



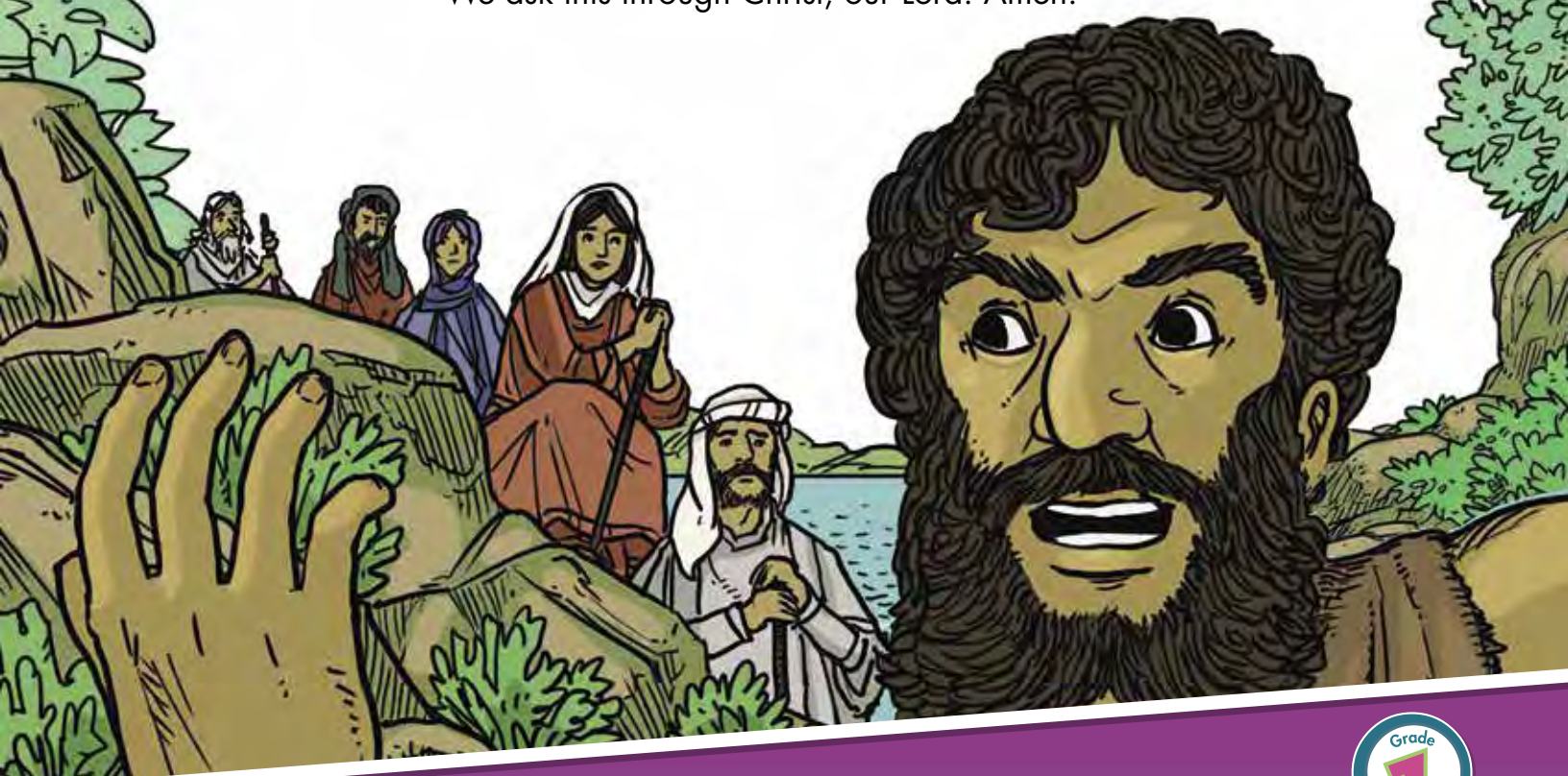
Discover!
Finding Faith in Life

Preparing for Jesus

Mark 1:4-8

Prayer

Loving God, you sent your Son, Jesus, to show us the way to you. Help us to follow your way every day and to grow closer to you this Advent season. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.





A Soft
Welcome
for **Baby Jesus**

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are truly God and truly human. More than two thousand years ago, you came into the world as a tiny baby.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: As we prepare to welcome you at Christmas, we offer you all of our good actions throughout this Advent.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We offer you our lives, our hearts, and everything you have given to us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will look for your presence in our world and in one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will welcome you with every kind action we do for one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Family Page

Background Reflection

Anyone who has ever helped prepare to welcome a new baby into a family already has some sense of what Advent can mean to us. The sacrifices we make, as we prepare space in our homes and hearts for this new member of our family, are made with excitement and anticipation. In a similar way, when we choose to take on sacrifices or penances as part of our Advent practice, we make room for the love of Jesus in our lives.

Sacrifice and *penance* are really shorthand terms for “loving.” Love means going beyond ourselves to care for the good of another. Learning to love is a lifelong task. We practice this task more mindfully in Advent. As adults, we too can learn from the practice of placing straw into the manger to prepare “a soft bed” for Jesus, marking our acts of love (or penance, or sacrifice). Sharing this practice with our child helps us to realize that even our smallest acts of love have infinite value in the eyes of Jesus.

Family Activities

- Write the names of each family member on slips of paper, and place the slips into a bag, bowl, or basket. Each person draws the name of a family member, who then becomes their “*Christkindl*,” or “Christ Child,” for the season of Advent. Each person has the challenge to do one kind action for their *Christkindl* per day.
- Set aside time to talk with your child about waiting. Ask her or him if it is hard or easy to wait for good things to happen. Share one or two ideas that you use for yourself when you are trying to wait patiently.
- Watch the video “Tell Me the Story: John the Baptist” (YouTube, 2:23) together. Explain that John the Baptist helped the people get ready for Jesus. As a family, discuss ways you are getting ready for Jesus and sharing God’s love this Advent.



People of Faith

The Immaculate Conception of Mary

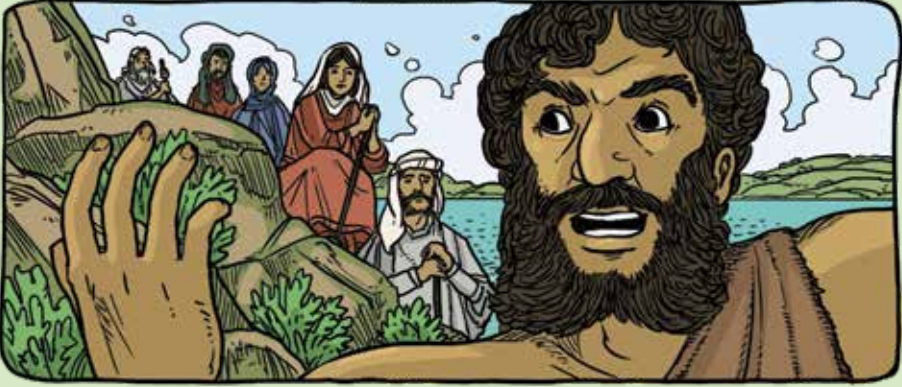
God kept Mary free from sin before she was born so that she could be the mother of Jesus. The angel Gabriel called Mary “full of grace” because she never sinned. We celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord Jesus, we look forward to welcoming you at Christmas with excitement and joy. Help us to act with patience and kindness this Advent. We ask this in your name. Amen.

John the Baptist Prepares People for Jesus



Mark 1:4-8 (For the full story, read Mark 1:1-8.)

4 So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." 5 Many people . . . went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was **locusts** and wild honey. 7 He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

locust a large grasshopper



Understand It!

When a visitor is coming, your family prepares. You clean the house, prepare food, and put on nice clothes. When Jesus came to earth, God sent John the Baptist to prepare for him. In this Bible story from Mark, John tells people to admit their sins and stop sinning. He baptizes them in the Jordan River as a sign that they wanted to change their hearts.

John also tells people that Jesus is coming. John explains that Jesus is far, far greater than he is. He says that the Baptism Jesus would give would be much more powerful than his. Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is the Baptism we received. It washed away our sins and made us members of the Church, the family of God!

STORY

Mark 1

Live It!

Say this prayer to tell God you are sorry for your sins. It is called an Act of Contrition. We use this prayer in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to
do good,

I have sinned against you whom I should
love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance,
to sin no more,

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

Tell It!



1



2



3



4

Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.





Discover!

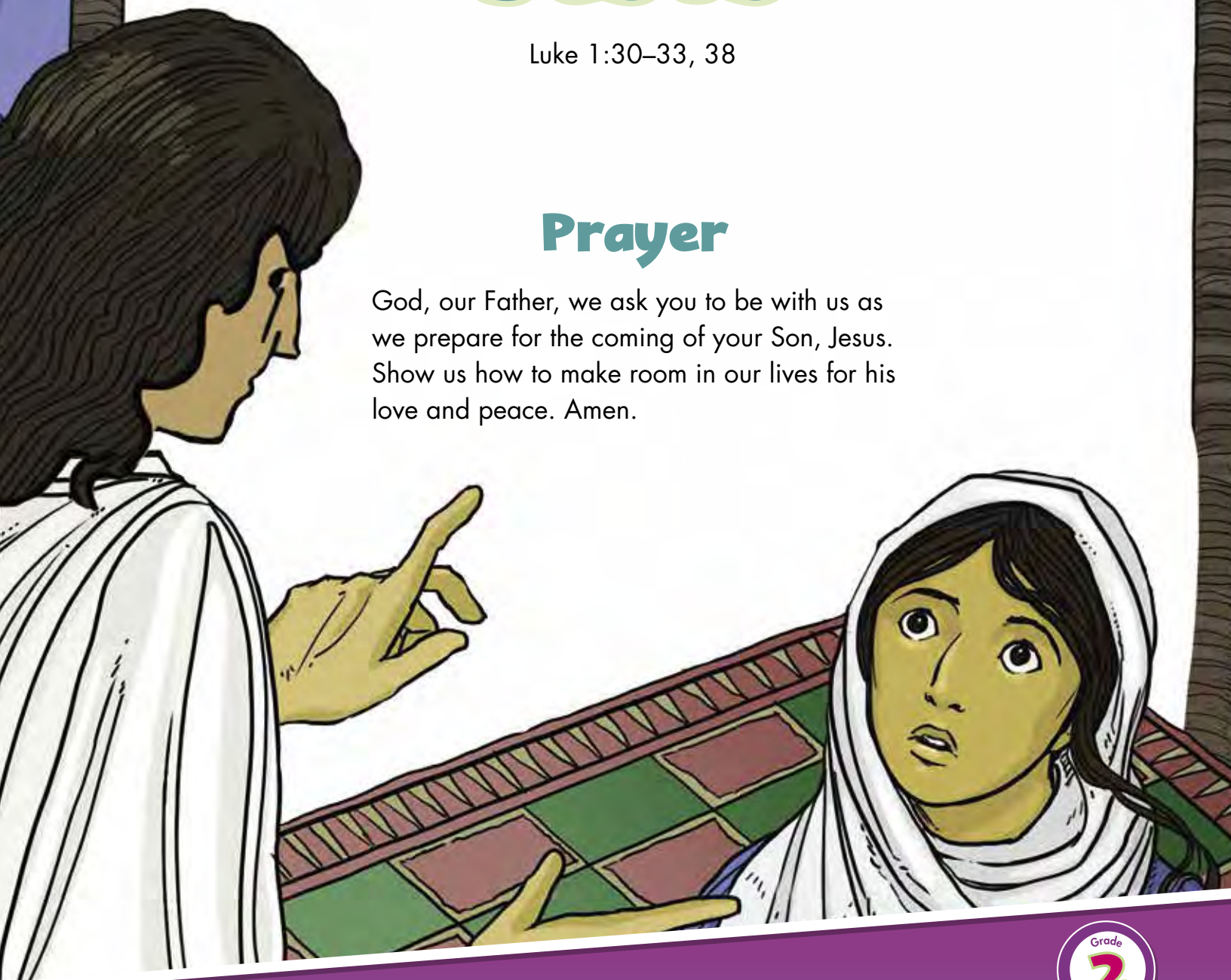
Finding Faith in Life

Welcoming Jesus

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Prayer

God, our Father, we ask you to be with us as we prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus. Show us how to make room in our lives for his love and peace. Amen.



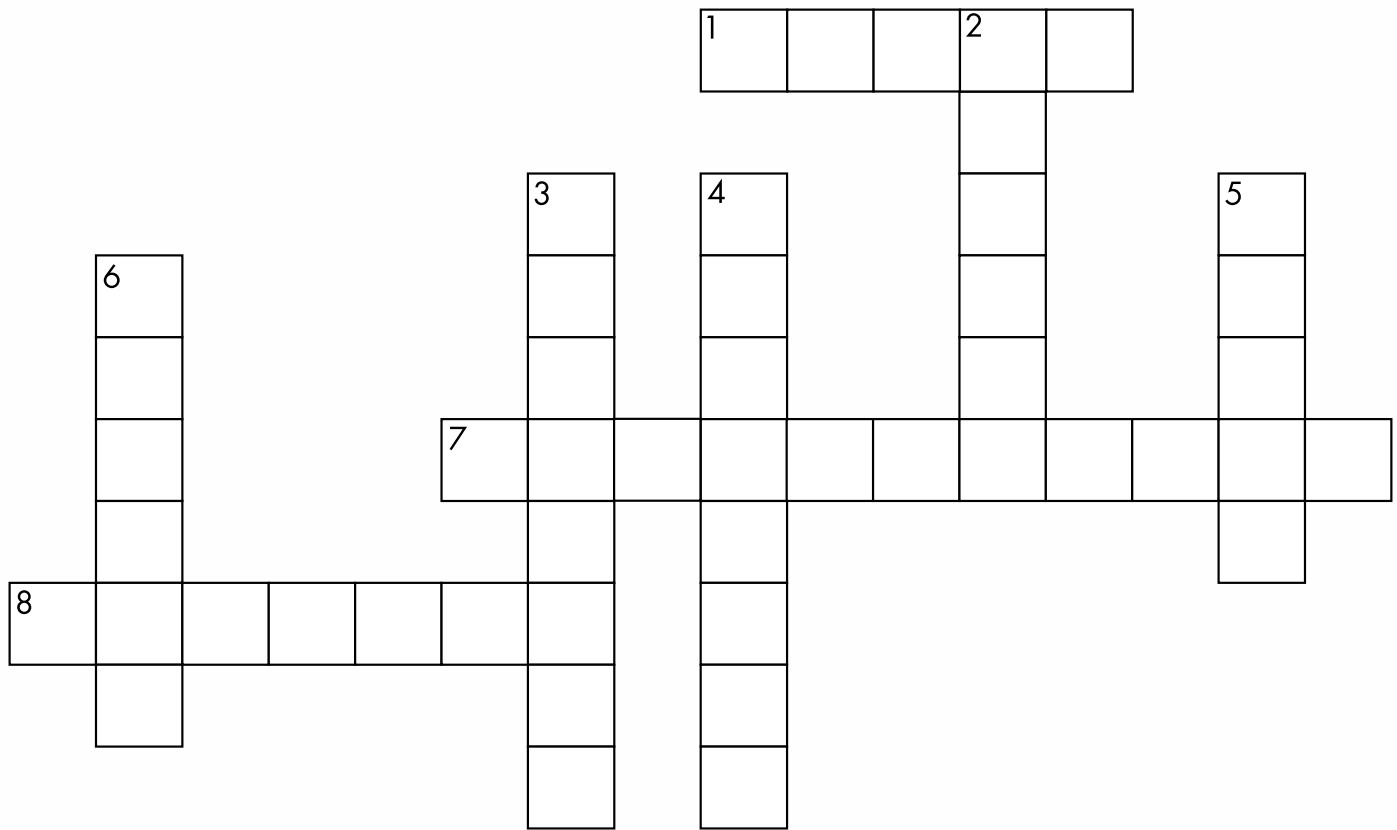
Use the Featured Story on page 1574 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Luke 1:30–33, 38) to solve the clues to the crossword below and learn more about the angel's message.

gracious
great

birth
ancestor

happen
servant

afraid
descendants



Down

- 2. He asked Mary not to be _____.
- 3. Mary's Son would be a king, as his _____ David was.
- 4. The angel told Mary that God had been _____ to her.
- 5. The angel told Mary that she would give _____ to a Son.
- 6. Mary agreed that everything should _____ to her as the angel had said.

