

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Advent V **Jesus is Born**

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INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT

The Good Shepherd Program is an ideal vehicle for the celebration of the season of Advent. It is an easy way to show the children in a touchable, concrete way the four weeks of "waiting and getting ready" .

The stage is set for Advent by using an underlay that changes from purple to white. The underlay is 45 x 12 inches. The purple fabric on one end is 36 x 12 inches and the white fabric on the other end is 9 x 12 inches. The underlay is rolled up with the white end to the inside and unrolled a little each week of Advent. There is great anticipation as the children eventually see the white piece appear. They actually see us approach the holy season of Christmas.

The Advent cards are used each week as the stories are shared. The first week only the card with one candle on it is used. The second week that card and the one with two candles on it are used. And so on. Each week we begin with card one, repeating in a shorter version each part of the Advent story, while adding the current week's story at the end.

Each week the card is placed on the underlay, the appropriate wooden figures from the Advent/Nativity set are placed above each card and a candle is placed next to the figures. The set becomes a horizontal Advent wreath. Just like we light the candles of the Advent wreath, so here we light the candles of the Advent story. The children are encouraged to take the Advent basket from the shelf and see if they can tell the story each week. Since matches are the only thing in the Good Shepherd room that must not be used by children, they are reminded to ask for adult help in the lighting of the candles as they tell the stories.

Each lesson of Advent contains an explanation of the candle used on the given week as well as telling you which wooden figures and Advent cards are to be used. During the "circle of light" be sure to place the appropriate bookmark representing each week's story in the Good Shepherd classroom Bible. This allows the children, non-readers as well as readers, to become familiar with where the Advent stories are found in the Bible.

Each week we emphasize the waiting and getting ready for the birth of Jesus. Those exact words may not be used, but the message is sent to the listeners that the incarnation of Christ into this world is a time of great joy and wonder. That is the message of Advent.

ADVENT V, Jesus Is Born MATERIALS

Items from the large Advent basket:

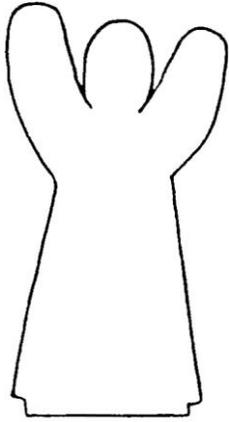
- the underlay
- set of Advent cards (5)
- 5 candleholders
- 3 purple candles
- 1 pink candle
- 1 white candle
- smaller basket to carry wooden figures from Advent/Nativity set

Items from the Advent/Nativity set (see next page for silhouettes of figures):

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| - prophet | - wiseman I |
| - annunciation angel | - wiseman II |
| - Mary | - wiseman III |
| - Joseph | - gift, round |
| - shepherd's angel | - gift, rectangle |
| - shepherd | - gift, pentagon |
| - shepherd with staff | - baby Jesus in manger |
| - shepherd boy | - stable |
| - 2 sheep | - cow |
| - star | - donkey |

Items from the worship shelf:

- candle snuffer
- matches



Prophet



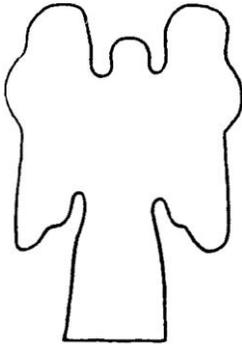
Annunciation Angel



Mary



Joseph



Shepherd's Angel



Shepherd



Shepherd with Staff



Shepherd Boy



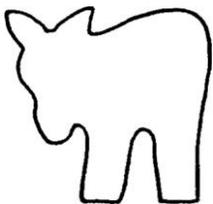
Wiseman I



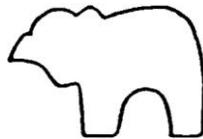
Wiseman II



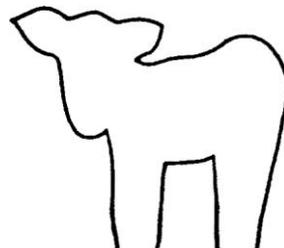
Wiseman III



Donkey



Sheep



Cow

ADVENT V, Jesus Is Born LUKE 2:1-7

ACTIONS

After speaking, get the Advent basket from its shelf. After placing it in front of your spot in the circle, return to get the basket of wooden figures, the matches and snuffer.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence while you reverently touch the wooden figures or cloth.

