

Children's Worship Lesson – December 13, 2020

WE PREPARE WITH JOY

Purpose: To experience the joy of the Christmas story

Preparation

Worship Table – purple or blue cloth

Pictures for Bible story and activity materials at the end of the lesson

White construction paper

Towel and tie

A nativity set

Lighting of the Christ Candle: We light this candle to remember that God is always with us.

Advent Wreath



This is the third week of Advent, the third week of waiting for Jesus to be born.

Two weeks ago, we lit the first candle, the **HOPE** candle. (Invite a child to turn on the **HOPE** candle. If using the Advent wreath sheet, point to the **HOPE** candle.)

Last week, we lit the second candle, the candle of **PEACE**. (Invite a child to turn on the **PEACE** candle or point to the **PEACE** candle on the sheet.)

This week's candle is the candle of joy. (Invite a child to turn on/glue the flame on the **JOY** candle.)

This week, we think of the joy that Mary and Joseph felt as they waited for their baby to be born, and the joy that Jesus brought to the world.

Advent Calendar

Last week, we made Advent calendars. Here is mine. Each day this week, I added a star.

(Choose a child to put a star on today's date. You may wish to have the children count the number of days left until Christmas.)

Opening Prayer

O God,

we bring our offering to say thank you for all the love you give to us,
and especially for the gift of Jesus.

Amen.

Advent Waiting Song (tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb)

A-Ad-vent is with us now, with us now, with us now

A-Ad-vent is with us now, our waiting time is here.

We clap our hands with happy smiles, happy smiles, happy smiles,

We clap our hands with happy smiles, and wait for Baby Jesus.

Introducing the Theme - Game: Christmas Riddles

We're gathered around the manger. Can you tell me why a manger is important at this time of year? **(Mary and Joseph laid baby Jesus in a manger after he was born.)** I have hidden some slips of paper in the straw. I am going to pull one out of the straw. Read the riddle on the slip of paper to the children and have them come up with the answer. **(Give them hints if necessary.)**

1. I am shaggy and brown. I carried Jesus' mother to Bethlehem. Who am I? **(donkey)**

2. I am soft and white. My wool was used to make a soft blanket for baby Jesus. Who am I? **(sheep)**

3. I carry a long staff to guide my sheep. Who am I? **(shepherd)**

4. We sang the message of peace and good news to the shepherds who were out on the hillside. Who are we? **(angels)**

5. I knocked on many doors before I found a place for us to stay. Who am I? **(Joseph)**

6. I took a long, long journey when my baby was due to be born soon. Who am I? **(Mary)**

7. I am hard and rough. I usually hold straw. A tiny baby slept in me on Christmas Day. What am I? **(manger)**

Exploring the Theme

Over the past two weeks, we have heard the Christmas story. We heard about Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem and baby Jesus being born in a stable. We heard about angels singing and telling the good news to the shepherds in the nearby hills. Today we are going to use our ears to hear and our imaginations to feel the Christmas story.

Mary and Joseph had to travel a long way to the city of Bethlehem. There were no cars or trucks, no trains or airplanes, so they had to walk. Where they lived, people wore sandals on their feet. The roads were made of sand and small stones. **(Imagine you are touching the gravel/sand.)** How do you think Mary and Joseph's feet would have felt while they were walking on the road? **(Wait for the children to respond.)** Have you ever had a stone in your sandal? How does that feel? **(Wait for the children to respond.)** The sand and stones on the rough roads must have made Mary and Joseph's feet very tired and sore.

Mary and Joseph needed to stop several times a day to rest and eat some of the food they carried with them. Sometimes, they would find a place to sit where Mary could lean her tired back on a strong tree trunk. **(Imagine you are touching the piece of bark, branch or twig.)** How does it feel to lean against a tree? **(Wait for the children to respond.)** It was a

tiring journey, and Mary and Joseph were both very glad when they finally got to Bethlehem.

Many people had already arrived in the town. There were big crowds, with people moving in every direction and sometimes bumping into them. There were all sorts of people: young and old, rich and poor. There were people from lots of different places, and they were dressed in many different colours and fabrics. Some clothes were rough and some smooth, some thick and some thin. **(Imagine you are touching different kinds of fabrics.)**

It was hard to find a place to stay. Everywhere they went, they were told: “There’s no room. We are full.” At last, Mary and Joseph were offered a place to sleep in a stable with some animals. They were glad to be out of the cold. The warm breath of the animals helped to make the stable cozy. Maybe Mary or Joseph gave the animals a pat. What would it feel like to pat a donkey, or a cow, or a cat, or a sheep? **(Imagine you are touching some fake fur and/or cotton batting.)** The stable floor was covered with straw. That was where Mary and Joseph slept that night. **(Imagine you are touching straw)** Do you think you would like to sleep on straw? **(Wait for the children to respond.)** The straw was dusty and a bit prickly, but it was dry and made a warm bed. That night, Baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in soft cloth. She wanted him to feel safe and warm. **(Imagine you are touching flannel/fleece.)** But where could Mary and Joseph put their special new baby to sleep? There was no cradle or crib. **(Wait for the children to respond.)** Yes, the animals’ manger was just the right size. It was made of sturdy wood. **(Imagine you are touching wood.)** Joseph put some clean straw in the manger and Mary gently laid Jesus there to sleep.

Shepherds in the nearby hills were watching over their sheep. Suddenly, angels appeared in the sky. They had come to tell the shepherds the news of this very special baby’s birth and to sing songs of joy. We’re going to sing a joyous Christmas song, too.

Sing – “Here We Go Up to Bethlehem”

- 1. Here we go up to Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Bethlehem,
Here we go up to Bethlehem, on a long and tiring journey.***
- 2. Where shall we stay in Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Bethlehem?
Where shall we stay in Bethlehem, on a long and tiring journey?***

Memory Verse: *“Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us!”* Luke 2:15

Integrating the Theme - Baby Jesus in a Manger

Materials: egg cartons cut apart into individual cups
yellow construction paper
straw or beige raffia cut in small pieces
small pieces of tissue paper or fabric for blanket
clear tape, and play dough

Do you remember the action rhyme that we learned two weeks ago?

(cup your hand) Here's a tiny little bed.

(lay a finger in the cupped hand) Here's a tiny little head.

(put a finger to your mouth) Shh! Baby Jesus is sleeping!

We're going to make baby Jesus in his manger. **(Hold up the materials as you explain.)** This will be the manger. Put some straw into the manger to make the bed soft for Jesus. Then make a baby out of play dough and wrap him up in a blanket to keep him warm. We'll use a piece of tape to hold his blanket in place. Place the baby in the manger, and then maybe you'd like to sing him a lullaby and rock him to sleep.

[Dance Song – Let it Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!: Kidz Bop on YouTube](#)

Closing Prayer

Dear God,

May the spirit of Christmas fill all your hearts with love.

May you leave here with the glory of the Lord's love inside each one of you here today.

Amen.

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