Across

- 1. Mary's Son would be _____ and would be called the Son of God.
- 7. Mary's Son would be king of the _____ of Jacob forever.
- 8. Mary agreed that she was the Lord's _____.



Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Loving God, heavenly Father, you sent your angel to Mary.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: The Angel Gabriel gave her the Good News that she would give birth to your Son, our Savior.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We celebrate this Good News during Advent, and we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth this Christmas.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We light [this candle / these candles] as a sign of peace [hope, joy, love].

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Jesus is the light of the world. May he light our way in Advent and throughout our lives.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Family Page

Background Reflection

Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of Jesus. The word *Advent* comes from a Latin root meaning “to arrive” or “to come toward.” When we prepare for something, we walk toward it. We think ahead and make plans. We gather courage and hope, and we look forward to the joy the big event will bring.

All year long, we celebrate and try to follow Mary’s example in saying yes to God as we walk toward him throughout our lives. During Advent, we prepare to welcome him in a more intense, more immediate way. Let us pray that, like Mary, we will be ready to accept with peace whatever God asks of us.

Family Activities

- Read together the Featured Story on page 1574 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (Luke 1:30–33, 38). Talk about what Mary may have felt when she heard Gabriel’s news. Talk about what it is like to know that a baby is on the way.
- Brainstorm with your child to create a list of ways your family can say “yes” to God more often. Examples might include going to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation together, beginning a habit of family prayer, or practicing more patient behavior with one another at home.
- Watch the video “Light the Advent Candle” (YouTube, 2:26) together. Talk about your family’s existing Advent wreath, or make plans to set up a new one. Rather than purchasing a new wreath, create a simple homemade wreath from craft supplies and recycled items you may already have.

People of Faith

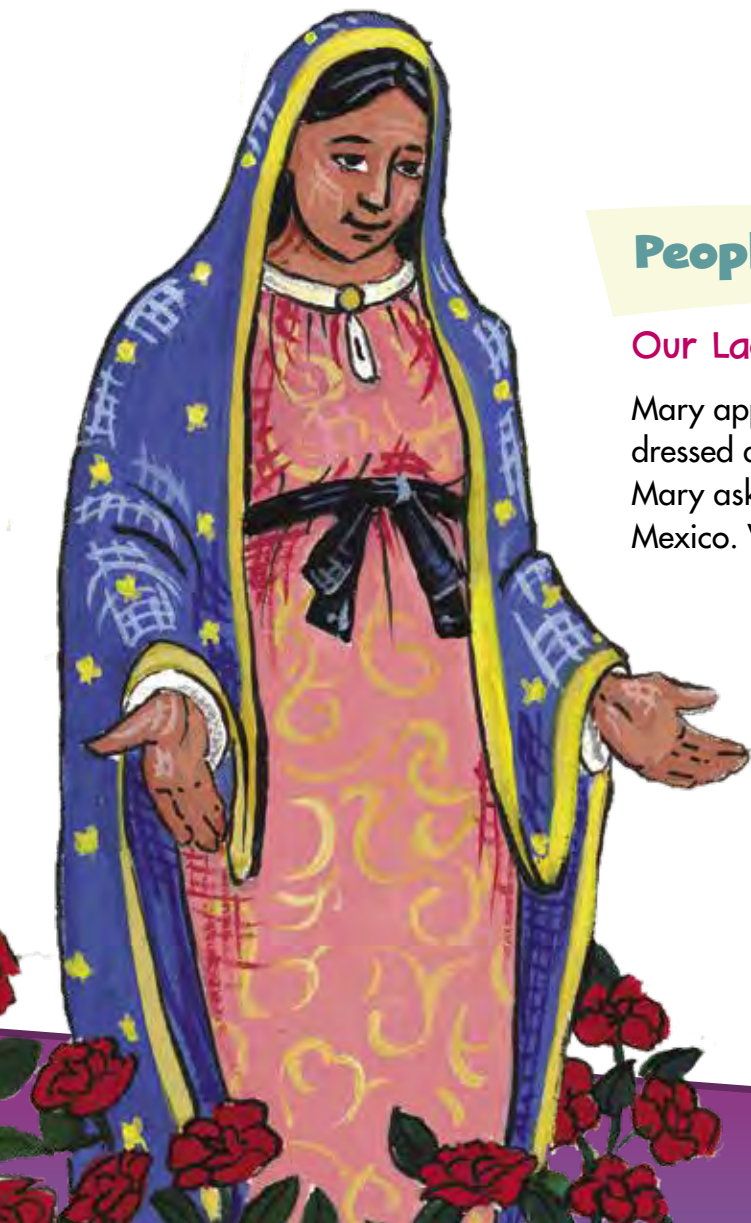
Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531)

Mary appeared to a Mexican farmer named Juan Diego. She dressed as a Mexican woman and spoke in the local language. Mary asked for a church to be built in her honor for the people of Mexico. We celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Loving God, you sent the Angel Gabriel to deliver your message to Mary. You send messages to us too. Help us listen for your voice and say “yes” to what you ask. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



Mary Trusts God Completely



Luke 1:30–33, 38 (For the full story, read Luke 1:26–38.)

30 The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary; God has been **gracious** to you. **31** You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his **ancestor** David was, **33** and he will be the king of the **descendants** of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!”

38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.

gracious kind

ancestor a member of a person’s family who lived long ago, such as a grandparent, great-grandparent, and so on

descendants all of a person’s children down through time

Great People of Faith

5

Reading Plan

Understand It!

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel [GAY-bree-uhl] appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

STORY
Luke 1

Live It!

Pray this prayer to ask for Mary's help in saying yes to God:

Mother Mary, pray for me.

I want to be just like you,
ready to say yes to whatever God asks.

Pray that when God calls me, I will be ready,
trusting that he will bless my life.

Then someday I will be with you and your son,
Jesus. Amen.

Tell It!



1



2



3



4

Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.




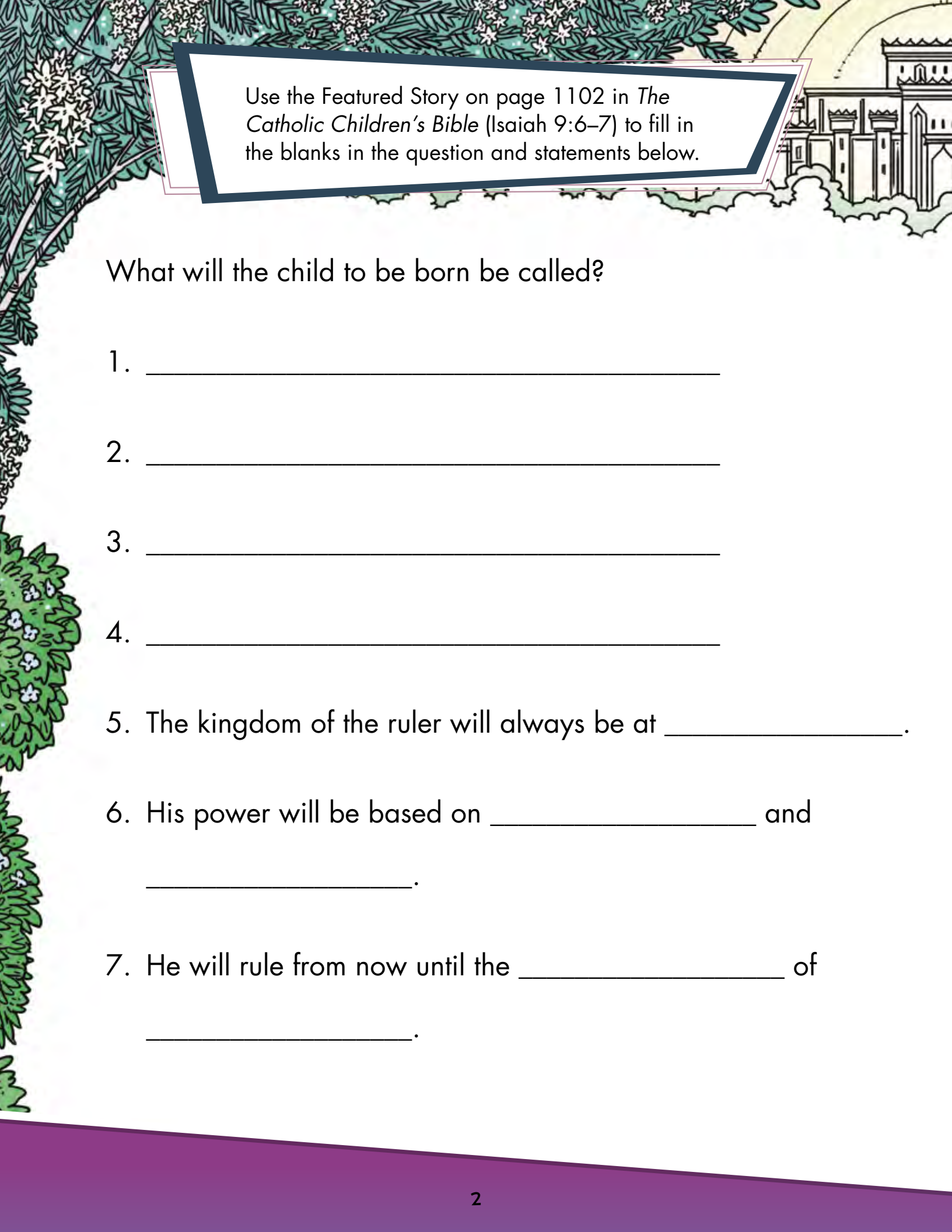
The King Is Coming

Isaiah 9:6-7

Prayer

O God, bless our homes, our families, and our friends as we prepare for Christmas. Teach us to wait in joyful hope and to be kind to one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.





Use the Featured Story on page 1102 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Isaiah 9:6-7) to fill in the blanks in the question and statements below.

What will the child to be born be called?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. The kingdom of the ruler will always be at _____.

6. His power will be based on _____ and
_____.

7. He will rule from now until the _____ of
_____.



Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Let us sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Leader: Dear God, we are getting ready to celebrate the birthday of your Son, Jesus. We ask your help to prepare our hearts for his coming. Fill us with joy. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless us with patience to wait as the people of Israel waited for their promised king. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless our Advent wreaths and help us to reach out to those who need our help. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Help us to make this world a better place by the light we bring into it. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Family Page

Background Reflection

In the midst of busy Christmas preparations, the season of Advent calls us to a different preparation—one of reflection, excitement, and growing joy! Waiting for Christmas can be difficult for the best of us, and it can be even harder for children. The first Advent wreaths and calendars were an attempt to help children to count the passing days, to focus their impatience, and to build anticipation and joy. These traditional practices also help adults to focus our longing and place our hope on the coming of the Messiah, in Bethlehem, in our lives now, and at the end of time.

The people of Israel were also impatient, enduring years of hardship and exile. The prophet Isaiah promised a great king and named him Prince of Peace, Eternal Father, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. What do we name that king? We name him Jesus! The birth of a king in an obscure, small, and humble place was not at all expected. So we are reminded that greatness often hides in the ordinary fabric of our lives and in the hidden corners of our world. The King of Kings is Emmanuel: God with us.

Family Activities

- Start making a paper chain with red and green construction paper strips to decorate your tree or a doorway. Cut out twenty-four strips of paper, about 6 inches long, for December 1–24. Each day, connect a new strip of paper to the chain. Use this time to talk about how you can make Advent a special time of preparation for Christmas.
- Decorate a can or jar. Write “Advent Pennies” on a label and attach it to the can or jar. Collect pennies and loose change to donate to a charity.
- View the video “Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)” (YouTube, 2:09) together. Discuss what your child saw in the video and any points that were new for her or him. Make a commitment to celebrate Advent in a new way this year.

People of Faith

Saint Lucy (c. 283–304)

Saint Lucy was a young woman who chose to die rather than give up her faith. Her life was a witness to the light of Christ and his love. Lucy means “light”. Saint Lucy’s feast day is December 13, and is often celebrated by lighting candles and sharing a sweet Saint Lucy bread.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Loving God, in this season of Advent, help us grow in love and fill our hearts with peace. As we prepare to celebrate your coming into the world, let us be grateful for all our gifts and especially for the gift of Jesus. Amen.



Isaiah Promises That God Will Send a Special King



Isaiah 9:6-7 (For the full story, read Isaiah 9:2-7.)

6 A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful **Counselor**," "Mighty God," "**Eternal** Father," "Prince of Peace." 7 His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's **successor**, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time. The LORD Almighty is **determined** to do all this.

counselor a person who gives advice

eternal lasting forever

successor a person who continues a person's work

determined to have one's mind made up



Understand It!

Kings sometimes are given special names that tell what they were like. A king in England was called Richard the Lion-Hearted. He was very brave. A prince in Russia was called Ivan the Terrible. He was very mean.

The prophet Isaiah [eye-ZAY-uh] told the Israelites [IZ-ry-el-yts] that a new king was coming. Isaiah gave this new king special names to describe what he would be like. He would be wonderful. He would be a counselor, or give good advice. He would be a prince of peace. We know that the king Isaiah was describing is Jesus, the king who cares for the world forever. Aren't you glad that he is our king?

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, the people hailed him as a king and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" We celebrate this event every year on Palm Sunday.

Live It!

Draw a picture of Jesus as a king. Pick one of these titles from Isaiah and write it on your drawing:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Eternal Father
- Prince of Peace

Share your picture with your family and explain what it means.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.



A King of Peace

Isaiah 11:6-9

Prayer

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with joy as we prepare and wait for you to come at Christmas. And so we pray: Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.



