

ADVENT II

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE HOLY FAMILY

- **LITURGICAL ACTION**
- **CORE PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: FOCAL SHELVES AND CHRISTMAS SHELVES**
- **PIECES: ADVENT CARDS ON A RACK OR TRAY; 4 ADVENT CANDLES IN A BOX, MATCHES IN A METAL CONTAINER AND A CANDLE SNUFFER, ALL ON A TRAY; PURPLE OR BLUE CLOTH OR FELT; NATIVITY SET FIGURES OF MARY, JOSEPH AND THE DONKEY; MODEL OF BETHLEHEM; OPTIONAL: CANDLE HOLDERS**
- **UNDERLAY: PURPLE (OR BLUE) AND WHITE**

BACKGROUND

This lesson helps children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle in the church. This week's presentation focuses on the Holy Family.

You begin this week's lesson by presenting the first of the four Advent cards and telling about the prophets; see Lesson 1, pages 27-33 for the movements and words.

In this lesson, you then add the second Advent card and tell the story of the Holy Family.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

You will find the material for this presentation on the Christmas shelves and the focal shelves. For a complete description of these materials, see the Notes on the Material in Lesson 1, page 27.

SPECIAL NOTES

Classroom Management: You'll find a useful tip about working with fire on page 28. Another issue that can arise with the Advent presentations is resistance on the part of older children to language about "getting ready to enter the Mystery." Supporting children as they struggle with their resistance is part of our art. These children do not yet know how the language of the Christian people works. There is little experience of this language in our culture, and certainly none in their formal schooling.

Don't give in to their honest—or sometimes not so honest—complaints about being bored or already having had this lesson. Sometimes children resist simply to be disruptive or even to avoid the discomfort of intimacy.

Affirm that being a part of the story is not easy. God never said it was easy. You never said it was easy. It is not easy like arithmetic. Arithmetic is a way of speaking that is always the same. $2+2=4$. In elementary arithmetic, this is always correct. $12-4=8$. Lovely. Arithmetic is comforting. It keeps things in order!

Religious language also gives order to our lives, as in going to church each Sunday, going to church for weddings and funerals, and by observing the seasons of the Church year. When it gives order, it also asks us to find what is new and different in the sameness. Religious language is generative language: it calls us to be who we are really supposed to be, creatures who create.

This lesson is different from math and science in another way. We are trying to enter into a mystery. We want to come as close to it as we can. You can't do that and at the same time stand back and measure it or analyze it. You can't add three mysteries to four mysteries to see what the sum of a mystery is. Each mystery enters into the sum of all mystery. The mystery of Christmas is more like a door to enter than a wall on which to write numbers or draw pictures.

What is important in this sort of language is finding your way into a meaning, a meaning that grows. In religious language there is always more. It is like a well that is never empty. You can become tired of such a challenge, but the language and its source is never exhausted nor emptied.

MOVEMENTS

When the children are ready, go to the Christmas shelves and get the materials you need, as described in Lesson 1, Advent I (p. 30).

Place the first Advent card and tell about the prophets. Do not minimize or rush that first story. End with the words: "Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem."

Unroll the underlay to uncover the next section. Place the second Advent card to your left of the first card. The second card shows two candles lit and an image of Bethlehem.

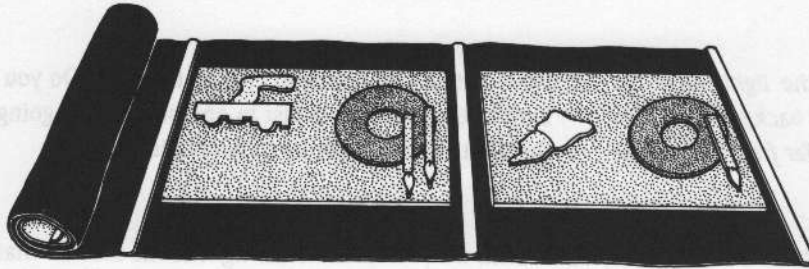
Point to the symbol of Bethlehem on the card.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go so you will always know where to find this lesson.

This is the card of the Holy Family.

Do you see Bethlehem on the card, and the road? The Holy Family is on the way to Bethlehem and we are going with them.



THE FIRST AND SECOND ADVENT CARDS (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Turn around to the focal shelves behind you. Take Mary from the Holy Family on the center of the top shelf and place her on the card, close to you.

Next take the Joseph figure and place him on the card.

Place the donkey figure on the card, between Mary and Joseph.

Here is the Mother Mary.

Here is the Father Joseph.

Here is the donkey.

Mary was about to have a baby. It is very hard to walk when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she could not take another step. Then she rode on the donkey.

It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. When she couldn't ride another step, she got down and walked. She rode and she walked.

They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

Sit back and enjoy how, in this second week of Advent, we are all on the way to the Mystery of Christmas. Then get out two candles and light them.

Here is the light of the prophets. Here is the light of the Mother Mary and the Father Joseph as they make their way to Bethlehem.

Let's enjoy the light.

The door person can turn out the classroom lights so the children can see the candles glow. Sit back and enjoy the light.

If you turned off the light, have the door person turn it back on now. Pick up the candle snuffer from the candle tray.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. Do you see how the light of the prophets is just in one place? I am going to change the light so that it can be in every place.

Snuff the first candle. Hold the snuffer over the flame for it to fill with smoke. When you lift it, the smoke will rise and begin to spread out. Then snuff the second candle in the same way.

Watch. Do you see how the light of the mother Mary and the father Joseph is just in this one place? I am going to change the light so that it can be in every place.

Do you see how the light is not gone? It is changed. It is not in one place. Now it is spreading out, getting thinner and thinner, to fill up the whole room. The room is filling up with the light of the prophets and with the light of the mother Mary and the father Joseph. Anywhere you go in this room you can come close to them today.

Enjoy the moment and then begin to put the lesson back. There is no wondering at the end of this lesson.

Now watch carefully where I go with this material, so you will always know where to get it when you want to work with it.

MOVEMENTS

Carry Bethlehem back to its shelf first. Then put the card and the underlay back in their rack (or tray) and return the rack to its shelf. Return Mary, Joseph and the donkey to the focal shelves. Put away the candle tray last, making certain the wax in the candles has had time to cool, so that it will not spill out into the cloth-lined tray. Be certain that the matches are secure in their container.

When everything is put away, come back to the circle and begin to help the children make their decisions about what work to get out next.

WORDS

I Wonder