

A Good Shepherd
Story of Jesus

Advent II
The Angel's Announcement

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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 II, The Angel's Announcement... MATERIALS

Items from the large Advent basket:

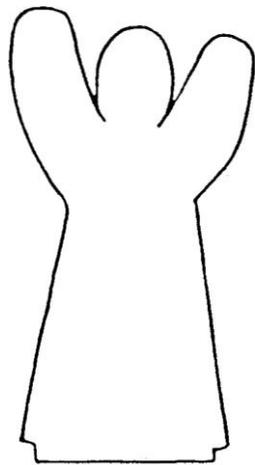
- the underlay
- first two Advent cards
- 2 candleholders
- 2 purple candles
- smaller basket to carry wooden figures from Advent/Nativity set

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

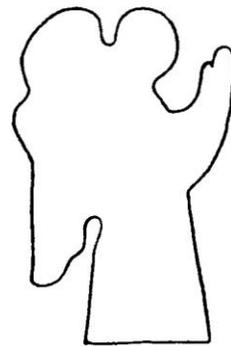
- prophet
- annunciation angel
- Mary
- Joseph

Items from the worship shelf:

- candle snuffer
- matches



Prophet



Annunciation Angel

Joseph



Mary



ADVENT II, The Angel's Announcement. ... LUKE 1:26-35, 46-47, LUKE 2:1-5

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the Advent basket from the shelf. Bring it to the circle, then get the figures of the prophet, Mary, Joseph and the annunciation angel. Return to get the snuffer and matches.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence while you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures as you center yourself and the children.

Unroll the underlay to hold two Advent cards. Smooth it carefully.

Place the figure of the prophet in side front of the first purple space.

Nod as you smile.

Cover your eyes with both hands and then remove them.

Place the first Advent card on the first part of the purple underlay.

Set a purple candle in holder next to the prophet figure.

Light the first Advent candle.

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 of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to my story?

This cloth is purple because we are in a special time of waiting and getting ready.

That time is called Advent.

The people of God waited, too.

They had people who helped them to understand how to live while they waited.

These people were prophets, who spoke God's words to the people of God.

When there was no hope, the prophets spoke words of hope.

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

And the prophets talked about a savior, one who would save God's people someday.

Last week we learned of the prophets and lit the prophet's candle of hope.

That was the first week of Advent.

Lay the second Advent card next to the first.

Place the figure of Mary in side front of the second card.

Place the annunciation angel next to Mary.

Cradle an imaginary baby in your arms.

Smile and gently shake your head.

Place the Joseph figure next to Mary.

Place the second purple candle in the holder next to the holy family.

Touch the prophet figure lightly.

Light the second Advent candle.

Today we begin the second week of Advent.

This is Mary.

A special angel came from God to give Mary a message.

The angel told her she would have a baby boy who would be called Jesus.

Mary was afraid, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Mary sang a prayer saying, "My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

When it was time for Mary's baby to be born, she and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem so that they could be counted with Joseph's family who were from Bethlehem.

So Mary and Joseph started on their way to Bethlehem from the place they lived, called Nazareth.

This is the angel's candle of expectation that we light for the second week of Advent.

The prophet said a savior would come.

And the angel told Mary her baby would be special.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder how the angel looked?

I wonder if Mary wanted to run and hide?

I wonder how long it took to get to Bethlehem from Nazareth?

Carefully snuff the lights on both candles. Place candles, holders and cards in the basket. Place the wooden figures in their basket. Last, roll up the purple and white underlay and place it in the Advent basket.

After speaking, replace the Advent basket on its shelf. Then return to get the basket of wooden figures and replace them. Finally, replace the snuffer and matches.

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

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

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will be able to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will make your work today? There are materials to make your own Advent cards. Or you may paint or draw or work with a story.

Remember, if you choose to work with the Advent story from today, you may use all the materials except the matches. Please ask an adult to help you light the prophet's and angel's candles. Let's begin.

ADVENT II, The Angel's Announcement. ... TEACHER HELPS

The second week of Advent concentrates on the annunciation (announcement) to Mary of the coming birth of her child, Mary's song of praise and the journey to Bethlehem.

In the annunciation Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel and is told that she will have a special son whom she must name Jesus. The author of Luke then quotes Isaiah 9:6-7 in describing the kind of savior Jesus will become. Mary is both puzzled and afraid, but the angel reassures her.

I've then skipped to Luke 1 :46-47 and used the words of the Magnificat. These words will become more and more familiar to the children as they grow older. I believe this is a wonderful place to begin.

The third piece of today's story explains that Mary and Joseph needed to leave their town of Nazareth and go to Bethlehem, the city of Joseph's ancestors, for the census.

And so the stage is set. Mary has been told that she will have a special baby, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary finds voice after she visits her cousin Elizabeth, the mother-to-be of John the Baptizer, and sings a beautiful song of praise to God.

And last, Joseph and Mary get ready for their journey to Bethlehem, the ancient city of David. It was from David's line that the Messiah was to come.

The intent of the story for the second week of Advent is to allow the children to see the plan for the Messiah's birth unfold. There is anticipation and the beginnings of an understanding about God's time for all things. This story also allows us to emphasize the unity of Mary and Joseph. Even though the gospel writer of Luke does not give the account of the angel's appearance to Joseph, the two of them leave, united, for the census and the birth of the baby boy. The family unit is comfortable for most children, even if they are from single parent or blended families. However, do be aware of children for whom this may be a painful reminder that their family is not together.

The wondering questions begin with wonderment about what the angel looked like. The children may each have their own stylized opinion of what an angel looks like, but the responses will give them a time to share their thoughts and hear those of the others.

The second question wonders if Mary was afraid, if she wanted to run and hide. The children may have varied responses to this. Some will believe that Mary wanted nothing to do with the angel, while others may believe that the angel was so wonderful that Mary wanted to see and hear more.

The final question about how long it took to get to Bethlehem is just to help the children put the trip into perspective. It's about 70 miles from Nazareth south to Bethlehem. While that's only a little over an hour with a car today, then it would have been at least a three day trip walking or riding on a donkey.

You have set the stage. The holy family is on their way to Bethlehem and the children are very aware that soon it will be time for the baby to be born.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Do you believe Mary and Joseph really saw an angel? What do you think the angel might have looked like? Do you think there are any angels around us today? Describe them.

Sometimes each of us gets the feeling that a decision we have made is really good - like choosing to help someone, or staying away from a particular place or group of people. We feel sure, as did Mary and Joseph, that we are doing what God wants us to do. With whom can you share a thought like that?

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt about each other? How did they feel about the baby they would raise who was God's son? Did the angel help them understand and deal with their feelings?

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.