Reread the Featured Story on page 1106 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Isaiah 11:6–9) and match the "animal partners."

wolves

bear cubs

leopards

young goats

calves

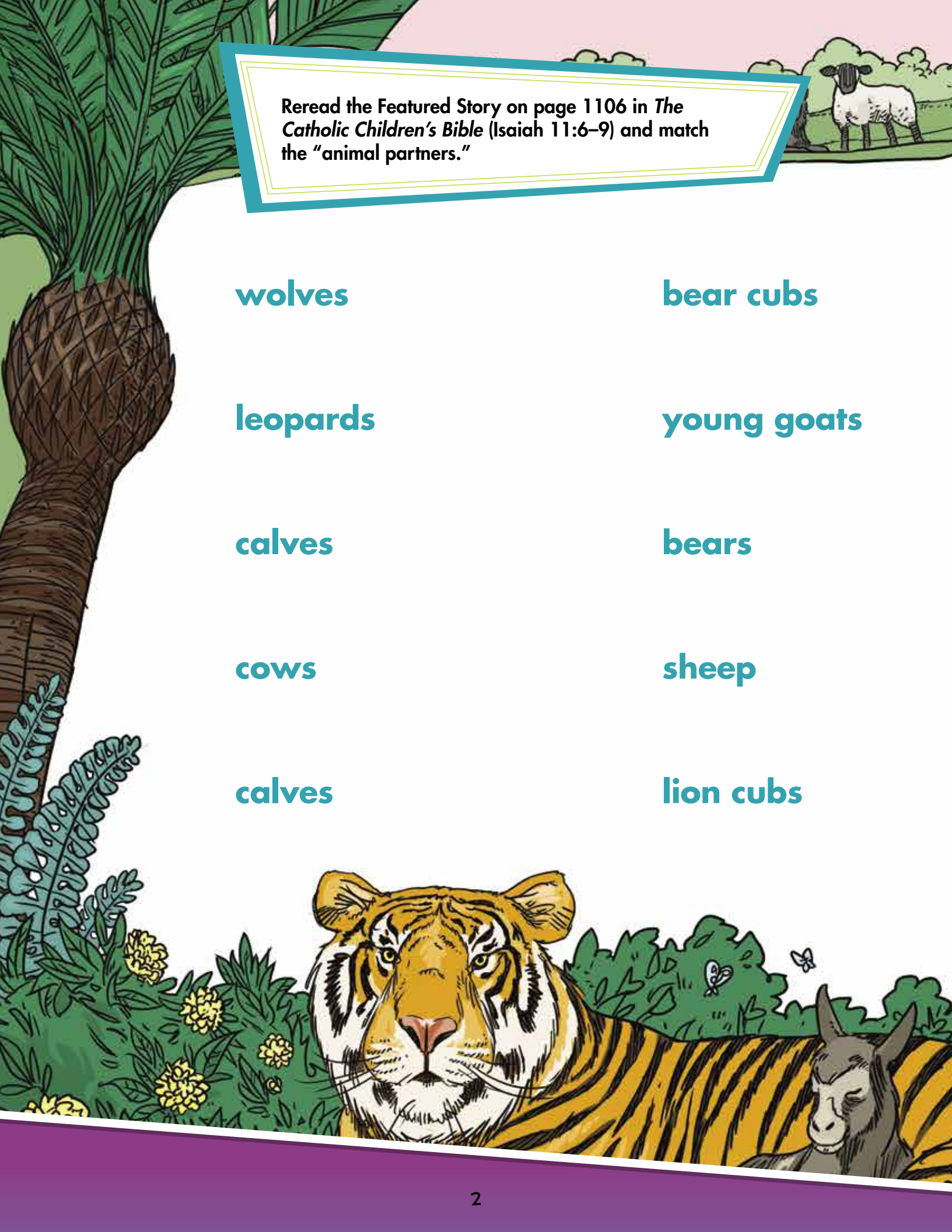
bears

cows

sheep

calves

lion cubs





Advent Light

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we remember your birth in Bethlehem. Let us think of your willingness to be born as a helpless baby. May we trust in you when we feel unsure and weak.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we invite you to enter our hearts and lives with your peace and joy. May we trust in you when we feel alone and distracted.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we know you will come again at the end of time. May we trust in you when we feel anxious and afraid.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us be part of your Kingdom of Peace by bringing peace and joy to others.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us prepare to receive you into our hearts at Christmas, especially when we receive you in Holy Communion.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Family Page

Background Reflection

The liturgical season of Advent is often a hurried precursor to the celebration of Christmas. We find it easy to focus on the birth of Jesus, but it's important to remember that the Church takes four weeks before Christmas to slow down and prepare.

The word *advent* comes from the Latin word for *coming*. In Advent, we prepare for Christ's coming in the historical event of Christmas, we prepare for his coming at the end of time, and we prepare for his coming into our hearts at Christmas, especially by receiving Holy Communion on that great feast.

This lesson focuses on pausing in prayer as we prepare for Christmas. You may invite your child to participate in traditional Advent customs like lighting an Advent wreath and serving others as Jesus came to serve us. And you can also remind her or him of Isaiah's promise of Jesus and his peaceful kingdom in the Old Testament. In these ways, your child can learn that Advent is a special season all its own.

Family Activities

- Pray the "Prayer of Saint Francis" found on page 1107 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Talk as a family about ways you can be instruments of God's peace this Advent.
- Go for a family drive to look at the Christmas lights in your neighborhood. Talk about the beauty and joy that Christmas lights bring, and then compare the lights to Jesus, the light of the world. Discuss how your family can be a light for others this season.
- Watch the video "Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)" (YouTube, 2:09) together. Pause the video as needed to process the different points it makes. Then talk about the ways Advent is different from Christmas. Finally, name some ways your child can use Advent to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

People of Faith

Saint John the Baptist (first century)

Saint John announced Jesus' coming. He is called a prophet because he spoke God's Word. John baptized people who wanted to change their hearts, and he encouraged them to follow Jesus, not himself. John was Jesus' cousin, and he was born six months before Jesus. The Church celebrates the birthday of John the Baptist on June 24, six months before Christmas Eve.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Dear Jesus, during Advent, may your words remain in our hearts so that we may fill our lives with generosity and compassion. We pray: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.



Isaiah Promises a Peaceful Kingdom



Isaiah 11:6–9 (For the full story, read Isaiah 11:1–9.)

6 Wolves and sheep will live together in peace, and **leopards** will lie down with young goats. Calves and lion cubs will feed together, and little children will take care of them. 7 Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do. 8 Even a baby will not be harmed if it plays near a **poisonous** snake. 9 On Zion [ZY-uhn], God's **sacred** hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be as full of knowledge of the LORD as the seas are full of water.

leopard a large, wild cat that has spots

poisonous something that can cause sickness or death

sacred holy



Understand It!

Sometimes people don't treat one another with kindness. Sometimes people fight and have wars. But Isaiah [eye-ZAY-uh] tells us that a time is coming when people will not fight with one another. A new king will bring a time of peace. In his kingdom there will be no enemies and no danger. Everyone will live together happily and without fear.

This new king is Jesus. His perfect Kingdom is Heaven. In Heaven there is no fighting or unhappiness. People live together with Jesus in peace and joy that never ends. We will live with him in Heaven forever if we follow his Law of Love!

Live It!

Here is a prayer you can say for peace. It is said to be written by Saint Francis of Assisi. (*Despair* means not having any hope.)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 when there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 and where there is sadness, joy.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.



Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Preparing for Jesus

Luke 1:39-56

Understand It!

When the angel announced the Good News to Mary, that she had been chosen to be the Mother of God, he also told her that her relative Elizabeth was also pregnant. Elizabeth was older and so, as soon as she could, Mary went to visit her. How happy they were to see each other and to share together their good news!

When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the child in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy. That child was John the Baptist, the prophet who would one day baptize his cousin Jesus as he began his mission in the world. Elizabeth calls Mary "the mother of the Lord," and so she is. In this moment of happiness, Mary sang a song of praise.

The Church joins Mary in her song of praise because of all God's wonderful works, especially his giving us his Son, Jesus. We have so many reasons to praise God!

Live It!

We all have reasons for praising God. What are some of yours? On a separate piece of paper, write them down. Then fold the paper and keep it in a safe place. When you get discouraged or sad, take out this "paper of praise" to remind yourself of God's goodness to you.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are Emmanuel, God with us. Thank you for coming to live among us. Help us to prepare to celebrate your birth at Christmas with peaceful and loving hearts. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.



Find the names below in this word find. Words may be found running horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Mary

Elizabeth

Zechariah

Abraham

Jesus

John

Gabriel

D	C	L	J	B	Y	Z	A	D	F
E	H	V	O	D	M	H	K	L	E
M	S	B	H	O	U	A	E	C	L
A	A	F	N	C	T	I	R	V	I
H	C	N	H	B	R	R	A	Y	Z
A	S	C	G	B	S	A	G	U	A
R	U	K	A	H	P	H	Y	I	B
B	S	G	L	J	Q	C	F	V	E
A	E	Y	Z	P	Q	E	R	G	T
G	J	A	N	E	D	Z	B	W	H

My  praises
the Lord;
my soul is glad
because of
God my Savior.



Luke 1:46



A Circle of Love and Light

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: We are gathered around the Advent wreath to help us prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Each candle counts one week of this beautiful season of Advent. This week, as we gather around the wreath, let us pray:

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of peace. Be with us this week. Help us be peaceful. Bring peace to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of love. Be with us this week. Help us to be loving to all we meet, whether friend or stranger. Bring love to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of joy. Be with us this week. Help us to be joyful. Bring joy to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of faith and hope. Be with us this week. Help us to hope in you as our Savior. Bring faith and hope to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Leader: We are gathered in a circle around the circle of the Advent wreath. A circle is a sign of God's love, a love that has no beginning and no end. Let us pray quietly for our families and friends. Let us bring them into our circle of prayer. Let us think of those who are poor and in need. Let us bring them into our circle of prayer. Let our circle of prayer include the whole world as we place ourselves today in the circle of God's love and light. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Family Page

Background Reflection

The season of Advent evokes deep feelings, reaching into our memories and touching our lives in a personal and spiritual way. The symbols of the season—the Advent wreath, the candles, the carols, and other preparation for Christmas, all with their own familiar memories—involve us in this season in a most personal way.

Yet, in the life of the Church, the personal becomes communal as we experience this preparatory season together. We are not solitary pilgrims. We travel in a caravan of pilgrims as we pray together, sing together (“O Come Emmanuel!”), and prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts yet again, together.

Let us join Mary in praise and thanksgiving, in wonder and awe. Let us join her in the Bethlehem of our own hearts, that hidden place in which the God who made the universe has chosen to dwell.

Family Activities

- Create an Advent atmosphere at home with an Advent wreath and Advent calendar. Use the wreath as a centerpiece at the family table, and light it when the family gathers for meals. Parents and children can take turns opening the windows on the Advent calendar.
- Choose a family “Advent Gift” to give to those who are poor. Support a toy drive or food drive as a family, or send a family contribution to a national or international aid group, like Catholic Relief Services. Encourage your fifth grader to contribute part of his or her allowance or piggy-bank savings to this effort.
- Read together the Scripture passage for this week’s lesson (Luke 1:39–56). Invite your child to tell you what he or she remembers about the meaning of Mary’s Song of Praise. Select a few verses that appeal to your child, and discuss them together.

People of Faith

Saint Elizabeth (first century)

Saint Elizabeth was the cousin of Mary, the mother of God. Elizabeth was an older woman, but the angel Gabriel revealed that she would have a son who would prepare people for the Lord. (That son was John the Baptist.) When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth realized that the Mother of the Lord had come to see her! Elizabeth glorified God and raised John to love God and care for God’s people. The Church celebrates Saint Elizabeth on November 5.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

With the entire Church around the world we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Help us celebrate your birth among us with faith and hope, peace, and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.



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not leave the house for five months.

25 “Now at last the Lord has helped me,” she said. “He has taken away my public disgrace!”

The Birth of Jesus Is Announced

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth.

27 He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary.

28 The angel came to her and said, “Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!”

29 Mary was deeply troubled by the angel’s message, and she wondered what his words meant. **30** The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you.

31 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, **33** and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!”

34 Mary said to the angel, “I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?”

35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. **36** Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. **37** For there is nothing that God cannot do.”

38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. **40** She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. **41** When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit **42** and said in a loud voice, “You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! **43** Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord’s mother comes to visit me? **44** For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. **45** How happy you are to believe that the Lord’s message to you will come true!”

Mary’s Song of Praise

46 Mary said,

“My heart praises the Lord;

47 my soul is glad because of
God my Savior,

48 for he has remembered me,
his lowly servant!

From now on all people will call
me happy,

49 because of the great things
the Mighty God has done
for me.

His name is holy;

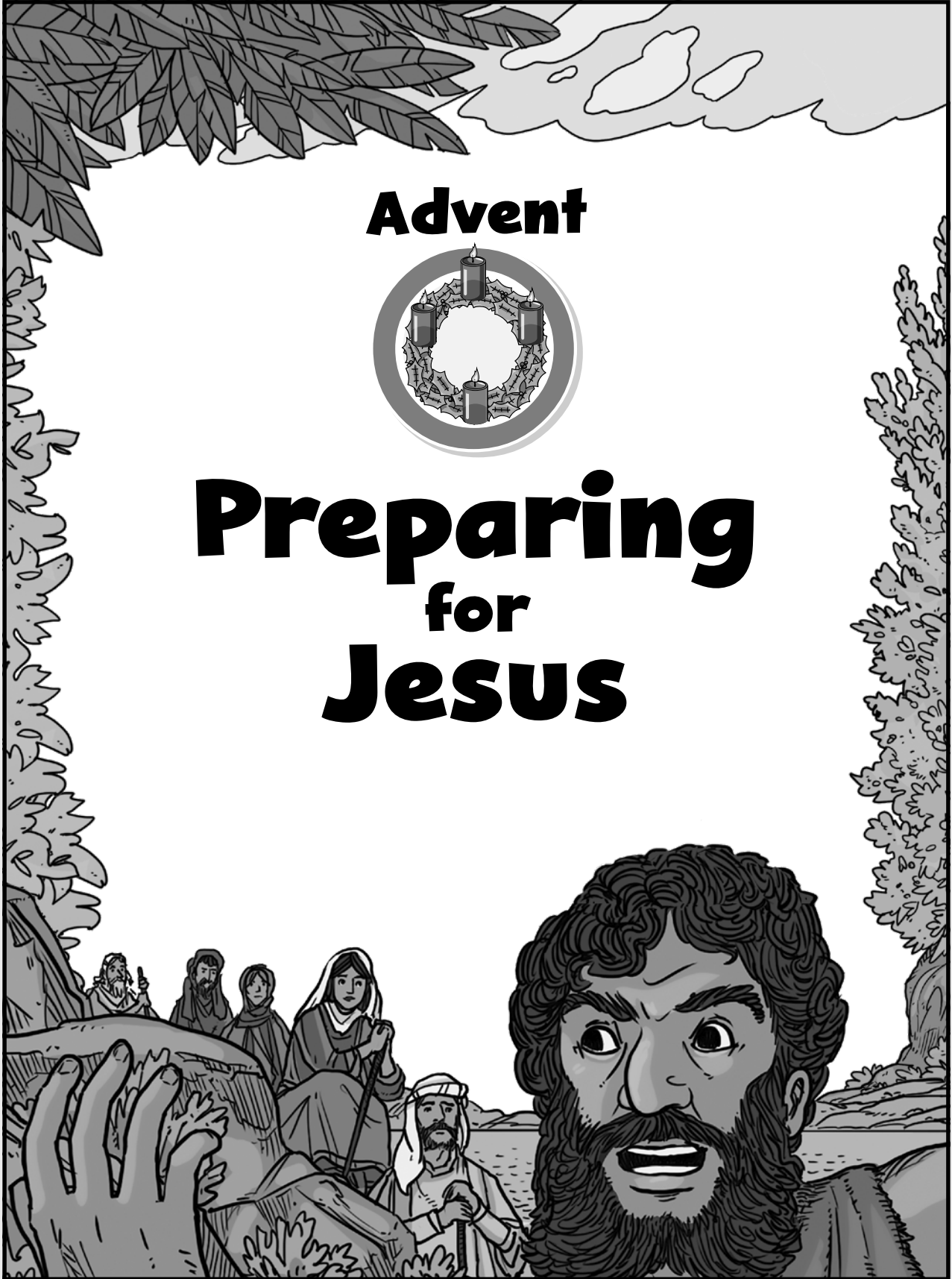
50 from one generation to
another

he shows mercy to those who
honor him.

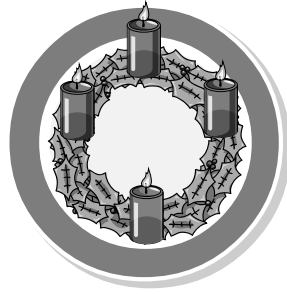
51 He has stretched out his mighty
arm
and scattered the proud with
all their plans.

