

Advent Lesson #1: The Prophets' Candle: Hope

Resources you might want to have for this lesson:
Device to show videos listed in lesson (computer, tablet, projector)
Bible
Journals or writing pad
Pens
Optional: Advent Wreath

Gathering

Before you start this WEsources on Advent it might be good to have an Advent wreath for your room. Keep it there all Advent and light the candles each week.

After everyone has entered and gotten settled say, "This week starts our new lessons that will focus on Advent. You might be thinking that you have heard that word, but you are not sure what it means. Advent is a Middle English term from a Latin term that means to "arrive." Most notably it is used to describe the waiting period of the church for the arrival of Christ that we celebrate every Christmas."

Here is a video about the season of Advent:
Advent in two minutes- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dlA>

Optional activity:
You can share more about the Advent wreath that you brought to the room or take a trip to the sanctuary to see the Advent wreath there.

This Advent we are going to study the themes that shape Advent:

Hope
Faith
Joy
Peace

These are the words that help shape our idea of the Advent season and the anticipation of Christmas.

For more on Advent you can look at our youth curriculum *Faith Out Loud*. Our *FOL* called "Seasons" has a full lesson including discussion questions and activities on Advent. You can find that resource online at <http://cpcmc.org/faithoutloud/>

Say, "Each week we will look at the story of the events leading up to and including the birth of Jesus Christ according to the Gospel of Luke. Today's scripture comes from Luke chapter 1 verses 26-38.

Scripture

Say, "For our scripture reading this morning we are going to read it a couple of times aloud. Each time we are going to focus our attention on one of the different characters in this story. Our first reading we will listen for the narrator's telling of the story. The second reading we will listen for the angel, Gabriel. And our final time we will focus on Mary. As you listen, write down what words and

phrases stand out and what questions you have, and we will discuss them after the scripture reading.”

Read Luke 1:26-38

Allow students a chance to write down any thoughts after each reading. After you’ve read the scripture three times ask them to share what they wrote down. Don’t try to answer the questions, just let them be said aloud.

Questions

- After hearing the scripture read aloud while focusing on three different voices, and hearing what stood out to each other how would you retell the story to someone who hadn’t heard it before?
- What is hopeful in this story?

Seeking Understanding

After hearing from one another watch this video that speaks about the Biblical meaning behind hope.

Word Study: Yakhal-Hope <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WYNBjJSYvE>

In the story leading up to the one we read today we read about Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah. They both longed for a child but feared they would not be able to have one because of their age. Still they had hope and were blessed with a child that grew up to foretell the coming of Jesus.

As the video says: “Hope is something you choose.”

Every day we have the chance to choose hope. And this is our reminder on this first Sunday of Advent. We are called to choose hope.

Ask, “What gives you hope?” Allow time for students to think of answers. Write those things on a dry erase board or newsprint to keep in your space during Advent.

Now ask, “How do you give hope to others? Allow time for students to ponder and answer.

Our challenge for this month, is to remember to choose hope. And not only choose it for ourselves but use the ways we just said to give hope. After all isn’t this the season to give freely and cheerfully?

To close your time together ask for any prayer requests and ask someone to close your time in prayer.

Advent Lesson #2: The Bethlehem Candle: Faith

Resources you might want to have for this lesson:

Device to show videos listed in lesson (computer, tablet, projector)

Bible

Journals/or writing pad
Pens
Optional: Advent Wreath

Gathering

Here is a video about the season of Advent:

Advent in two minutes- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dIA>

Last week we talked about The Prophets' Candle and how it symbolizes the Hope of Advent. Today we will look at what we call The Bethlehem Candle that symbolizes Faith.

For more on Advent you can look at our youth curriculum *Faith Out Loud*. Our *FOL* called "Seasons" has a full lesson including discussion questions and activities on Advent. You can find that resource online at <http://cpcmc.org/faithoutloud/>

Say, "Today's scripture comes from Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7."

Optional activity

Our lessons on Advent focus on chapters 1 & 2 in the Gospel of Luke. *The Bible Project* has a great video of the birth of Jesus narrative in Luke. Here is a link to that video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLezoUvOEQ&t=2s>

Scripture

Read Luke 2:1-7.

Say, "Have you ever asked your parents about or heard the story of your birth?"

If anyone feels comfortable sharing have them share.

Say, "One, of if not the most famous birth narrative in history is the birth of Jesus. Each of us might not remember every line of the story but we would most likely be able to tell the story. In our scripture for today we read about the census taking place and how Jesus was born while Joseph and Mary were traveling and laid him in a manger.

Questions

- What is a census?
- From last week we know an angel had spoken to Mary about the birth of Jesus. What do you think Mary and Joseph did while they waited for the birth of Jesus?

Seeking Understanding

Say, "Giving birth is one of the most joyous and anxious times in a person's life. Even more so when an angel tells you that you are giving birth to God's one and only son!

The candle we light this week of Advent is called The Bethlehem Candle. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to take part in the census of Roman rule and while there gave birth to Jesus. Mary and Joseph spent 9 months in limbo having to rely on their faith about whether what the angel told

Mary so many months would come true. That's a long time, and as we know waiting is difficult. And this waiting was made much more stressful by the fact that they had the added pressure of waiting for God's son.