Unroll the purple underlay to the edge of the white, keeping the white hidden.

Smooth the purple cloth slowly.

Place the prophet figure to the left front of the first area of the underlay.

Place the first Advent card on the purple underlay.

Place a purple candle, in holder, to the right front of the first area of the underlay. Light the candle and pause a bit to enjoy the light.

Place the figures of Mary, Joseph and the annunciation angel to the left front of the second area of the purple underlay.

Softly emphasize the name "Jesus".

Place the second Advent card next to the first.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story.

This purple cloth helped us understand that we waited through Advent, for the special holy day we celebrate now.

We waited, just like the people of God.

They waited for a savior, too.

While they waited, God sent them a prophet who lifted his arms and spoke God's words of hope.

One prophet said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. "

This is the prophet's candle of hope that we lit to celebrate the first week of Advent and waiting.

Much later Mary and Joseph heard special and wonderful words from an angel.

The angel said that Mary would have a baby boy and that they must name him Jesus.

Then Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem to be counted in the census.

Place a purple candle, in holder, to the right front of the second area of the underlay. Light the candle and pause a bit to enjoy the light.

Place the shepherd with staff, 2 sheep and shepherd's angel to the left front of the third area of the purple underlay.

Touch the shepherd with staff figure gently.

Place the third Advent card on the purple underlay.

Place the pink candle, in holder, to the right front of the third underlay area. Light it and pause for a bit to enjoy the light.

Place the wooden star to left front of the fourth area of the underlay.

Place the 3 wisemen next to the star.

Place the "gifts" next to the wisemen.

Hold up the fourth Advent card and then place it on the underlay.

Place a purple candle in holder to the right front of the fourth area of the underlay. Light the candle and pause to enjoy the light for a bit.

Move your hand over cards 1-4.

This is the angel's candle of expectation. We lit it to celebrate the second week of Advent.

This is the shepherd. And these are some of his sheep.

The shepherds were watching their sheep when they heard the words of the angels.

The angel said that a baby boy had been born who would be the savior of the world.

The shepherds ran quickly to find the baby.

This is the shepherd's candle of joy. We lit it to celebrate the third week of Advent.

In a far away land some wise men called "Magi" studied the stars.

When they saw a bright new star they knew a new king had been born.

They followed the star a long time until they found Jesus.

The Magi brought Jesus precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Last week we lit the fourth Advent candle, the Magi's candle of love.

Now we are finished with the purple cloth.

Unroll the underlay to expose the white section.

Shake your head slowly.

Place the stable, cow and donkey to the left front of the white underlay.

Touch the figures of Mary and Joseph as you say their names. (They are located next to the second Advent area on the underlay.)

Place your right hand in your crooked left arm as though holding a baby.

Wrap an imaginary baby and hold him close for a brief moment then place the wooden manger with the baby in it in the stable.

Show the children the fifth Advent card and then place it on the white section of the underlay. Place the shepherd and shepherd boy near the stable.

Touch the prophet's card.

Touch the card of the annunciation angel.

Touch the shepherd's card.

Touch the card of the Magi.

Place the white candle in holder to the right front of the white underlay. Light it and pause for a bit to enjoy the light.

We are finished waiting.

Mary and Joseph traveled all the way to Bethlehem.

When they got to the city there was no place for them to stay.

Finally one man said they could stay in his stable, which was like a cave.

So, there with all the animals around, Mary and Joseph settled down.

That night the baby the angel promised was born.

Mary wrapped the baby in soft white cloths and laid him in the manger to sleep.

And so Jesus was born, in Bethlehem, in a stable.

The time of waiting is over.

The prophets understood about waiting. Now the light they spoke of has come.

Mary and Joseph are finished waiting. The child has been born.

The shepherds heard the good news and ran to see the baby.

The Magi travelled a long time to find the special new king.

This is the Christ candle. We light it to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season with the birth of Jesus.

Hold both hands out, palms up, over the underlay.

We celebrate the promises that came true.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if the animals made any noises to wake the baby Jesus?