52 He has brought down mighty
kings from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly.

53 He has filled the hungry with
good things,

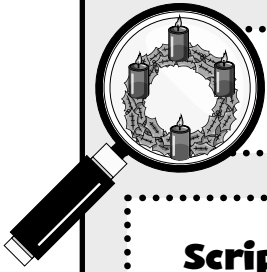


Advent



**Preparing
for
Jesus**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 1:4–8

Lesson Goals

- to indicate that John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus
- to identify ourselves as wanting to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas
- to describe ways we can make ourselves ready for Jesus

Catechism References

522–524

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

locust, prepare

Music Suggestions

- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” by The Little Sunshine Kids (Starting Five Media)
- “Hope, Peace, Joy and Love (Advent Song),” by Lumin8 Children’s Choir (Calvary Church)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Advent activity booklet
- a Nativity scene with large, sturdy manger
- cotton balls, one for each child
- copies of the handout “Preparing for Jesus” (TX006171), one for each child
- round-tipped scissors
- tape or glue sticks
- envelopes, one for each child
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Anyone who has ever helped prepare to welcome a new baby into a family already has some sense of what Advent can mean to us. The sacrifices we make, as we prepare space in our homes and hearts for this new member of our family, are made with excitement and anticipation. In a similar way, when we choose to take on sacrifices or penances as part of our Advent practice, we make room for the love of Jesus in our lives.

Sacrifice and *penance* are really shorthand terms for “loving.” Love means going beyond ourselves to care for the good of another. Learning to love is a lifelong task. We practice this task more mindfully in Advent. As adults, we too can learn from the practice of placing straw into the manger to prepare “a soft bed” for Jesus, marking our acts of love (or penance, or sacrifice). Sharing this practice with children helps us to realize that even our smallest acts of love have infinite value in the eyes of Jesus.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think about times when they have been excited about something that is about to happen. (Examples might include a promised treat, a special family trip, or the birth of a new sibling.) Ask volunteers to share some examples.
- Invite the volunteers into a conversation about their feelings as they looked forward to that special event. Ask the following questions:
 - How long did you have to wait for your special event?
 - Was it hard for you to wait?
 - What did you do to help you to be patient?
 - Did you do anything special to get ready? If so, what?
- Tell the children that in this lesson, they will be learning that God helped his people to get ready for Jesus by sending John the Baptist to **prepare** them. Explain that the word *prepare* means "to get ready."
- Tell the children that during this season of Advent, the Church is getting ready for Christmas. Explain to the group that in this lesson, they will learn what they need to do to prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmas.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Mark 1:1–8 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1524). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1526. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1524.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1526–1527 and to describe what they see.

- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did John tell the people? (*“Turn away from your sins and be baptized . . . and God will forgive your sins” [verse 4].*)
 - After the people confessed their sins, what did John do? (*He baptized them in the Jordan River.*)
 - John told people that a man would come after him who would be much greater than he was. Who might this person be? (*Accept all responses. Tell the children they will find out who this was shortly.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.. Read the instructions and help the children remember the answer from the Bible story. *Answer: JOHN*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1527, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - We get ready for important visitors.
 - When Jesus came to walk on Earth, God sent John the Baptist to help people to get ready for Jesus.
 - John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus by asking people to turn away from their sins. He also invited them to be baptized as a sign that they were ready to change their hearts.
 - John told people that Jesus was coming. John said that Jesus’ Baptism would be more powerful than John’s. We have received the Baptism of Jesus, and we are part of the Church, the family of God.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1527, or have a volunteer read it.
- Read the prayer for the children. Then ask them to repeat it after you, going slowly, phrase by phrase.
- Let the children know that they will see this prayer again when they are preparing for First Reconciliation. Explain that this will most likely be next year, when they are in second grade. Tell them that this prayer shows God that we are sorry for making wrong choices, and we pray for God’s help to make better choices in the future.
- Explain that this prayer is a good one for Advent because, in Advent, we are preparing ourselves to welcome Jesus.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1527.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows John the Baptist. Image 2 shows John calling people away from sin and to Baptism. Image 3 shows the many people who went to John. Image 4 shows John baptizing with water.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

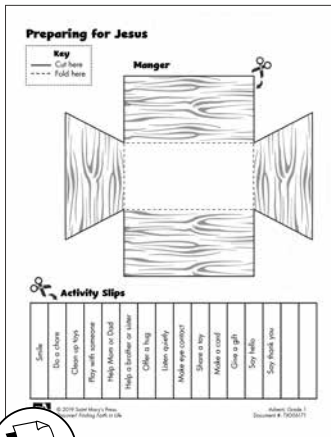
Advent

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Making a Manger to Welcome Jesus

- Distribute the copies of the handout and envelopes, one each per child. Have scissors and tape or glue sticks ready for the next steps.
- Tell the children to look over the page but to wait for instructions before beginning. Tell them to first watch what you do. Explain that then it will be their turn to try.
- Explain to the children that they will be making a manger that resembles the one that the infant Jesus would have slept in when he was born.
- Distribute the scissors. Show the children how to cut out the mangers. You may want to take an extra copy of the sheet and show them exactly how to do this.
- Show the children how to fold the manger and tape it into a 3-D shape. It may also help to have a completed version already done, so that you can show them what the finished product can look like.
- Tell them that they will have the chance to fill the manger with soft “bedding” for Jesus by doing kind actions.
- Invite them to cut out their activity slips and place these in their envelopes. If they have ideas to write on the blank slips, you may need to help them by writing their ideas down for them.



TX006171

Process the Activity

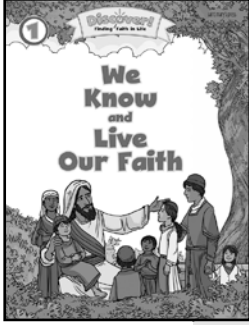
- Encourage the children to take their mangers home and practice doing kind actions for others there. Tell them that whenever they do a kind action for a family member, they can find the slip that lists that action and make it part of the “bed” for the Baby Jesus in the manger.
- Explain that on Christmas Eve, the night before Christmas, they may put the cutout of Baby Jesus into the manger. Tell them that all of their actions will make a soft bed for the Baby Jesus.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 233–234 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that John the Baptist came to call people to turn away from their sins and to believe in God. Tell them that he told people to trust that God would forgive their sins.
- Continue with some of the following points:
 - John the Baptist baptized people in the Jordan River. John’s baptism was for people who wanted to change their hearts and turn to God. This baptism was different from the Baptism that Jesus brought to us. Our Baptism brought us into God’s family and made us members of the Church.
 - John said the Baptism that Jesus gives is more powerful than his own. John wanted to get people ready to receive Jesus.
 - In Advent, we are preparing to receive Jesus, just as the people were in the time of John the Baptist; we are preparing to celebrate Christmas.
 - We can get ready for Jesus in Advent by praying, telling God we are sorry for our sins, and doing kind actions for others. We change our hearts. We change from being mean or selfish to being more loving and kind.
 - In Advent, the Church uses the color purple to stand for being sorry and turning away from sins and the color rose (pink) to stand for joy.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does it mean to turn away from sins? *(We change our hearts. We do the best we can to follow Jesus, to be loving and kind.)*
 - What does the season of Advent prepare us to do? *(It helps us prepare to receive Jesus into our lives. It helps us prepare to celebrate Christmas.)*
 - What can we do to get ready to welcome Jesus? *(We can pray, tell God we are sorry for our sins, and do kind actions for others.)*
 - Why do we use purple and pink in church during Advent? *(Purple means being sorry and turning away from sin. Pink means joy.)*
- Have the children turn to page 4 in the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, and encourage the children to say, “Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource corresponds to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Advent," page 31

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus.
 - In Advent, we take time to prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.
 - We can get ready for Jesus in Advent by praying, telling God we are sorry for our sins, and doing kind actions for others.

Short Closing Prayer (*optional*)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to repeat "Come, Lord Jesus" after you as you pray this short litany:

Leader: To our family and friends this Christmas: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To all of us here together: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our parish and all our parish helpers: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our Church around the world: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our town or our city, our country and the whole world:
Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

A Soft Welcome for Baby Jesus

Prepare by setting up the Nativity scene with large manger (but without the Baby Jesus) in the prayer corner or other appropriate spot in the classroom. Give each child a cotton ball. Tell the group that at a certain point in the prayer service, they will make a procession. Tell them that this means that they will line up and walk slowly, one by one, toward the manger. Explain that they will place their cotton ball in the manger to represent all of the good actions they will do throughout Advent. At the end, as an option, the model of the Baby Jesus may also be placed in the manger by the last child in line.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are truly God and truly human. More than two thousand years ago, you came into the world as a tiny baby.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: As we prepare to welcome you at Christmas, we offer you all of our good actions throughout this Advent.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We offer you our lives, our hearts, and everything that you have given to us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will look for your presence in our world and in one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will welcome you with every kind action that we do for one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

All form into a single line for the procession. Each child places his or her cotton ball into the manger. At the end, as an option, the model of the Baby Jesus may also be placed in the manger. Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- handouts with a colorable image of an Advent wreath, one for each child
- markers or crayons
- Advent music and a device for playing it

Advent Coloring (15 minutes)

- Search the internet for a simple black-and-white image of an Advent wreath that can be colored.
- Print enough copies for each child. Distribute the handouts along with markers or crayons, and invite the children to color in the wreath with the correct colors for the candles. You may also encourage them to write numbers on the candles, so they can understand that the third candle marks a special Sunday in Advent.
- Play some Advent music in the background while the children color.
- Encourage them to finish their coloring at home if they do not complete it in the time available.

Materials Needed

- tape or glue sticks
- paper plates, one for each child
- 1- to 2-inch sections of cardboard tube from paper towels or toilet paper, four for each child
- 1- to 2-inch strips of purple and rose paper, three purple and one rose for each child
- yellow tissue paper "flames," four for each child
- leaves cut from green paper, artificial greenery, or real evergreen branches

An Advent Wreath (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time by making a sample Advent wreath according to the instructions below.
- Explain to the children that they will be making Advent wreaths. Tell them that Advent wreaths appear in churches as a sign of our preparation for Jesus coming to dwell with us. Explain that many families also use these wreaths in their homes as a way of counting down the weeks until Christmas.
- Show the children the process for making the Advent wreath: Take a paper plate, four cardboard tube "candles," three purple paper strips, one rose paper strip, and some tape or glue. Around each "candle," tape one paper strip. Arrange the "candles" on the plate, and tape or glue them down. Decorate the wreath with greenery of your choice, taping or gluing this down around the candles. Add paper "flames" in the center of each tube.
- Help the children follow the steps using the materials provided to complete their own Advent wreaths.
- Encourage the children to take their wreaths home and use them in their families, perhaps as a centerpiece at the family table or a feature on the home prayer table.

Materials Needed

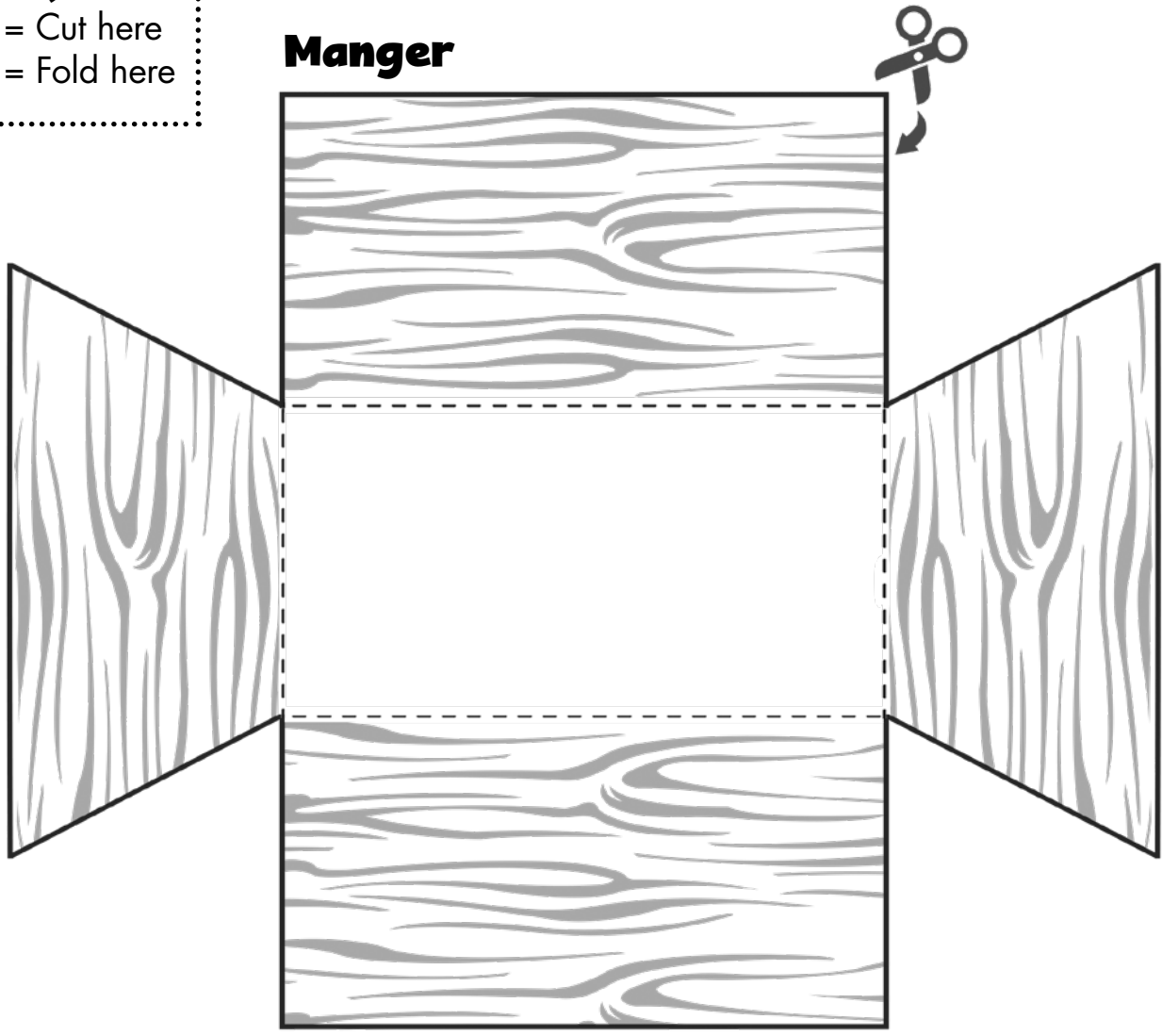
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- precut paper hearts, one for each child
- red crayons, one for each child
- a board or poster to write on

The Message of John the Baptist (15 Minutes)

- Show the video “Tell Me the Story: John the Baptist” (YouTube, 2:23).
- Ask the following questions to check for comprehension:
 - What was John’s Good News? *(That Jesus was God’s Son who was coming to save the world.)*
 - Who came to John? *(People who were sorry for their sins.)*
 - How did John help people prepare for Jesus? *(He baptized them.)*
 - What did John say that he was doing? *(Baptizing with water.)*
 - How would Jesus baptize? *(Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.)*
 - How does the Holy Spirit help us? *(The Holy Spirit helps us to share God’s love.)*
- Remind the children that we learn about John the Baptist in Advent because John the Baptist reminds us to prepare our hearts for Jesus to come to us at Christmas.
- Distribute a precut paper heart and a red crayon to each child.
- Write on the board, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Instruct the children to copy the prayer onto their paper hearts in big letters.
- Direct the children to take their hearts home and to display them there. The hearts will remind them and their families to prepare for the coming of Jesus into their hearts at Christmas.

