came to be the most important man in history – because he was God's son. Let's sing songs about him!

1. "God Is With Us"

**Words by Jeremy Quillo. Music by Jeremy Quillo & Dustin Neeley.
Sojourn Music © 2002 from the album Advent Songs**

Verse 1

The glory of God has come to the earth,
The glory of God in our Savior's birth,
Join with the angels to sing and proclaim
Glory to His name

Chorus

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God is with us
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God is with us now.

Verse 2

Eternity's likeness has come into time,
A light in the darkness, now hope is alive,
Down from the heavens on this holy night,
Our God in a manger, our God as a child.

Chorus

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God is with us.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God is with us now.
Oh, let us bring Him more than our silver and gold...

Male leader: When Jesus was born, they wrapped him in cloths and laid him down in a manger. Does anyone know what a manger is?

It's like a trough, a feeding box that animals would eat out of. Can you imagine laying a baby in a dog bowl? Or a pig sty? Yuck! But that was all he had. Isn't it amazing that Jesus could have such a quiet, humble beginning? Let's sing about that beginning together

2. "Away in a Manger,"

Words: Anonymous, 1885, 1892; Music: James R. Murray, 1887.

Verse 1:

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;

The stars in the sky looked down where He lay;
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Verse 3:

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

(Repeat Verse 1)

Female singer:

An angel appeared to some Shepherds who were out watching over their sheep. The shepherds were very surprised to be visited by the angels. What did the angel tell them? (Accept reasonable answers from the children.) The angel said, "Don't be afraid! We have good news for you and for everybody in the whole world! For today, in Bethlehem, the city of David, a Savior is born, Christ the LORD!" And then do you know what happened? Suddenly the whole sky was full of angels praising GOD and singing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, goodwill to men!" We are going to be like the angels this morning, singing joyfully to God! We are going to sing: "Joy to the world!"

3. Joy To the World

Guitarist/instrumentalist:

Jesus is our Savior! He came to earth to save us from our sins! Let's be like the Shepherds who went quickly to worship Him when they heard about Him. Let's be like the angels who sang songs to praise Him! Let's sing "Go tell it on the Mountain."

4. Go tell it on the Mountain!

Male Singer (Closing prayer): We are going to pray. . . fold your hands and be still and talk to God. **Let's talk to God.** "Jesus, you are wonderful! You are worthy of praise! The angels praise you and sing to you! The shepherds worshiped you. We want to sing and worship you too! Happy Birthday to you! Thank you for coming to earth to save us from our sins! Thank you for this time called advent, where we can remember how wonderful your arrival on earth was. Thank for coming to save us from our sins! Amen."

SNACK AND BATHROOM BREAK (15 MINUTES)

ART PROJECT (15 MINUTES)

For ages 3-5: "Stained Glass" Windows

Supplies: Blue construction paper cut into 4.25" x 5.5" fold-over frames with a hole punched in the top (1 per child—prepared in your classrooms); Wax paper cut into 4" x 5.25" fold-over squares (1 per child—prepared in your classrooms); multi-colored tissue paper cut into small shapes; pen; glue; stapler; yarn; "caption" notes with Isaiah 9:2a—"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light."

- (1) During the welcome time, have the children choose pieces of tissue paper to create a design for their "stained glass" window. Have the child arrange the tissue as a design between the folded wax paper. As each child finishes his or her design, put the prepared windows aside. Use a pen to write the child's name or initials on one piece of tissue.
- (2) During the music and liturgy, assigned teachers, hall monitors, and Titus 2 moms will run each of the wax paper windows through a laminating machine to slightly melt the wax.
- (3) When children return to the classroom, assist them with stapling the wax paper "windows" inside a fold-over frame, gluing the "caption" on the outside of the frame, and tying a piece of string so that the "stained glass" windows can be hung in a window at home.

Use the art project time as a time to remind the children about the message of today's lesson using the

For grades 1-5: Cyanotype Window Art for display in the 930 Auditorium.

Supplies, Preparation, and Procedure: (Led by Katherine Valentine) Have cyanotypes taped on the ground with markers for tracing. Several kids can come at one time, as long as there is an adult to trace them. Using different colored markers is fine, kids can overlap one another. Encourage them to use bold poses, with their arms and fingers outstretched. The outline should be from about the hip up.

Today you've been learning about the season of advent. What does the word "advent" mean? Kids: waiting

And what are we *waiting* for during advent?

Kids: Jesus to come into the world/Jesus' birth

Today, you've heard how the Bible describes Jesus as a Great Light. This is awesome, because being in the Light is so exciting! You've played a game today where you celebrated how exciting and joyful it is to be in the Light after being in darkness. And you've sung songs about the Joy that came to the world when Jesus was born. You've learned how shepherds and angels all were waiting and celebrating the coming of the Light. Why were they so excited? [Hear what kids have to say about this, accepting reasonable responses.]

They were SO excited because before Jesus, the Light of the world, came it was like they were living in darkness. Do you remember how it feels when you are in the dark?

[Kids: scary, alone, can't see.]

When you are in the dark, it's hard to see - you don't know if it is safe, or if anything is there. It's even hard to see yourself! What about when you are in the light?

[Kids: safe, fun, you can see.]

When you are in the light, it's not scary, because you can see the world around you, you don't have to fear. You can see and be seen. And sometimes, when we do something wrong, when we sin, we like to hide in the darkness, so that what we did can't be seen - because we are afraid of punishment. But, when Jesus died, his Light covered the whole world, so that everyone who believed wouldn't have to be in darkness anymore. In his Light our sins are seen and they are forgiven! That's why Jesus' birth is so exciting. It's the beginning of the Light of forgiveness coming into the world. Let's make art about how we are excited and waiting and longing for the Light of Jesus.

The center of this fabric is bright white. It's like the Light of Christ. What we're going to do is have each one of you lie down around the center and reach for the light. You can lay any way you want and we'll trace you. When we're finished, you'll be able to see an outline of yourself reaching in celebration towards the Light!