

LESSON 3

ADVENT III

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE SHEPHERDS

- LITURGICAL ACTION
- CORE PRESENTATION

THE MATERIAL

- LOCATION: FOCAL SHELVES AND CHRISTMAS SHELVES
- PIECES: ADVENT CARDS ON A RACK OR TRAY; FOUR 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, DONKEY, SHEPHERD AND SHEEP); 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 shepherds.

You begin this week's lesson by presenting the first and second of the four Advent cards and telling the stories found in Lesson 1 (pp. 27-33) and Lesson 2 (pp. 34-39).

In this lesson, you then add the third Advent card and tell the story of the shepherds.

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.

MOVEMENTS

When the children are ready, go to the Christmas shelves and get the materials you need, as described in Lesson 1 (p. 30) and listed at the beginning of this lesson.

Place the first Advent card and tell about the prophets (pp. 30-32). Do not minimize or rush the story. End with the words: "Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem."

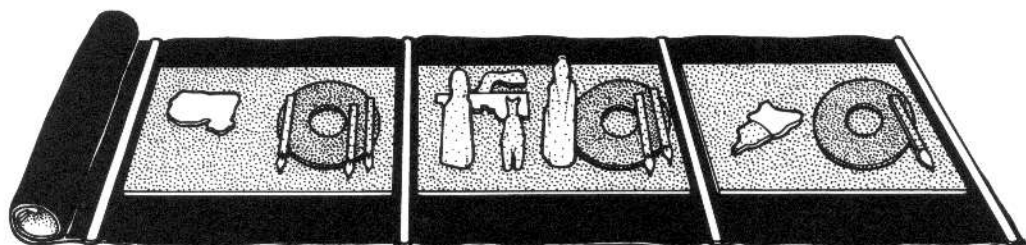
Place the second Advent card and tell about the Holy Family (pp. 37-38). Do not minimize or rush this second story. End with the words: "They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night."

When you have finished, unroll the underlay to uncover the next section. Place the third Advent card to your left of the second card. The third card shows three lit candles and an image of a sheep.

WORDS

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

This is the card of the shepherds.



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

Turn around to the focal shelves behind you. Take the shepherd and the sheep and place them on the third Advent card, close to you.

On the third Sunday in Advent we remember the shepherds who were standing in the fields around Bethlehem keeping their sheep. They were trying to stay awake so the wolves could not come and get the sheep. Suddenly there was so much light in the sky that it hurt their eyes.

MOVEMENTS

Pat your chest to make the sound of a heart beating.

Place three candles, one by one, between you and the three cards on the underlay.

Point to the third candle.

Light the candles.

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

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

Snuff out the three candles slowly, as if doing it for the first time. Take time for the interpretation of what you are doing. Take time for the words.

WORDS

They were afraid. Their hearts were beating so loudly. When they could hear something besides their own hearts, they thought they heard singing in the sky! That also scared them until they heard the words of the song. The angels were singing, "Don't be afraid." Angels often say that, because it is scary to have a messenger of God come to you.

The angels singing sounded something like this: "Don't be afraid. We bring you tidings of great joy. Peace on earth and good will to everyone. A Child is born. Go. Hurry. Run to Bethlehem to see the Child who will change everything."

Here is the candle of the prophets. This is the candle of the Holy Family. Here is the candle of the shepherds.

Look—there is something different about this candle. It is the color of roses. This is to remind us of the great joy the angels sang of. It also helps us remember that even if it is very serious to get ready to come close to a great mystery like Christmas, you can't be serious all of the time as you get ready. This is the Sunday when it is time for a little celebration!

There is one more thing about the color of roses. It is also one of the colors for the mother Mary. We remember her again, for without the mother Mary, there would be no baby.

Let's enjoy the light.

Now I am going to change the light. Do you see how the light of the prophets is just in one place? That is very helpful. That helps us see the light. Watch.

Now it is changed, and the light that was in just one place is now spreading out. It gets more invisible as it spreads out. Soon it will fill up the whole room.

MOVEMENTS

Here is the light of the Holy Family. It is easy to see when it is all gathered in one place. Now watch; I am going to change the light. Look. It too is spreading out. Do you see figures in the smoke? Watch how it changes. Look. It is spreading out and filling up the whole room. Just because it is hard to see doesn't mean that it isn't there.

And here is the light of the shepherds and the mother Mary again. I am going to change the light. Do you see how it is in one place? Now it can go be in every place. Look. It is filling up the room with the shepherds and mixing with the Holy Family and the prophets. Anywhere you go in the room today they will be there.

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

Carry Bethlehem back to its shelf first. Then put the cards and the underlay back in their rack (or tray) and return the rack to its shelf. Return the nativity figures 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 secured 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

Here is the light of the Holy Family. It is easy to see when it is all gathered in one place. Now watch; I am going to change the light. Look. It too is spreading out. Do you see figures in the smoke? Watch how it changes. Look. It is spreading out and filling up the whole room. Just because it is hard to see doesn't mean that it isn't there.

And here is the light of the shepherds and the mother Mary again. I am going to change the light. Do you see how it is in one place? Now it can go be in every place. Look. It is filling up the room with the shepherds and mixing with the Holy Family and the prophets. Anywhere you go in the room today they will be there.

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.

Wonder