Preparing for Jesus

Key
 — = Cut here
 - - - = Fold here

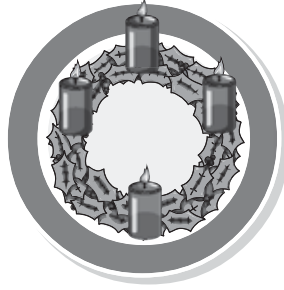


Activity Slips

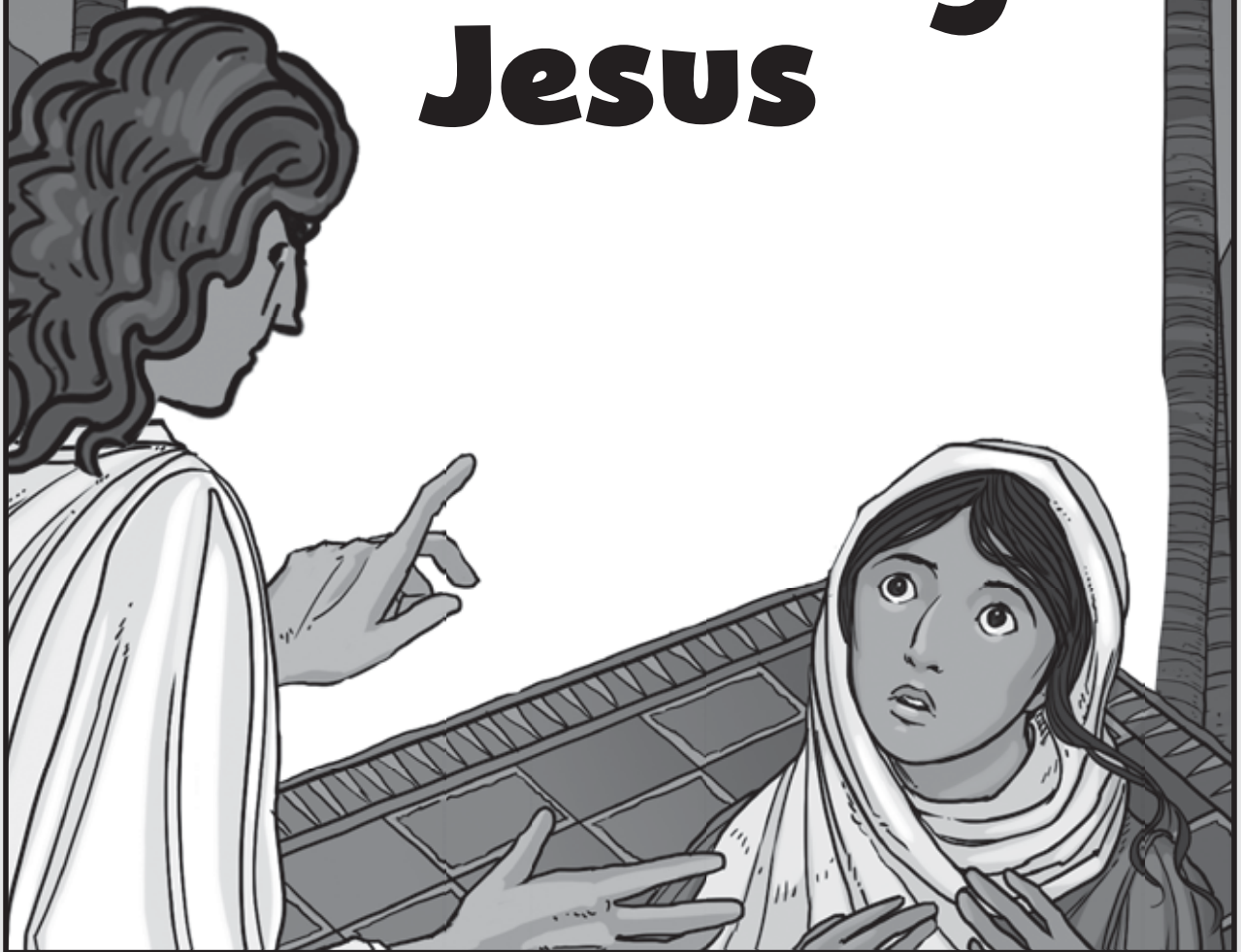
Smile	Do a chore	Clean up toys	Play with someone	Help Mom or Dad	Help a brother or sister	Offer a hug	Listen quietly	Make eye contact	Share a toy	Make a card	Give a gift	Say hello	Say thank you		
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Advent



Welcoming Jesus





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Lesson Goals

- to identify the Angel Gabriel as a messenger from God to Mary
- to explain that Mary agreed to become the Mother of God's Son, Jesus
- to state that we can prepare for Christmas during Advent by saying "yes" to God

Catechism References

484–495, 522–524, 721–726

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white and full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade2.

Key Words

gracious, ancestor, descendants

Music Suggestions

- "I Wanna Say Yes," by Cat.Chat (Cat.Chat)
- "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," by Bethel Music Kids (Bethel Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Advent activity booklet
- folded slips of paper that say "I (heart) you," one per child
- a sample paper Advent wreath
- paper plates, one for each child
- 2- to 3-inch construction paper candles (3 purple and 1 rose for each child)
- yellow construction paper flames (4 for each child)
- green construction paper leaves, enough for each child to make a wreath
- several bottles of glue
- an Advent wreath with candles (real or battery-powered)
- matches or safety lighter (*optional*)
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of Jesus. The word *Advent* comes from a Latin root meaning "to arrive" or "to come toward." When we prepare for something, we walk toward it. We think ahead and make plans. We gather courage and hope, and we look forward to the joy the big event will bring.

All year long, we celebrate and try to follow Mary's example in saying "yes" to God as we walk toward him throughout our lives. During Advent, we prepare to welcome him in a more intense, immediate way. Let us pray that, like Mary, we will be ready to accept with peace whatever God asks of us.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Prepare in advance by writing "I [heart] you!" and your signature on slips of paper, and then fold them tightly. Prepare one folded note for each child.
- Invite the children to close their eyes and hold out their cupped hands. Place one note in each child's hands.
- Tell the children they can open their eyes and examine what you put in their hands.
- Ask them these reflection questions, and invite volunteers to respond:
 - How did you feel when I asked you to close your eyes and hold out your hands?
 - What did you think might happen?
 - Was it hard to trust me? Why or why not?
 - What happened when you trusted me?
- Tell the children that today's Scripture shares the exciting news that Mary, the mother of Jesus, received from the angel Gabriel. Explain that Mary didn't know what exactly to expect but she trusted that God wanted only good things for her.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 1:26–38 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1572). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1574. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1572.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1574–1575 and describe what they see. Invite them to imagine how Mary might have felt to be visited by an angel.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Explain that the angel Gabriel was God’s messenger to Mary. Be sure to discuss the bold key words with them. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did the angel say to Mary? (*He said that God had been gracious to Mary. He said that Mary would become pregnant and give birth to a son.*)
 - What did the angel say about Jesus? (*He said that Jesus would be great and would be called the Son of God.*)
 - How did Mary respond? (*She agreed to what the angel said. She said that she was God’s servant.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. great, 2. afraid, 3. ancestor, 4. gracious, 5. birth, 6. happen, 7. descendants, 8. servant*

Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1575, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Mary was only a teenager when Gabriel told her that God chose her to be the mother of his son.
 - The angel said that Jesus would be a great king, and his Kingdom would last forever.
 - Mary did not understand how God’s plan could even happen. But Mary could say yes to God because she knew that he was good and loving. She put her life into God’s hands.
 - Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth to save all human beings.
 - When we trust God, we can also expect good things.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1575, or have a volunteer read it.
- Have the group pray the prayer together after taking a few deep breaths to quiet themselves. Begin prayer with the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the children to end the prayer with “Amen,” and close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1575.
- Invite volunteers to share what is happening in each box and how it relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows Gabriel coming to Mary. Image 2 shows Gabriel telling Mary about the infant Jesus. Image 3 shows Gabriel describing how Jesus will be a king. Image 4 shows Mary saying to Gabriel, “I am the Lord’s servant.”*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity (Craft)****Advent Wreath**

- Make a sample wreath ahead of time, according to the instructions below, to show to the children.
- Lay out the materials on a table before class, so the children can access these when needed.
- Explain that the children will be making Advent wreaths.
- Invite them to come up to the materials table and take 1 paper plate, 3 purple paper candles, 1 rose paper candle, 4 yellow paper flames, and several green paper leaves. Have the children sit in groups to share the bottles of glue.
- Show the children the craft you prepared in advance. Instruct them to glue the green paper leaves around their paper plates to make their wreaths. Show them how to glue the candle shapes around their wreaths.
- Have the children glue the flames to the number of candles corresponding to the week of Advent you are currently observing. Have them take extra flames to complete their wreaths at home.

Process the Activity

- Tell the children that we use Advent wreaths in homes and churches to track our preparation for Jesus' coming at Christmas.
- Share the following points with the children:
 - Traditionally, the purple candle for the first week represents peace.
 - The purple candle for the second week represents hope.
 - The rose candle for the third week represents joy.
 - The purple candle for the fourth week represents love.
- We seek to grow in each of these qualities as we move through the season of Advent.

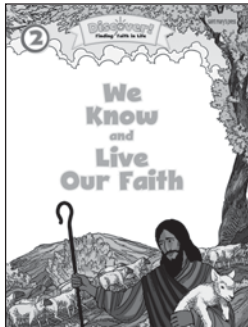
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 231 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Advent is the season when we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus. Tell them that our Church switches from the color green (the color of Ordinary Time) to the color purple (the color of Advent), which symbolizes preparation. Encourage the children to notice the color shift in vestments, banners, etc. in your parish.
- Tell the children that Jesus comes to us in three ways:
 - Jesus first came into the world when Mary gave birth to him.
 - He will come into the world again at the end of time.
 - Every year at Christmas, Jesus comes into our hearts and our lives.
- Tell the children that during Advent, we practice saying yes to God as Mary did when she agreed to be the mother of God's Son, Jesus. Explain that we can do this by acting the way Jesus wants us to act. Tell them that we can listen to our parents, be kind to our siblings, pay attention in class, follow instructions during sports practice, and so on.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What do we prepare for during Advent? (*We prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.*)

- What are three ways Jesus comes into the world? (*Jesus first entered the world at the first Christmas. He will come again at the end of time. He comes into our hearts and lives every Christmas.*)
 - What color do we use during Advent, and what does that color mean? (*We use the color purple for preparation.*)
 - What are some ways we can practice saying yes to God in Advent? (*Affirm all reasonable answers.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read aloud the “People of Faith” section. Add any other information you know about Our Lady of Guadalupe, and encourage the children to say, “Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “Who Is Jesus?” page 13
- “Mary Is the Mother of God,” page 16

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The angel Gabriel was a messenger from God to Mary.
 - Mary agreed to become the mother of God’s Son, Jesus.
 - We can prepare for Christmas during Advent by saying yes to God.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to respond “Come, Lord Jesus,” after you read each line in this prayer:
 - Jesus, you are the light of the world.
 - We prepare with hope and joy for your coming this Christmas.
 - Please light our way through this Advent and throughout our lives.
- Say, “We ask this in your holy name.” Invite the children to respond with “Amen,” and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Come, Lord Jesus

Set up a prayer table with an Advent wreath and candles ahead of time. Invite the children to join you around the Advent wreath. Count out how many candles on your Advent wreath should be lit, based on which week of Advent you teach this lesson. Light the candles (real or battery-powered) as indicated, and say the word that corresponds with what each candle symbolizes (peace for the first candle, hope for the second, joy for the third, and love for the fourth).

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, heavenly Father, you sent your angel to Mary.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: The angel Gabriel gave her the Good News that she would give birth to your Son, our Savior.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We celebrate this Good News during Advent, and we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth this Christmas.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We light [this candle/these candles] as a sign of peace [hope, joy, and love].

(Light the appropriate number of Advent candles. Say the corresponding words as you light each candle.)

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Jesus is the light of the world. May he light our way in Advent and throughout our lives.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Close by singing one of the music suggestions or another appropriate Advent song of your choice.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- several pairs of scissors
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

Advent Actions (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that Advent is a time of preparation for Christmastime, and tell them that we can say yes like Mary did to all that God wants for us.
- Distribute the blank paper and scissors, and invite each child to cut their paper into four strips.
- Have them think of and share some Advent actions they can do to prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmastime. Brainstorm some ideas with the children and write these on the board.
- Distribute the markers or crayons, and tell the children that they should write one action on each slip of paper. Then invite them to decorate the strip of paper or draw a picture of them doing the action.
- Give them time to complete their strips of Advent actions, helping them continue to think of ideas as needed. Encourage them to take their strips home and to focus on one for each week of Advent.

Materials Needed

- song sheets or hymnals with Advent lyrics
- audio equipment or small instrument to play accompaniment (*optional*)

Sing Along: Advent Songs (15 minutes)

- Prepare in advance by creating song sheets for the children, or gather hymnals and make note of the hymn numbers.
- Invite the children to sit in a large circle on the floor. Tell them that they will learn two Advent songs they can sing at home throughout the season.
- Distribute the song sheets or hymnals. Sing the songs with the children, slowly and without accompaniment at first, then a second time. Play accompanying music this second time, if desired.
- Remind the children that these songs can help us wait patiently and prepare for Jesus to come to us at Christmas.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Exploring the Advent Wreath (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Light the Advent Candle" (YouTube, 2:26) to the group.
- Invite the children to describe their family Advent wreaths, the parish Advent wreath, and other Advent wreaths they have seen. Affirm the details the children recall.
- Invite the children to draw their own Advent wreaths. Distribute the blank paper and drawing materials. Allow time for drawing. Consider playing the video on repeat as background music while the children work.





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Isaiah 9:6–7

Lesson Goals

- to recall that Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ
- to identify Jesus Christ as the special king that Isaiah promised
- to name the special titles and characteristics of Jesus our King

Catechism References

522–524, 2816–2817

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white at the end of this book on page 326 and in full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade3.

Key Words

counselor, eternal, successor, determined

Music Suggestions

- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” by Bethel Music Kids Christmas Party (Bethel Music)
- “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” by Fernando Ortega (Curb Records, Inc.)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Advent activity booklet
- the *Discover!* folder
- blank paper and crayons
- an Advent wreath with four candles for the prayer service
- white paper plates, 8- to 10-inch size, one for each child
- large paper cups, one for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- green crayons or markers
- four 1-x-5-inch paper strips for each child, three purple and one pink
- several bottles of glue
- small plastic baggies with four yellow paper flames in each, one for each child
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

In the midst of busy Christmas preparations, the season of Advent calls us to a different preparation—one of reflection, excitement, and growing joy! Waiting for Christmas can be difficult for the best of us, and can be even harder for children. The first Advent wreaths and calendars were an attempt to help children count the passing days, focus their impatience, and build anticipation and joy. These traditional practices also help adults focus our longing and place our hope on the coming of the Messiah, in Bethlehem, in our lives now and at the end of time.

