

Junior Soldiers

UNIT 16 : LESSON 10



Advent

PURPOSE: For the children to explore the themes of Advent and to understand how they can share the peace, hope, joy and love of Jesus with others.

The Saviour - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

Luke 2:11

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Luke 2:25-35

Advent is a wonder-filled time of waiting. It is the time when we prepare our hearts and minds to receive the gift of the light of Christ anew each year. Often, it is also a time of busyness, noise and distractions.

Be intentional this year about taking time to focus on the peace, joy, hope and love of Christ and share them with others this Advent season.

NOTE: This lesson would work well in combination with a Christmas party. If time is limited, consider just using the candle lighting reflections. You might also like to give the children the supplies and instructions to complete the craft activity at home.

What you will need:

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles – enough for one per child
- A table
- Four candles (you will need one more for 'Prayer Activity') – these can be regular candles or electric candles. If using electric candles, ensure that the batteries are operating
- Matches – if using regular candles
- Print copies of the four readings and ask children beforehand to read them
- Option 1: precut cardboard or wooden Christmas decorations (see images below for examples – ensure that they have a hole cut for threading a string or ribbon through) – enough for four per child; ribbon or thread – enough for four pieces per child; craft paint and paint brushes



- Option 2: large baubles – enough for four per child, glitter glue pens in contrasting colours, empty egg cartons – one 'dozen' carton will be enough for three children (if available)

For 'Prayer Activity'

- A candle – note: this is in addition to the four candles required for 'The Main Thing'
- Print a copy of the reflection and ask a child beforehand to read it

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.

Connecting In

Activity...

Play a game of 'Wait, Go'.

Stand at one end of the room and ask the children to line up across the other end of the room.

Explain:

- the goal is for them to get to your side of the room
- you will turn your back to them
- they can move forward at any time
- you will turn and say 'wait' at random times
- if you see anyone moving when you turn, they must return to the start

Link...

What is the longest you have ever had to wait for something? Allow for responses.

People had been waiting for the birth of Jesus for hundreds of years. Can you imagine waiting for something for that long?

Advent is a time of waiting for the arrival of someone or something important.

We celebrate four weeks of Advent each year as we wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

The Main Thing

Ask the children to look up Luke 2:25-32 and have the passage ready to read.

Eight days after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated to the Lord.

Invite several children to take turns reading the verses out loud.

Simeon had been waiting his whole life for The Messiah, Jesus to be born. He knew that Jesus would bring peace, joy, hope and love. He didn't understand the way that this would happen, but he believed God would keep his promises through Jesus.

As we celebrate Advent each year, we also remember the peace, joy, hope and love that Jesus has brought into the world. One tradition is to light candles as we remember what Advent means.

Set up the candles on a table. Let the children know that this will be a quieter part of the lesson. Invite a child to do each reading, and another to light (or turn on) a candle as the reflection is being read. Move through the four readings, pausing for a moment between each one.

Peace

We light the candle of peace as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring peace, calling people to forgive each other and to live in harmony.

We pray that Jesus will bring peace to our lives this Christmas.

Joy

We light the candle of joy as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring joy, setting us free from fear.

We pray that we will spread joy to others this Christmas.

Hope

We light the candle of hope as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring hope, offering us the gift of life.

We pray that we will share the gifts of life and hope this Christmas.

Love

We light the candle of love as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring love, God's love for everyone.

We pray that we will deeply experience the love of God this Christmas.

To help us to remember the peace, joy, hope and love that Jesus brings, we are going to make some decorations.

Option 1 – Painted ornaments

- Provide each child with four precut wooden or cardboard ornaments, paint and paintbrushes, four pieces of ribbon or string
- Invite the children to decorate their ornaments, then paint them with the words, 'peace', 'hope', 'joy' and 'love'
- When the paint has dried, thread a piece of ribbon or string through each one

Option 2 – Glitter glue baubles

- Provide each child with four large baubles and glitter glue pens
- Invite the children to use the glitter glue pens to write the words 'peace', 'hope', 'joy' and 'love' - one word per bauble
- If you have empty egg cartons, rest the baubles in them to keep them still while they dry

Tying In

Ask the children to share in groups of 2-3:

- What will help you to feel peaceful this Christmas?
- How will you bring joy to someone else this Christmas?
- What are you hoping for this Christmas?
- How will you show someone they are loved this Christmas?

Memory Verse

Divide the children into groups of 2-3.

Ask each group to choose a Christmas carol or song and sing the words of the verse to that tune.

Allow 5-10 minutes for the children to practice, then invite to sing the verse to the group. Assure the children that singing to the group is completely optional.

Prayer Time

Ask the children to stand around the table. Invite a child to read the final reflection, as the fifth candle is lit. Ask the children to repeat the last line together.

The Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas.

We remember the peace, joy, hope and love that he pours into our lives.

We pray that the light of Jesus will shine brightly in and through us.

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Home & Beyond

Show the Christmas decorations that you made to your Big Bud or a family member. Explain to them about what Advent means. Think of a way that you can share peace, hope, joy or love with someone as you prepare for Christmas. Invite someone to come to church with you this Christmas.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Show the Christmas decorations that you made to your Big Bud or a family member. Explain to them about what Advent means. Think of a way that you can share peace, hope, joy or love with someone as you prepare for Christmas. Invite someone to come to church with you this Christmas.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Show the Christmas decorations that you made to your Big Bud or a family member. Explain to them about what Advent means. Think of a way that you can share peace, hope, joy or love with someone as you prepare for Christmas. Invite someone to come to church with you this Christmas.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Show the Christmas decorations that you made to your Big Bud or a family member. Explain to them about what Advent means. Think of a way that you can share peace, hope, joy or love with someone as you prepare for Christmas. Invite someone to come to church with you this Christmas.


Junior Soldiers

Reflection readings

Peace

We light the candle of peace as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring peace, calling people to forgive each other and to live in harmony.

We pray that Jesus will bring peace to our lives this Christmas.

Joy

We light the candle of joy as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring joy, setting us free from fear.

We pray that we will spread joy to others this Christmas.

Hope

We light the candle of hope as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring hope, offering us the gift of life.

We pray that we will share the gifts of life and hope this Christmas.

Love

We light the candle of love as we wait for Christmas.

We celebrate that Jesus came to bring love, God's love for everyone.

We pray that we will deeply experience the love of God this Christmas.

The Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas.

We remember the peace, joy, hope and love that he pours into our lives.

We pray that the light of Jesus will shine brightly in and through us.