I wonder what the innkeeper thought the next morning when he saw the baby?

I wonder if Mary laughed like Sarah when her baby was born?

Snuff all candles and place them and holders in the Advent basket. Pick up Advent cards and place them in the basket. Place all wooden figures in their basket. Finally, roll up the underlay, beginning with the white end, and place it in the Advent basket.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away. If you choose to make this your work today or another day, you will know how to use them.

After speaking, return Advent basket to its shelf. Return to get basket of wooden figures and place it on appropriate shelf. Last, return matches and snuffer.

Watch carefully where I return these materials so you will know where to find them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

Dismiss all children to their work ONLY when everyone has had a chance to choose their work.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Will you paint, or work with a story? Will you make Advent cards? Let's go around the circle and choose our work.

Remember, if you choose to work with the Advent story from today, you may use all the materials except the matches. Ask one of the adults and they will help you light the prophet's, the angel's, the shepherd's, the Magi's and Christ's candles. Let's begin.

ADVENT V, Jesus Is Born (Christmas) TEACHER HELPS

This is really not an Advent story, but a Christmas story. For the sake of categories I've included this with the Advent series. But our major emphasis for the children will be the move from waiting to fulfillment. Christmas makes this an easy lesson to teach children. They understand about having to wait for something, especially when it is wrapped and put under the Christmas tree.

Christmas is the greatest example of God's faithfulness to God's people that we can experience. In the Exodus of the people of God from Egypt the author of Exodus 2:24-25 tells us that when the people of God groaned under the oppression of the Pharaoh, God "heard remembered ... saw ... and knew". Then God did something about the oppression. God sent a deliverer in the person of Moses. At Christmas we celebrate that once again God heard, remembered, saw and knew our needs and our oppression by sin. This time God didn't send Moses. This time God sent the greatest gift, God's own son. God was faithful to the promises made to the people of God. And the evidence was in a manger in Bethlehem.

Let the wonder and delight of the birth of Jesus be in your voice and your heart as you tell this story. Know that you are opening to the children the greatest gift ever given. None of us can ever completely understand the incarnation of God into man, but we can share our joy and awe. Children will not respond to the birth as we do, but they will take the first steps to comprehending the immense love God has for God's people to have sent Christ.

The first wondering question allows the children to imagine what it must have been like in the stable. Did the animals make their usual noises or were they quiet? We don't know, but it's a wonderful way to help the children touch the place where Jesus was born in their minds.

The question about the innkeeper supposes that he knew nothing of the birth event until hours after it happened. This does not make historical sense, as the innkeeper's wife or a midwife would probably have been summoned to assist with the birth. What the question aims at is the sense of surprise of finding a newborn baby in such humble surroundings. Also, did the innkeeper realize this baby was special? What did he think when he saw the child?

The final question is designed to help the children understand the happiness of a mother at the birth of a healthy, strong child. Just as Isaac was a cherished and beloved child, so was Jesus. This question links the humanness of both Mary and the baby. If Mary was a normal, happy mother at the birth, then was Jesus a normal, happy baby? Yes and no. Jesus was both God and man. That's too difficult for most of us to comprehend, especially children. It helps a child to understand that at one time Jesus was like each of them, and like their baby brother or sister. He needed to be cared for by his mother and father. Just because he was the Savior of the world doesn't mean he didn't need to be fed, changed and bathed like all other babies.

Celebrate and enjoy this lesson. Help the children to understand that this is a season, not just a day.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

What is your favorite part of the Christmas story?

Some people of other faiths, like Muslims and Buddhists, believe that God was shown to them through someone who was made special after he was born. Christians believe God made Jesus inside of Mary. Jesus then was 100% human and 100% God. Why would this be important? (Teachers: If he was only human, he couldn't have saved the whole world and if he was only divine, he couldn't really have understood what we as humans need.)

Today, we've heard about the birth of Jesus. What is your favorite part of your own story when you were born or when you were a very tiny baby?

What kind of baby do you think Jesus was? Did he cry and get fussy like other babies or was he really good?

WARNING

The use of candles and matches should be closely supervised by a responsible adult. Serious injuries may result from contact with flame or hot wax.