The people of Israel were also impatient, enduring years of hardship and exile. The prophet Isaiah promised a great king and named him Prince of Peace, Eternal Father, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. What do we name that king? We name him Jesus! The birth of a king in an obscure, small, and humble place was not at all expected. So we are reminded that greatness often hides in the ordinary fabric of our lives and in the hidden corners of our world. The King of Kings is Emmanuel: God with us.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Begin by asking questions about the four seasons of the natural year, such as the following:
 - Who can tell me what season of the year we are in?
 - How many seasons are there?
 - Can you name all four seasons?
 - What do you like best about each one?
- Continue by asking some specific questions about waiting:
 - What is something that you have to wait for?
 - Have you ever had to wait a long time for something special (a birthday, trip, vacation, present, or baby brother or sister)?
 - Do you like waiting? Why or why not?
 - Are you waiting for Christmas?
- Tell the children that today they will learn about the time of waiting and preparation for Christmas, called the season of Advent.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Isaiah 9:2–7 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1101). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1102. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Read the title of the Featured Story.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1102–1103. Ask who the king pictured on this page is (*Jesus*).
- Explain that the lion and the lamb lying together is a sign of peace and a sign of the Kingdom of God.

- Draw the children’s attention to the key words on page 1102. Ask a volunteer to read each word, and another volunteer to read the definitions.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What kind of child will be born? (*a son and a ruler*)
 - Does Isaiah know his name? (*no*)
 - What does he call the new king? (*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*)
 - How long will he rule? (*from now until the end of time*)
- Explain that now, years and years later, we know that the king that Isaiah was telling us about is Jesus, the Son of God.
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. Wonderful Counselor; 2. Mighty God; 3. Eternal Father; 4. Prince of Peace; 5. peace; 6. right, justice; 7. end, time*

Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1103, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Kings are often given names that describe them in some way.
 - When Isaiah told the Israelites about the king to come, Isaiah described him with special names.
 - Isaiah called this king wonderful and a counselor, which means he gives good advice.
 - This king would be the Prince of Peace.
 - The king Isaiah was describing is Jesus.
 - He will be our King forever.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1103, or have a volunteer read it.
- Distribute blank paper and crayons to the group.
- Have the children draw a picture of Jesus as a king. Ask them to pick one of the four titles and write it on their drawing.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1103. (*Image 1 shows the child Jesus with Mary and Joseph. Image 2 shows Jesus as a king. Image 3 shows Jesus the King teaching about the Kingdom of God.*)
- Have the children join a partner to retell the story in their own words.



Discover! (25 minutes)

Advent

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

A Paper Advent Wreath

- Prepare materials ahead of time by cutting out enough purple and pink paper candles for the wreaths in your group, as well as four yellow paper flames for each child.
- Introduce the activity by explaining to the children that they will make Advent wreaths to mark the time of waiting before Christmas that we call the season of Advent.
- Distribute a paper plate and cup to each child, and have several pairs of scissors available. Invite the children to write their names on the bottom of the plate, on the rim.
- Instruct the children to hold the cup in the center of the plate and then trace around it with a pencil. (You might want to ask them to work in pairs so that one child can hold the cup while the other traces around it.)
- Explain that they are to cut out the circle they traced, so that the plate has a hole in the center.
- Distribute green crayons or markers, and ask the children to color the plate to look like a wreath.
- Distribute the paper strip candles and glue. Direct the children to create a 1-inch tab at the bottom of each candle by making a fold. Then instruct them to glue their candles to their wreath.
- Distribute the baggies of paper flames. Explain that the children may take the flames home to “light” the candles on the Sundays of Advent. If appropriate, have the children glue a flame to the first candle at the top of the wreath during the activity.

Process the Activity

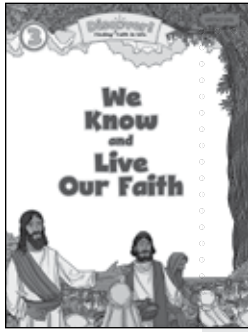
- Explain that the Advent wreath is a way to help us count the weeks until the celebration of the birthday of Jesus on Christmas.
- Tell the children that each Sunday for four weeks before Christmas we light a candle on the wreath. Explain that the green wreath is a symbol of God’s never-ending love and care, always alive and fresh.
- Point out that three of the candles are purple and one of the candles is pink.
- Explain that purple is the color of Advent. Tell them that it is the color of waiting, not in a sad way but in a way that reminds us to prepare for the coming of the birthday of Jesus.
- Explain that the pink candle is for the Third Sunday of Advent. Tell them that this candle reminds us to be joyful and happy because Christmas is almost here.
- Tell the children that all of the candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. Explain that when we follow Jesus, we share his light and his love with others.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 264–265 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that Advent is a season in the Church year. Explain that it is a time of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. Tell the group that during Advent, we follow Jesus more closely and do special things for others to share the love of Jesus.
- Remind the group that in Advent we use the color purple to show that we are waiting. Tell them that we are not sad, but we are sorry for our sins and we look for special ways to help others as we prepare for Christmas. Explain that we use the color pink to show that we are waiting joyfully and hopefully for Jesus to come.
- Remind the children that the Advent candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. Help them understand that when we follow him, we will not wander around in the darkness. Explain that we follow him because he shows us the way through our lives.
- Explain that we use the Advent wreath to count the weeks before Christmas. Tell them that as more candles are lighted closer to Christmas, it's a wonderful reminder that the light of Christ is coming soon.
- Tell the children that sometimes we count the days too, using an Advent calendar. (If possible, have an example of an Advent calendar to show the children.)
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What season of the Church year are we currently in? (*Advent*)
 - What do we do during Advent? (*We prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.*)
 - What do we do for others during Advent? (*We do special things to help others and to share the love of Jesus with others.*)
 - What do the candles of the Advent wreath teach us? (*That Jesus is the Light of the World. We are lights, too, when we share his light and love.*)
 - Why do we use the color purple during Advent? (*It shows we are sorry for our sins and we are waiting for Jesus.*)
 - Why do we use the color pink during Advent? (*It shows we are waiting with joy for Jesus to come.*)
 - How do we count the weeks before Christmas? (*with an Advent wreath*)
 - How do we count the days before Christmas? (*with an Advent calendar*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Lucy, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Lucy, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “The Church Year” + activity, pages 28–29

Read aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, the selection as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Advent is a time to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ.
 - Jesus Christ is the special king that Isaiah promised.
 - Jesus is called by many special names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” and allow a few seconds of silence.
- Explain that they will pray using the names of Jesus that were in our Scripture passage today. Tell them that after each name, they should respond, “Come, Lord Jesus.”
- Pray using the following:
 - Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, help us and guide us always.
 - Jesus, Mighty God, uphold us all our lives with your mighty power.
 - Jesus, Eternal Father, care for us and love us as your own family.
 - Jesus, Prince of Peace, bring us peace in our hearts and in our world.
- End by reading this prayer:
 - Lord Jesus, we thank you for being our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Eternal Father, and our Prince of Peace. We look forward to celebrating your birthday on Christmas!
- Invite the class to respond “Amen,” and close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Come, Lord Jesus!

Have the children gather around an Advent wreath. Sing or play the first verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," and practice it with the children. Explain that the word *Emmanuel* means "God with us." Tell them that Jesus came to the world to be with us. Explain the word *ransom* means "to give back, to rescue, or to save," and that Jesus came to the world to save us.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. (*All make Sign of the Cross.*) Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (*Allow about 10 seconds of silence.*)

Leader: Let us sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Leader: Dear God, we are getting ready to celebrate the birthday of your Son, Jesus. We ask your help to prepare our hearts for his coming. Fill us with joy. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless us with patience to wait as the people of Israel waited for their promised king. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless our Advent wreaths and help us to reach out to those who need our help. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Help us to make this world a better place by the light we bring into it. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Close by singing the first verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" again.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

Advent Prayer in Sign (15 minutes)

- Explain that the prayer “Come, Lord Jesus” was prayed often by the early Christians. Tell the children that it is a good prayer for Advent, when we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord at Christmas.
- Teach the children the following words and signs by saying the word and demonstrating the action. Then ask the children to do it with you as you repeat the word and the action.
 - COME: Hold arms out, index fingers pointing at each other, and circle and bring arms in toward body.
 - LORD: Make a backward L shape with thumb and forefinger of right hand. Start at left shoulder and move hand out away from body and down to right hip (to imitate a sash for a king).
 - JESUS: Point to the center of one palm with middle finger of other hand, then repeat with the other hand. (Explain that we are pointing to the nail marks in Jesus’ hands.)
- Ask, “Who or what should we pray for?” (Pray each intention one by one.)
- Remind the children to add, “Come, Lord Jesus,” to each petition (or you may add it).
- Lead the group to respond silently with just the hand motions for “Come, Lord Jesus.”
- Encourage the children to share the words and signs with their families.

Materials Needed

- handout of twelve Christmas ball ornaments of various designs printed on white cardstock paper, two copies for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- markers or crayons
- 4–5-inch lengths of yarn or ribbon, one for each child

Christmas Ornament Countdown (15 minutes)

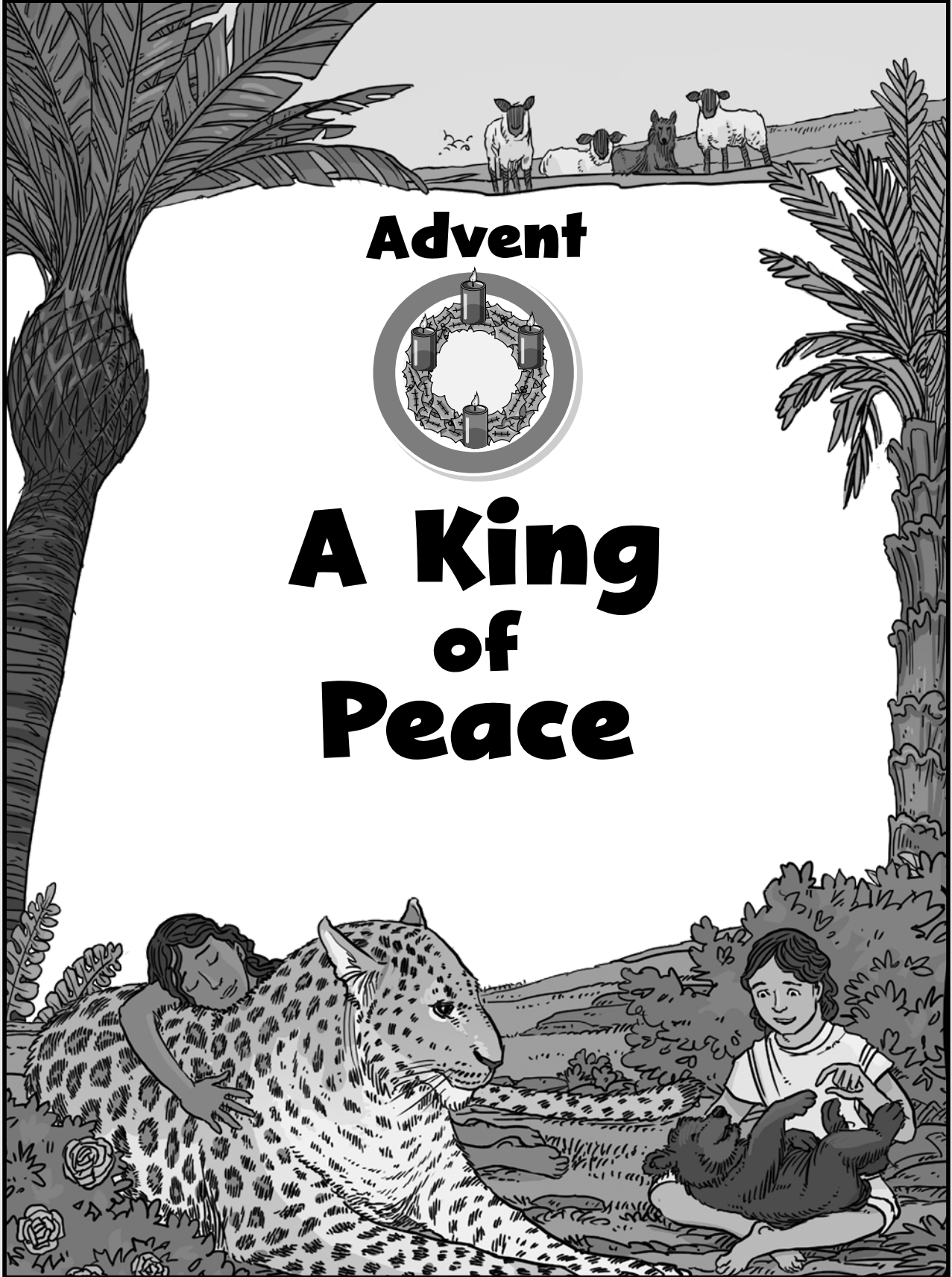
- Design a handout with twelve Christmas ball ornaments in varied designs. Print two copies on cardstock paper for each child.
- Distribute the ornament handouts, the markers or crayons, and the yarn or ribbon. Explain that each Christmas ornament counts for one day from December 1 to December 24.
- Instruct the children to color and cut out one ornament each day. (They will do the first one in class today and the rest on their own at home.) Invite them to write a kind or loving thing they can do on the back of the ornament. (*Some suggestions:* Be thankful. Share my light. Be gentle. Pick up my toys. Pet my dog or cat. Help my mom with a chore. Pray for a soldier. Pray for someone who is sick.)
- Tell the children they will poke a hole in the ornament with a pencil or a hole punch, then put yarn, ribbon, or string through the hole to hang their ornament on their Christmas tree or in another special place.
- Invite them to begin the first ornament now by coloring it and cutting it out.

Materials Needed

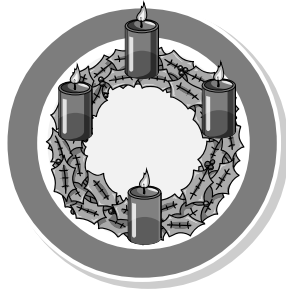
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

All about Advent (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to form groups of three or four. Explain that you are going to show a video and that the goal is for their group to pay close attention to remember as many things as they can about the video.
- Play the video “Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)” (YouTube, 2:09).
- Encourage each group to discuss all the different things they saw in the video. Invite them to write these things down if they would like.
- Ask the different groups to share as many things as they can remember about the video.
- Play the video a second time and see if the groups can pull out any additional points.
- Identify any key points that have still not been mentioned.
- Summarize the message of the video by introducing the phrase, “Jesus is the reason for the season.” Explain that no matter what we do during the Advent season—shopping, baking, cleaning—we are doing it because of Jesus.
- Remind the children that sometimes they will need to be extra patient because everyone is extra busy during Advent. Encourage them to find ways to give their love to others this season, in their helpfulness and cheerfulness. Explain that this is the best way to prepare for Christmas!



Advent



**A King
of
Peace**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Isaiah 11:6–9

Lesson Goals

- to recall Advent as the season in which we await the coming of the Savior, the Prince of Peace
- to define the three comings of Jesus: his coming as a child in Bethlehem, his coming at the end of time, and his coming into our hearts at Christmas
- to identify Jesus as the king foretold by Isaiah

Catechism References

522–524, 1095, 2612

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade4.

Key Words

leopard, poisonous, sacred, Advent

Music Suggestions

- “Breath of Heaven (Mary’s Song),” by Amy Grant (Amy Grant Productions)
- “O Come Divine Messiah (feat. Jennie Lee Riddle),” by Robbie Seay Band (Catapult)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Advent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- copies of the handout “Be-a-Servant Stars” (TX006201), one copy for each child
- a completed “Be-a-Servant Stars” sample
- markers or crayons
- purple construction paper
- several pairs of scissors
- several staplers
- Advent wreath with battery-powered candles OR a picture of an Advent wreath (perhaps with construction paper flames you can attach to the candles)
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

The liturgical season of Advent is often a hurried precursor to the celebration of Christmas. We find it easy to focus on the birth of Jesus, but it’s important to remember that the Church takes four weeks before Christmas to slow down and prepare.