Faith is a funny thing. It's something we are told to have but it's so hard to define and explain. Yet each of us have so much faith every day. Hebrews 11 says, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Let's see how much faith you all have in your everyday life.

Activity: Faith Quiz

Ask your group the following questions; have them keep a tally of how many times they say yes and how many times they say no.

1. Do you ride in a car to get you someplace you have to go on time?
2. Do you breathe?
3. Have you ever gotten on an airplane to go on vacation or on a trip?
4. Do you use a computer with it being plugged into a power outlet?
5. Do you walk to get somewhere?
6. Do you ever just listen to someone talk or teach but don't write anything down?
7. Do you eat?
8. Do you ever tell someone that you love them?
9. Have you ever thrown a ball or played catch with someone?
10. Do you set an alarm to wake you up?

Say, "Now most of us probably answered yes to a majority if not all of these questions. But each of these things take faith from us. Faith that the car will not breakdown, that we won't all of sudden stop breathing, that the plane won't have any problems, that our computer's battery will last, that our feet, legs, muscles won't give out on us, that we will remember what someone will say, that we won't choke or get ill, that someone loves us back, that we won't get injured by that ball we are throwing, that the alarm will work.

It takes faith for us to live. The difference is we have confidence in many of these things because we've seen these things work out. We still have faith but it's just not the faith that the Bible speaks of in Hebrews.

That kind of faith is the kind that Mary and Joseph had when preparing to welcome baby Jesus and it's the kind of faith we reflect on during Advent. They had hope and assurance of things unseen. This is the type of faith we are called to have in Advent. Sometimes it's hard to see what God has or where God is, but this Advent we are reminded to have faith just like Mary and Joseph did so long ago."

To finish your time together, have your students write down areas of their life that they need to have a little more faith. If they feel led ask them to share with one another. Make a list and pray for each of those things said (and any unsaid).

Advent Lesson #3: The Shepherds' Candle: Joy

Resources you might want to have for this lesson:
Device to show videos listed in lesson (computer, tablet, projector)
Bible
Journals/or writing pad
On poster board write the word Joy (you can use this template as well
<https://images.app.goo.gl/ALzUuxu798HSnv8J9>)
Scissors
Tape
Optional: Advent Wreath

Gathering

Here is a video about the season of Advent:

Advent in two minutes- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dIA>

Over the last two lessons we've covered different parts of the Advent season using the Advent candles as our guide. Our first lesson was about Hope symbolized by the Prophets' Candle and the second was on Faith symbolized by the Bethlehem Candle. Today we will focus on the third candle, called the Shepherds' Candle.

For more on Advent you can look at our youth curriculum *Faith Out Loud*. Our FOL called "Seasons" has a full lesson including discussion questions and activities on Advent. You can find that resource online at <http://cpcmc.org/faithoutloud/>

Ask, "Have you ever sung the song that goes "'ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy!" (feel free to sing ☺). When you hear the word Joy, what comes to mind?

Say, "Today our lesson will continue in the Gospel of Luke."

Optional activity

Our lessons on Advent focus on chapters 1 & 2 in the Gospel of Luke. *The Bible Project* has a great video of the birth of Jesus narrative in Luke. Here is a link to that video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OLezoUvOEQ&t=2s

Scripture

Read Luke 2:15-20.

Questions

- What are shepherds? What do they do?
- Have you ever had something happen to you that you just couldn't wait to tell others about? (maybe a good grade, making a team, etc) What was it and why did you just need to tell people?

Seeking Understanding

Say, "On this day in Advent we focus on The Shepherds' Candle and how it symbolizes Joy."

Watch this video from *The Bible Project* about Joy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvOhQTuD2e0>

The video shares a key difference between something that makes us happy and having joy. Joy is “an attitude God’s people adopt not because of happy circumstances but because of their hope in God’s love and promise.”

Say, “We see this in the story of the shepherds. Obviously, they are happy seeing baby Jesus but what got them sharing the news in the community and coming back to glorify and praise God was they saw something God had promised them.”

Ask, “When you are angry or sad or something other than feeling happy how do you try and feel better”? (This might be a tough question so give them an example from your own life)

Activity: Finding Joy Again

For the closing activity your students will go on a scavenger hunt to find a piece of poster board. After finding their piece they will tape it on the wall until all the pieces come back together spelling the word joy. (You can either hide them in the room you are meeting in or around the church).

Tip: Make sure to write large enough (using either bubble letters or the template above). You can also write Bible passages about joy on the pieces and have them read those out loud once they have found their piece (use the scriptures from the video about joy).

Give them a few minutes to find the pieces and put them together. After they have completed that say, “Sometimes joy is nowhere to be found and we have to go looking for it. Advent reminds us not only of the joy of the birth of Jesus but that waiting and anticipation sometimes have to happen for joy to appear.”

Ask, “How will you find joy this week”?

After everyone has had time to answer close in prayer.

