

Week 3

The Candle of Love

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For the third week of Advent, we relight the candles of Hope and Peace and add the candle of Love. God is love. We give thanks that God shows us what love is.

Candle Lighting

We light this third Advent Candle, the candle of Love. This candle reminds us that God sent his son, Jesus, to show us what love looks like.

Wonder Together

I wonder why God loves me so much.
I wonder how I can show others how much God loves them.

Candle Snuffing Prayer

May God's hope, peace and love be at work in and through us,
even as we blow out these candles.



Week 3: Hands On Activity

We are now in the third week of Advent. Does it sometimes feel like Christmas is never going to get here? Waiting, especially for something wonderful like Christmas, can be really hard. Being patient is something that nearly everyone struggles with. A simple way to define patience is waiting without grumbling. In what situations is it hardest for you to be patient? The Bible tells us we need to be patient: "Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. You too must be patient" (James 5:7-8). How long does it take for a crop to grow? What would happen if a farmer got tired of waiting and harvested the crop before it was finished growing?

Supplies:

- *Sugar
- *String
- *Pencil
- *Jar or glass
- *Water

Do: Since it is winter time, we are going to practice being patient by growing something inside. Combine $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of water with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of sugar in a microwavable measuring cup or deep bowl. Stir well to mix then microwave on high for 1 minute or until the mixture boils. Next, tie the string around side of a pencil. Put the pencil on top of the jar that will hold the sugar/water solution and measure the string so that it will nearly touch the bottom when the pencil lies across the top. Carefully, remove sugar/water mixture once it boils, stir and pour into the jar. Lay the pencil, with the string, on top of the jar - you can use your spoon to make sure the string goes into the liquid and is not floating on the top. Put the jar in a safe spot where you can see it but it won't get bumped or moved.

Now comes the hard part! Wait for the sugar crystals to grow and **DO NOT TOUCH THE STRING!** In our testing it took 4-7 days for the sugar crystals to develop. If you are patient, you will eventually have a string covered in sugar crystals (rock candy) that you can eat.

Pray: God, waiting without grumbling is so hard. Please help me remember to ask You for help. Thank You for praying for me when I do not even know what to pray for. Amen.



Nativity Story 5: The Stable

Read: During the time right before Jesus' birth, the emperor Caesar Augustus ruled over many people. Emperor Augustus decided that he wanted a list (a census) of everyone who lived in the whole Roman world. To accomplish this, he made a law that ordered everyone to go to the towns where their ancestors had lived in order to be counted.

"So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby" (Luke 2:4-5).



Let's Talk: The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem is nearly 100 miles. Bible scholars say this would have been a grueling trip lasting 5 to 10 days. Google Maps says it takes 33 hours to walk from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Pictures often portray Mary making this journey riding on a donkey, but there is no mention of a donkey in the Bible. Now imagine you are Mary or Joseph - what are you thinking about as you travel to Bethlehem while you waiting for your baby to arrive any day? Would you be excited to be making the trip at this time or maybe worried about being so far from home and family? Do you think Mary or Joseph were wondering if God was with them on this journey? Do you wonder if God is with you on your journey?

Do: Color the stable scene and any animals that you want to add. Get it ready for Mary and Joseph's arrival.



Week 3: Interactive Prayer Activity

Supplies

Straws, post it notes, pen, tape

As we focus on praying blessings for others during Advent, sometimes it is hard to know for whom we should pray or even what. Paul wrote this advice to his young friend Timothy, "I want all of you to pray for everyone. Ask God to bless them. Give thanks for them. Pray for kings. Pray for all who are in authority. Pray that we will live peaceful and quiet lives. And pray that we will be godly and holy" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

In these verses, Paul tells us that we should pray for everyone and he specifically mentions we should pray for people who are in authority. Paul also tells us how we should pray. We should ask God to bless them. Give thanks for them. Pray for others to live peaceful, godly and holy lives.

Do: Think of a few people to pray for. Be sure to include someone who is in a position of authority. Write or draw pictures of who you want to pray for on a post it note. Now create a Prayer Rocket to send your prayers to God. Roll the post it note around a straw with sticky part facing away from the straw. Fold the top over the straw to and seal with tape to create a sealed pocket over the straw. Blow through your straw to shoot your prayer as far as possible to symbolize releasing your prayers to God.

Pray: God, thanks for being able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. Amen.

****Be sure to save at least half of the post it notes for week 4's prayer activity.**



Nativity Story 6: The Manger & Baby Jesus

Read: While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem to be counted, the time came for the baby to be born. “Mary gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

Let's Talk: In what kind of places do you think that really important people like kings and queens are born? The angel had told Mary that she was giving birth to the “Son of the Most High God” yet Jesus’ first bed was a manger! A manger is a wooden or stone feeding trough or food box that holds hay for larger farm animals like cattle, horses and donkeys - a place where animals would come to eat. Do you think this was poor planning on God’s part or a mistake? Why do you think God decided that Jesus was to be born into such circumstances? Why do you think Jesus wasn’t born in a palace or somewhere more suitable for a future king and the son of the Most High God?



Do: Color the manger and baby Jesus. Set up your stable scene with Mary, Joseph, the manger, baby Jesus and whatever animals you want in your stable.

FMT

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