The word *advent* comes from the Latin word for *coming*. In Advent, we prepare for Christ’s coming in the historical event of Christmas, we prepare for his coming at the end of time, and we prepare for his coming into our hearts at Christmas, especially by receiving Holy Communion on that great feast.

This lesson focuses on pausing in prayer as we prepare for Christmas. We invite the children to participate in traditional Advent customs like lighting an Advent wreath and serving others as Jesus came to serve us. We can also remind the children of Isaiah’s promise of Jesus and his peaceful kingdom in the Old Testament. In these ways, our children learn that Advent is a special season all its own.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to talk about a time they have seen a teacher, parent, or friend be a peacemaker at home or school. (*Answers might include intervening on the playground or in a sports game.*)
- Ask the children how it feels when friends are involved in an argument or misunderstanding, using the following questions:
 - How does it feel when a peacemaker helps calm the fight?
 - How does a peacemaker serve others?
 - Have you ever been a peacemaker?
- Tell the children that today they will learn how Jesus is the peaceful king promised long ago by Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Isaiah 11:1–9 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1105 and 1108). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1106. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the surrounding pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1106–1107. Ask them if the pictures are unusual in any way. (*These images show animals that do not usually rest peacefully together.*)

- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Isaiah is describing a peaceful kingdom. Whom do you think might be the king Isaiah promises? (*Jesus*)
 - How does Isaiah describe this new kingdom? (*He says animals will live together in peace. There will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be full of knowledge of the Lord.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: wolves/sheep, leopards/young goats, calves/lion cubs, cows/bears, calves/bear cubs.*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1107, or invite a volunteer to read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The Old Testament prophet Isaiah tells of a time of peace, when people will not fight with one another.
 - There will be no enemies and no danger in this kingdom.
 - Jesus is the new king foretold by Isaiah, and this perfect Kingdom is Heaven.
 - We will live with Jesus in Heaven forever if we follow his Law of Love.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1107, or have a volunteer read it.
- Encourage the children to suggest concrete ways they can be instruments of God's peace, following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi.

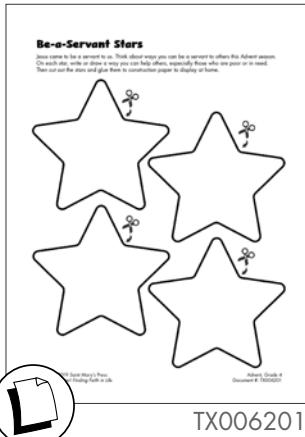
Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1107.
- Pair up the children to describe what each image shows. Allow them to talk for a couple of minutes.
- Choose some volunteers to share with the class. (*Image 1 shows a wolf and a lamb, natural enemies, together. Image 2 shows a cow lying in peace with a wolf—two more natural enemies. Image 3 shows a lion eating straw as cattle do. Image 4 shows a baby playing safely near a snake.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade4.



Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Be-a-Servant Stars

- Prepare in advance an example of a completed “Be-a-Servant Stars” handout (TX006201) so that you can model ways to serve.
- Explain to the children that Jesus came to us a king who served others. Tell the group that because Jesus was born to a poor family, we make special efforts during Advent to help and serve those who are poor and in need.
- Distribute the “Be-a-Servant Stars” handout, and show them the example you completed. Distribute the drawing materials, purple construction paper, scissors, and staplers.
- Invite the children to write or draw four good deeds they can do during Advent for people in need—one good deed for each star on the handout. Encourage the children to decorate their stars with colors and images.
- Invite the children to cut out their stars and staple them to a piece of construction paper to take home to display.

Process the Activity

- Ask volunteers to share their service ideas with the group.
- Conclude by reminding the children that when we serve as Jesus served, we help bring about the peaceful kingdom Isaiah promised.

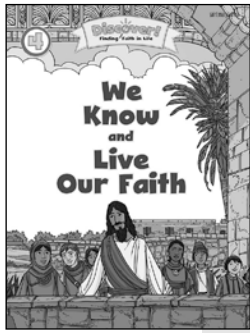
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 242 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain the season of **Advent** to the children, using some of the following points:
 - Advent is a time the Church gives us to prepare for Christmas. It lasts almost four weeks and marks the beginning of the Church year.
 - During Advent, we remember three different comings of Jesus:
 - his birth in Bethlehem
 - his coming into our hearts at Christmas, especially in receiving him in Holy Communion on that special day
 - his second coming at the end of time, when we will all enter into his Kingdom of Peace

- Remind the children that one important Advent symbol is the Advent wreath. Show the group an Advent wreath (or picture) you brought. Explain the wreath's symbolism as follows:
 - The wreath is a circle. This circle reminds us that God's love is unending, just like a circle has no end.
 - The wreath has four candles, usually three purple and one pink.
 - We light one new candle each Sunday of Advent to count the weeks to Christmas. We light the purple candles on the First, Second, and Fourth Sundays of Advent. Purple is a color of waiting, preparation, and repentance.
 - We light the pink candle on the Third Sunday of Advent. Pink (or rose) symbolizes joy. It reminds us that Christmas is very close.
- Recall that Isaiah promised the coming of a peaceful kingdom. Remind the children that in this peaceful kingdom there will be nothing harmful or evil, and the land will be full of knowledge of the Lord.
- Emphasize to the children that Jesus is the king of this peaceful kingdom. Explain that we will sometimes hear Jesus referred to as the Prince of Peace. Tell the children that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is the promised king that comes to us at Christmas.
- Remind the children that their "Be-a-Servant Stars" suggest ways they can be like Jesus, the Prince of Peace, in their everyday lives.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who is the Prince of Peace we hear about in Isaiah? (*Jesus is the Prince of Peace.*)
 - What will Jesus' Kingdom be like? (*It will be peaceful, with nothing harmful or evil. Everyone will know the Lord.*)
 - Why do we help the poor and needy especially this time of year? (*Jesus himself was born to a poor family, and he came to serve others.*)
 - Why is the Advent wreath a circle? (*It reminds us of God's unending love.*)
 - What do the four candles symbolize? (*The purple candles symbolize waiting and preparation, and the pink candle symbolizes joy.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint John the Baptist, and encourage the children to say, "Saint John the Baptist, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "God Didn't Give Up on Us," pages 14–15
- "The Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary," page 15

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The Season of Advent is the season in which we await the coming of the Savior, the Prince of Peace.
 - The three comings of Jesus are his coming as a child in Bethlehem, his coming at the end of time, and his coming into our hearts at Christmas.
 - Jesus is the king foretold by Isaiah.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray together the following, and ask the children to respond, "Come, Lord Jesus" to each prayer:
 - Be with us, Lord Jesus, in Advent, as our Prince of Peace. . . .
 - Be with us, Lord Jesus, as we prepare to celebrate your birth as a baby in Bethlehem. . . .
 - Be with us, Lord Jesus, as we prepare to receive you into our hearts at Christmas, especially in Holy Communion. . . .
 - Be with us, Lord Jesus, as we prepare to meet you at the end of time, when you will make all things new in your Kingdom. . . .
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Advent Light

Arrange an Advent wreath in a place where the group can gather around it in a circle. Invite the group to gather first in one corner of the room. Explain that when the music begins, you will lead them single file to the Advent wreath and around it in a circle. Explain that the circle of the Advent wreath and the circle they will form around it are signs of God's love, because a circle has no beginning and no end. A circle goes on forever.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make the Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Invite a volunteer to light the appropriate Advent wreath candle.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we remember your birth in Bethlehem. Let us think of your willingness to be born as a helpless baby. May we trust in you when we feel unsure and weak.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we invite you to enter our hearts and lives with your peace and joy. May we trust in you when we feel alone and distracted.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we know you will come again at the end of time. May we trust in you when we feel anxious and afraid.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us be part of your Kingdom of Peace by bringing peace and joy to others.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us to prepare to receive you into our hearts at Christmas, especially when we receive you in Holy Communion.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Make a final Sign of the Cross and then sing an Advent song that is popular in your parish or that the children know.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible*

Act It Out: Images from Isaiah (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into groups of two to four. Assign each group an image of the peaceful kingdom from Isaiah 11:6–9 to act out for the class.
- Allow 5 minutes to prepare, and then invite each group to present its image.
- Invite the other children to discuss the image depicted by each group.
- End by praying the prayer by Saint Francis of Assisi in the Live It! on page 1107 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Materials Needed

- strips of purple or pink construction paper, ten for each child
- markers or crayons
- several staplers

Advent Prayer Chain (15 minutes)

- Explain that praying for others is one way we follow the Prince of Peace, Jesus. Tell the children that Advent is a perfect time to make prayer a priority.
- Tell the group that today they will make an Advent prayer chain. Explain that the prayer chain will help them count down each day until Christmas but also remind them of people they'd like to pray for.
- Give each child ten long strips of construction paper and some markers or crayons. Instruct the children to complete each strip by writing the name of a person for whom they want to pray in a special way during Advent. Tell the children that they can write a description if they don't know the person's name (such as someone they see at Church).
- Have the children staple one strip together so that it forms a circle. Show them how to make a chain by looping a second strip through the first and stapling it into a circle, and so on. Continue until their chains have ten links. Tell them that they can continue adding to their Advent prayer chains at home until they have one chain for each day of Advent.
- Lead a discussion as the children work on their prayer chains, asking them where they could keep their chains to remember to pray and count down to Christmas.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Advent Summary (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)" (YouTube, 2:09) to the group. Ask the children to share what they noticed.
- Reshow the video, pausing as needed for the children to read all the text.
- Invite the children to share three things they think are important to remember about Advent. You might invite them to imagine that they need to teach the second graders about Advent and that they have to come up with three key points. (*Accept all reasonable responses.*)
- Tell the children that the video mentioned that this is a time to be expectant, hopeful, and joyful in our lives. Encourage them to share how they think they might display these qualities during Advent.
- Distribute the blank paper and drawing materials. Ask the children to think about welcoming Jesus into the home of their hearts. Invite them to draw what they want that scene to look like.

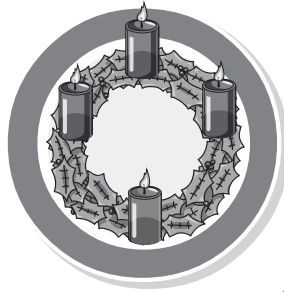
Be-a-Servant Stars

Jesus came to be a servant to us. Think about ways you can be a servant to others this Advent season. On each star, write or draw a way you can help others, especially those who are poor or in need. Then cut out the stars and glue them to construction paper to display at home.





Advent



**Preparing
for the
Coming of Jesus**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 1:39–56

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Advent is the season when we prepare to celebrate that Jesus made God's promise come true
- to state that Mary's special role in salvation was to be the mother of God
- to identify Mary as someone who spoke for those who are poor

Catechism References

456–463, 522–526

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white at the end of this book on page 299 and in full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade5.

Key Words

Advent, Magnificat

Music Suggestions

- "Magnificat," by Todd Agnew (Ardent Music, LLC)
- "Mary's Song," by Kelly Price (The Island Def Jam Music Group)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and Advent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- light purple and black construction paper
- masking tape
- crayons, including a white crayon (or white pencil)
- scissors, one pair for each young person
- 8½-x-11-inch sheets of adhesive paper, cut in half, two for each young person
- copies of the handout "Stained Glass Window Ornament," one for each young person
- small squares of colored tissue paper
- gold ribbon
- a hole punch
- half-sheets of blank paper
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose
- candles (battery-operated) or flashlights, one for each young person

Background Reflection

The season of Advent evokes deep feelings, reaching into our memories and touching our lives in a personal and spiritual way. The symbols of the season—the Advent wreath, the candles, the carols, and other preparation for Christmas—involve us in this season in a most personal way.

Yet in the life of the Church, the personal becomes communal as we experience this preparatory season together. We are not solitary pilgrims. We travel in a caravan of pilgrims as we pray together, sing together ("O Come Emmanuel!"), and prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts yet again, together.

Let us join Mary in praise and thanksgiving, in wonder and awe. Let us join her in the Bethlehem of our own hearts, that hidden place in which the God who made the universe has chosen to dwell.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the young people to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite the young people to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Draw a picture of a stable on the board, in outline form (a roof and two lines to indicate walls).
- Give each young person a piece of light purple construction paper and a pair of scissors. Ask the young people to draw an outline of their shoe on the paper and then cut out the shape. Ask them to write their name and the word *Advent* on the shoe.
- Give each young person a piece of masking tape. Direct them to attach the tape in a loop on the back of their shoe cutouts and then to create a line of footprints from the back of the room to the front, across the board, and ending at the stable.
- Tell the young people that today they are going to learn more about the season of Advent and how we can journey with Mary and Joseph to celebrate Christmas.

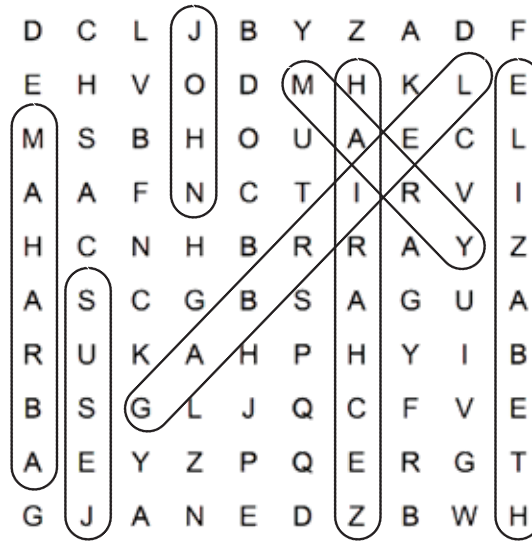


Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Have the group find Luke 1:39–56 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1572–1573).
- Invite several volunteers to take turns reading the Bible story aloud.
- Explain that Elizabeth was Mary's older cousin, and that Elizabeth would soon give birth to a child, who was John the Baptist.
- Ask the young people several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Where was Mary going on this trip? (*to visit Elizabeth*)
 - What did Elizabeth realize about Mary? (*that Mary was blessed and that she was going to bear a child, that she would be the mother of the Lord*)
 - What did Mary say in response? (*Mary sang a song of praise for all that God had done for her.*)

- Have the young people turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the young people to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of God.
 - Mary visited Elizabeth, who was also pregnant.
 - Elizabeth's child was John the Baptist.
 - Mary sang a song of praise in her moment of happiness.

Live It!

- Have the young people turn to page 1 of the activity booklet. Remind them that each of us has reasons for praising God. Distribute half-sheets of paper and give the young people a few minutes to write down reasons they want to praise God.
- Invite the group to fold their papers and to keep them at home in a safe place. Ask them to write "Paper of Praise" on the top of this paper.

Tell It!

- Invite one or more volunteers to retell the Scripture story in their own words.
- Affirm the young people for the points they remember. Help them fill in any key points they leave out.

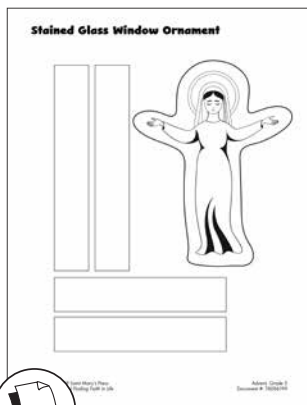


Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Advent Stained Glass Window Ornament

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade5.