Advent Lesson #4: The Angels’ Candle: Peace

Resources you might want to have for this lesson:

Device to show videos listed in lesson (computer, tablet, projector)

Bible

Journals/or writing pad

Speaker to play music in seeking understanding

Optional: Advent Wreath

Gathering

Say, “Today we will focus on the fourth candle of Advent called the Angel’s Candle that symbolizes peace. Before we look at our scripture passage today, we are going to watch a video about the word Shalom.”

Watch Word Study: Shalom-Peace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLYORLZOaZE>

After watching the video, you can skip to reading the scripture passage for the day.

Additional Information/Resources:

Here is a video about the season of Advent:

Advent in two minutes- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dlA>.

For more on Advent you can look at our youth curriculum *Faith Out Loud*. Our FOL called “Seasons” has a full lesson including discussion questions and activities on Advent. You can find that resource online at <http://cpcmc.org/faithoutloud/>.

Optional activity:

Our lessons on Advent focus on chapters 1 & 2 in the Gospel of Luke. *The Bible Project* has a great video of the birth of Jesus narrative in Luke. Here is a link to that video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLezoUvOEQ&t=2s>.

Scripture

Say, “Our scripture for today actually jumps backwards into the story in Luke where the angels visit the shepherds.”

Read Luke 2:8-14.

Questions

- When is a time in your life you’ve been scared? What happened?
- What does it feel like to be scared? How do you react when you are scared?

Seeking Understanding

Say, “Casting Crowns is a world-renowned Christian band that has written many hit songs. Today we are going to listen to one of their songs called *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. Printed are the lyrics for you and as you listen, I want you to circle words and phrases that stand out to you.”

You can find the lyrics here: <https://castingcrowns.com/music/i-heard-the-bells-on-christmas-day/>.

After listening to the song have the group share some of the words and phrases that stood out to them.

Say, “The Jewish people had long waited for the prophesied Messiah to arrive. The Hebrew people believed this Messiah would bring about Shalom—peace—to their people. The angel’s announcing to the shepherds “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards all” was the proclamation that this child born in Bethlehem was indeed the long-awaited Messiah.

As the video earlier pointed out peace to the people of that day was not just about an end to conflict but a restoration—a making things whole. Advent is a time of reflection. As you reflect, where do you see shalom or peace in your life? Where do you see it in the world?”

After you give students time to share, say “We know we are not all at peace; there is much that is at conflict—broken in our world—and at times it can seem so daunting. But Christ has taught “blessed are the peacemakers.” Peace—Shalom—isn’t something that just happens but something we make happen. As you reflect this Advent season, what are ways you can be a peacemaker, someone who helps to bring restoration to your life? To others?”

Have the students write down their reflections and throughout the week send them encouraging texts to be peacemakers this week.

Close your time in prayer.

First Sunday after Christmas: The Christ Candle

Resources you might want to have for this lesson:
Device to show videos listed in lesson (computer, tablet, projector)
Bible
Journals/or writing pad
Speaker to play Hillsong Worship *The Peace Project* album

Gathering

As students gather have the album *The Peace Project* by Hillsong Worship playing in the background.

After everyone has arrived and settled ask them some general questions about their Christmas and allow them time to share.

Say, "Merry Christmas everyone! Today is our last lesson of our Advent series and we will be reading and discussing Luke 2:22-38."

Additional Information/Resources:

Our lessons on Advent focus on chapters 1 & 2 in the Gospel of Luke. *The Bible Project* has a great video of the birth of Jesus narrative in Luke. Here is a link to that video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLezoUvOEQ&t=2s>.

Scripture

Read Luke 2:22-38.

After reading the scripture passage say, "Have any of you been around for the birth of a child like a little brother or sister or cousin"? Have them share about the events surrounding that time.

Questions

- What in this story stands out to you or do you have questions about?

Seeking Understanding

There are two encounters with two people, Simeon and Anna. Before teaching I'd suggest checking out a *Who's Who in the Bible* or looking up more info about Simeon and Anna.

Say, "When we were born our parents had expectations for our lives. Not only that but our siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and neighbors all had these visions for our lives. Do any of you know any stories about what your parents hoped for or others hoped for you when you were born"? You may want to share a personal story possibly other names that were considered or what you might grow up to do in life. After everyone who wants to share has gone go to next part.

Who we want to be:

Say, "In our Bible story we read about two people who had visions for the life Jesus would live. One was a vision of salvation and glory and the other of redemption. As we look back on our Christmas each of us had these hopes, expectations, dreams of what that time would be. Now that gifts are unwrapped, the food is all gone, and we look towards a new year what do we hope for our lives? Many of us have lived our lives up to this point trying to fulfill others' visions, dreams, expectations

for us but now is the time to think about what God envisions, dreams, expects from us. We have an opportunity to choose our own path or the path God has for us. These lessons of hope, faith, joy, and peace aren't just for Advent, but these are things God wants for us and for us to offer others."

Give a piece of paper to each student and have them write down the words hope, faith, joy and peace. Ask them to write a prayer around each of those words. Once they have finished, have them post them around the room. Let these prayers surround you for the upcoming year and maybe even include them from time to time to open or close your time together.