- Give each young person a handout, scissors, a white crayon or pencil, and a handful of squares of colored tissue paper.
- Invite the young people to cut out the rectangles from the handout, place them on the black paper, trace them, and cut them out.
- Tell the young people to color the image of Mary on the handout and then to cut it out.
- Hand out a half-sheet of clear adhesive paper for each young person. Have them lay the adhesive paper sticky side up, on their desk. Tell them to be careful not to touch this sheet.
- Tell the group to lay the black rectangles on their desks (not on the adhesive paper) to make an outline of a house, using the shorter pieces for the roof and the longer pieces for the sides. Then tell them to place the picture of Mary inside it. When they are satisfied with the arrangement, they may carefully lay the pieces in the same way on the adhesive paper, being careful not to touch the adhesive.
- Ask the young people to take pieces of the tissue paper and lay them inside the house and around the figure of Mary. Explain that the pieces may overlap one another and the silhouette, but not too much. Tell them that no clear paper should show through. Explain that they should lay the tissue paper flat so that it does not bunch up.
- Give each person another half-sheet of adhesive paper to lay over the scene when the house is filled with tissue paper.
- Instruct the young people to cut around the house carefully, so that the excess adhesive paper is cut away.
- Punch a hole at the top of each young person's house, and give each one a piece of gold ribbon to put through the hole and then knot.
- Suggest that rather than keeping the ornament for themselves, they should give it as a gift to someone who may be lonely, sad, or ill. Tell the young people that you would be happy to take their ornaments to a nearby assisted living facility if they wish.

Process the Activity

- Explain that in the silhouette, Mary has her arms raised in prayer. Tell them that this is how the early Christians prayed. Share that sometimes people pray with their arms raised and that when the priest prays at Mass, he prays with his arms raised as well.

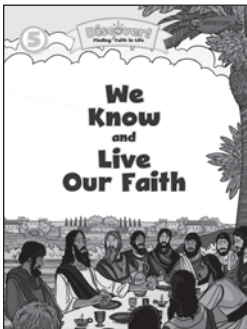
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 229–230 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain that *advent* means “coming” and that **Advent** is the season of preparation for the feast of Christmas, when we celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world and into our hearts. Point out that God promised to send a savior, and we know that at Christmas, Jesus came to save the world. Share that in Advent we realize that in Jesus, all of God’s promises have come true!
- Tell the young people that Advent is a time when we journey with Mary. Remind the group that Elizabeth was so happy when Mary journeyed to see her. Mary was happy too, and she sang a song of praise. We call this song of praise the **Magnificat**, from the first words in Latin, “*Magnificat anima meam,*” meaning “My soul praises.”
- Remind the group that Mary was chosen to be the mother of God. Tell them that we call Mary the mother of God because Jesus is fully man and fully God. Explain that God knew that Jesus had to have the best mother possible, and God chose Mary to be that very best mother! Share that this was Mary’s role in God’s plan to save us.
- Invite a volunteer to reread Luke 1:46 from *The Catholic Children’s Bible*.
- Ask, “Why was Mary praising God?” Ask volunteers to read the following verses to answer this question:
 - Verses 48–49: Mary is happy that God has remembered her and has favored her. Mary knew that God had done great things for her.
 - Verses 52–53: Mary praises God because God lifts up the lowly and cares for the poor. Mary is a voice for the poor and needy, then and now.
 - Verses 54–55: Mary praises God because God kept his promise to his people. He promised to send a Savior, and now Jesus was coming to save the world!

- Ask the young people some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does the word *advent* mean? (*coming*)
 - What do we prepare for in the season of Advent? (*the coming of Jesus into our world and into our hearts*)
 - When did Mary sing her song of praise? (*when she visited Elizabeth*)
 - Why was Mary praising God? (*because God had done great things for her, because God lifts up the lowly and cares for the poor, and because God is keeping his promise and sending Jesus into the world*)
- Have the young people turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Elizabeth, and encourage the young people to say, “Saint Elizabeth, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “How Do We Know That God Exists?” pages 6–7
- “The Bride of Christ,” page 20
- “The Bridegroom Comes” + activity, pages 20–21
- “The Equal Dignity of the Human Person,” page 61

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Invite the young people to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the young people to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Advent is the season when we prepare to celebrate that Jesus made God's promise come true.
 - Mary's special role in salvation was to be the mother of God.
 - In her *Magnificat*, Mary spoke for those who are poor.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Prepare for prayer by asking the young people to think of ways to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Encourage them to think of good things to do at home and at school, and to make small sacrifices during Advent to prepare their hearts for Jesus.
- Begin prayer by leading the young people in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the young people to raise their arms in prayer as you pray, "We thank you, God, for making Mary the mother of God. We thank you also for the gift of your Son, Jesus, who is with us now and who will come into our hearts again at Christmas."
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

A Circle of Love and Light

Gather battery-operated candles or flashlights for the young people to hold during this Advent-wreath ritual. Choose four readers from among the group. Give them a few minutes to practice reading their parts. Invite the group to gather around the Advent wreath in a circle with their candles or flashlights lit. Alternatively, you could have the young people process to the Advent wreath with their lights as you play an Advent song.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: We are gathered around the Advent wreath to help us prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Each candle counts one week of this beautiful season of Advent. This week, as we gather around the wreath, let us pray:

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of peace. Be with us this week. Help us be peaceful. Bring peace to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of love. Be with us this week. Help us to be loving to all we meet, whether friend or stranger. Bring love to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of joy. Be with us this week. Help us to be joyful. Bring joy to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Reader: Jesus, you are the light of faith and hope. Be with us this week. Help us to hope in you as our Savior. Bring faith and hope to our families, our community, and our world.

All: Amen.

Leader: We are gathered in a circle around the circle of the Advent wreath. A circle is a sign of God's love, a love that has no beginning and no end. Let us pray quietly for our families and friends. Let us bring them into our circle of prayer. Let us think of those who are poor and in need. Let us bring them into our circle of prayer. Let our circle of prayer include the whole world as we place ourselves today in the circle of God's love and light. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- paper shoes from Engage activity

Journey to Bethlehem (15 minutes)

- Ask the group to find their paper shoes from the Engage activity, remove them from wherever they are taped, and then line up across the back of the room. Draw a stable on the board at the front of the room with simple lines for a roof and walls. Explain that we will all be making a journey to this stable together.
- Ask the young people to remember what we read in the Scripture story for today, about Mary's song. Ask questions about the reading and call on volunteers for answers. With each correct answer, the volunteer may take one giant step toward the stable and place the paper shoe on the floor. Questions can also be general knowledge questions about Advent, Scripture, or Church practices. For example: "What is the color of Advent?" "What did Mary name her baby?" etc.
- Give each person a chance to answer correctly. If someone needs help, allow that person to choose someone to whisper the correct answer privately so that all can journey to Bethlehem together.
- Celebrate reaching the stable at the front of the room by singing "Silent Night" or another familiar Christmas carol.

Materials Needed

- paper shoes from Engage activity

My Advent Promises (15 minutes)

- Remind the young people that Advent is the time when we remember that God kept his promises and sent his Son, Jesus, to save us. Explain that Advent is a good time to remember that Jesus asked us to be aware of the needs of others, to pray for one another, and to love one another. Tell the group that one way we can remember this during Advent is to make a promise to God.
- Ask the young people to retrieve their paper shoes from where they have been taped and to remove the tape or to lay the tape flat on the shoe.
- Invite the young people to make one or two promises to God, to be kept during Advent. Explain that this promise could be a promise of prayer or a promise to help others in some way. Brainstorm various promises that the young people could choose.
- Ask the young people to think about their promises and then to write one or two on their paper shoes, and to keep the shoes in a place where they will see them every day.

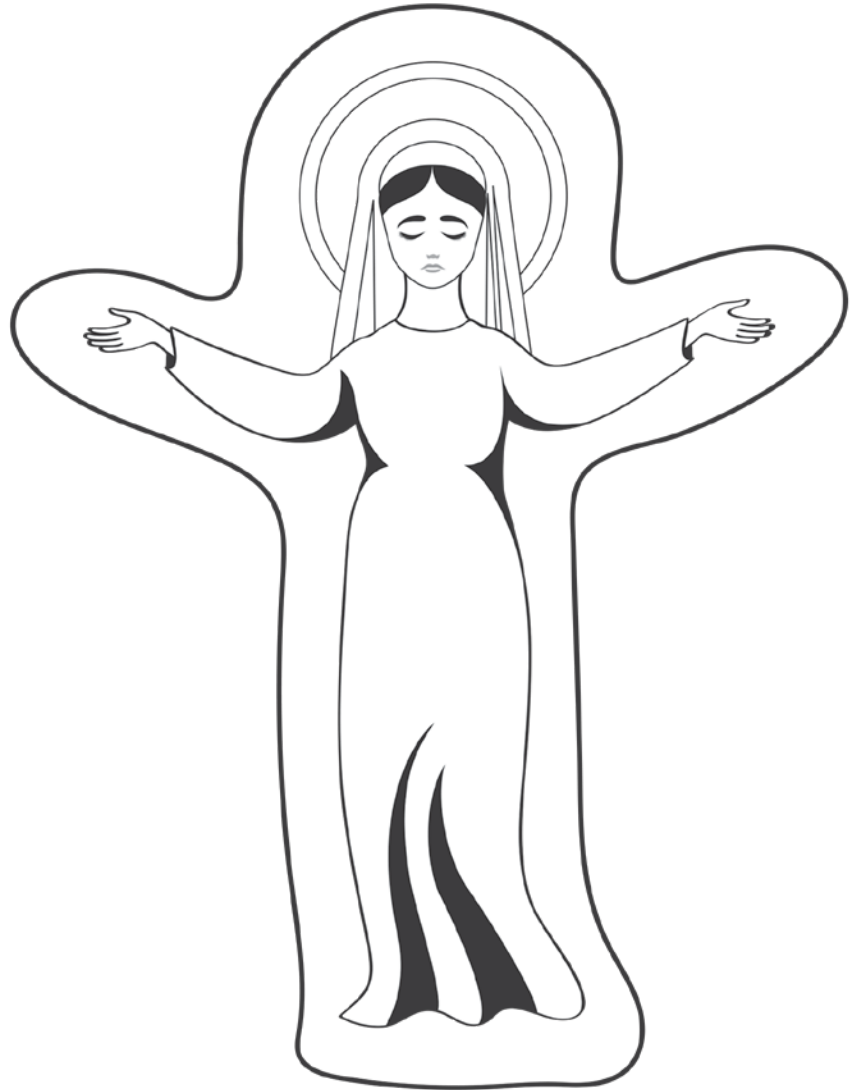
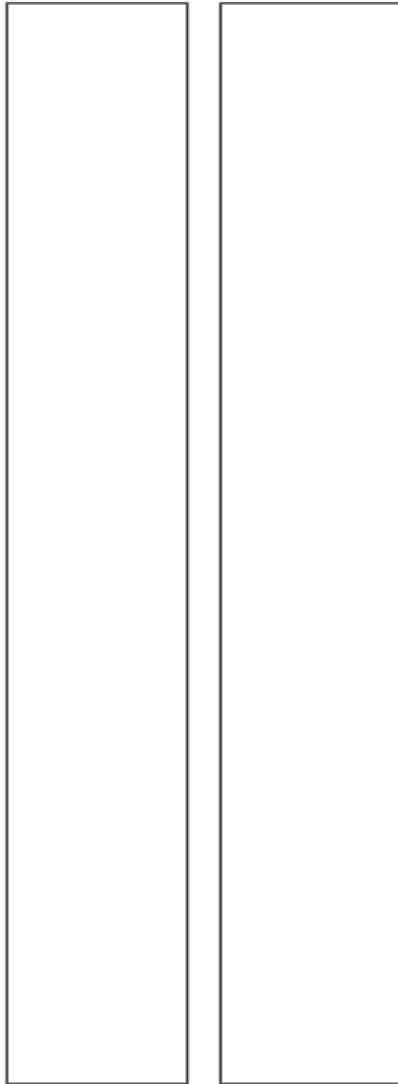
Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank index cards

Mary Visits Elizabeth (15 minutes)

- View the video “Mary Visits Elizabeth|GCED|HeartFelt Bible Christmas” (YouTube, 3:21).
- Emphasize that Mary bore the gift of Jesus, who came for our salvation. Tell the young people that each of us has gifts and talents that can help build the Kingdom of God on Earth.
- Distribute a blank index card to each person and ask the young people to put their name on their index card.
- Invite the young people to move around the room, exchanging cards with each person in the room. Tell them that when they receive another person’s card, they should write a compliment about that person on the card. Continue the activity until everyone’s card has been filled with the compliments of the other young people.
- Explain that we don’t always see our gifts or that we may think of them as small, but others can help remind us that we have gifts that we share and can be used to build God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Stained Glass Window Ornament



for messages from the spirits and consult the dead on behalf of the living.”

20 You are to answer them, “Listen to what the LORD is teaching you! Don’t listen to mediums—what they tell you cannot keep trouble away.”

A Time of Trouble

21 The people will wander through the land, discouraged and hungry. In their hunger and their anger they will curse their king and their God. They may look up to the sky **22** or stare at the ground, but they will see nothing but trouble and darkness, terrifying darkness into which they are being driven.

9 **1** There will be no way for them to escape from this time of trouble.

The Future King

The land of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was once disgraced, but the future will bring honor to this region, from the Mediterranean eastward to the land on the other side of the Jordan, and even to Galilee itself, where the foreigners live.

2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
They lived in a land of shadows,
but now light is shining on them.

3 You have given them great joy,
Lord;
you have made them happy.
They rejoice in what you have done,
as people rejoice when they harvest grain
or when they divide captured wealth.

4 For you have broken the yoke
that burdened them

and the rod that beat their
shoulders.

You have defeated the nation
that oppressed and exploited
your people,
just as you defeated the army
of Midian long ago.

5 The boots of the invading army
and all their bloodstained
clothing
will be destroyed by fire.

6 A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called, “Wonderful
Counselor,”
“Mighty God,” “Eternal
Father,”
“Prince of Peace.”

7 His royal power will continue to
grow;
his kingdom will always be at
peace.
He will rule as King David’s
successor,
basing his power on right and
justice,
from now until the end of
time.

The LORD Almighty is determined
to do all this.

The LORD Will Punish Israel

8 The Lord has pronounced judgment on the kingdom of Israel, on the descendants of Jacob. **9** All the people of Israel, everyone who lives in the city of Samaria, will know that he has done this. Now they are proud and arrogant. They say, **10** “The brick buildings have fallen down, but we will replace them with stone buildings. The beams of sycamore wood have been cut down, but we will replace them with the finest cedar.”

Isaiah Promises That God Will Send a Special King



Isaiah 9:6-7 (For the full story, read Isaiah 9:2-7.)

6 A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful **Counselor**," "Mighty God," "**Eternal** Father," "Prince of Peace." 7 His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David's **successor**, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time. The LORD Almighty is **determined** to do all this.

counselor a person who gives advice

eternal lasting forever

successor a person who continues a person's work

determined to have one's mind made up

Isaiah 9
STORY



Understand It!

Kings sometimes are given special names that tell what they were like. A king in England was called Richard the Lion-Hearted. He was very brave. A prince in Russia was called Ivan the Terrible. He was very mean.

The prophet Isaiah [eye-ZAY-uh] told the Israelites [IZ-ry-el-yts] that a new king was coming. Isaiah gave this new king special names to describe what he would be like. He would be wonderful. He would be a counselor, or give good advice. He would be a prince of peace. We know that the king Isaiah was describing is Jesus, the king who cares for the world forever. Aren't you glad that he is our king?

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, the people hailed him as a king and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" We celebrate this event every year on Palm Sunday.

Live It!

Draw a picture of Jesus as a king. Pick one of these titles from Isaiah and write it on your drawing:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Eternal Father
- Prince of Peace

Share your picture with your family and explain what it means.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.