

LESSON 4

ADVENT IV

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE WISE MEN AND CHRISTMAS

- 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, DONKEY, SHEPHERD, SHEEP, WISE MEN, CHRIST CHILD, MANGER); 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 wise men and the celebration of Christmas.

You begin this week's lesson by presenting the first, second and third of the four Advent cards and telling the stories found in Lesson 1 (pp. 27-33), Lesson 2 (pp. 34-39) and Lesson 3 (pp. 40-44).

You then add:

- the fourth and final Advent card, telling the story of the wise men, contained in this lesson
- the Christmas card, telling the story of Jesus' birth, also contained in this lesson

MOVEMENTS

WORDS

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

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

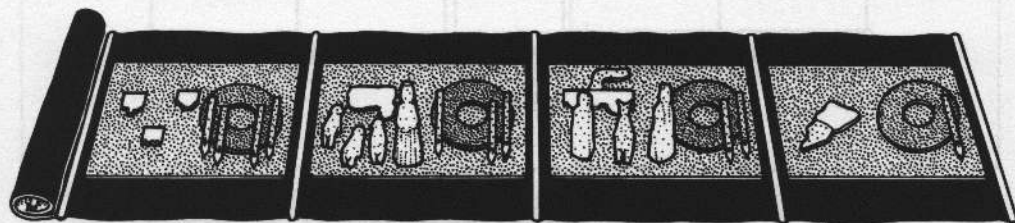
Place the first Advent card and tell about the prophets (pp. 30-32). Do not minimize or rush the story. End with the words: "Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem."

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

Place the third Advent card and tell about the shepherds (pp. 42-43). Do not minimize or rush the story. End with the words: "Run to Bethlehem to see the child who will change everything."

When you have finished, unroll the underlay to uncover the next section. Place the fourth Advent card to your left of the third card. The fourth card shows four candles lit and an image of three crowns, which also look like the three gifts.

This is the card of the wise men.



THE FOUR ADVENT CARDS (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

MOVEMENTS

Turn around to the focal shelves behind you. Take the wise men, place them on the fourth Advent card, close to you.

As you talk about the stars, look up and then at your hands as if they were a book and point into the sky to note the proper places of the stars.

Place four candles, one by one, between you and the underlay with the cards on it.

Now light the candles.

Sit back and enjoy the light. Then, instead of snuffing the candles, unroll the fifth and final segment of the underlay, which is white.

Move your hand over the white.

Lay down the white card for Christmas. Then slowly turn around to the focal shelves behind you. Take the baby in the manger and place him in the middle of the white card.

WORDS

On the fourth Sunday in Advent we remember the three kings, the Magi, the wise men. They came from far in the East, and they were so wise that people thought they were magic. In fact we get our word, "magic," from the name they were called in their own language, "the Magi."

Of all the things they knew, they knew the most about the stars. They knew where each star was supposed to be at each time of the year, so they could tell people when it was time to plant their crops, or take a trip on the ocean in a boat, or cross the high mountain passes when the snow wasn't too deep.

Suddenly they saw the wild star. It was not on any of their star maps. It went where it wanted to go. It did not stay put. They decided to follow the wild star to see where it was going and what it wanted to show them.

They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem, but they came from so far away that they got there after the baby was born. They are always late, it seems. Every year they are late. They usually don't arrive until January 6th, but we remember them anyway, because, like us, they too are on the way to Bethlehem.

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

Let's enjoy the light.

Look! When you come to the mystery of Christmas, everything changes. It becomes the color of pure celebration.

This is when the baby is born, the one we have been waiting for.

Here is the Christ Child, the mystery of Christmas. This is amazing, but of all the creatures there that night, perhaps the most amazed was the old cow.

MOVEMENTS

WORDS

Slowly turn back to the focal shelves and pick up the cow. Turn back and place the cow by the manger.

When the old cow came up to the feed box in the morning to eat some straw it found a baby lying in the manger. Someone had put a soft cover over the straw. The manger had become a bed. All the old cow could do was look and look at the baby with its big brown eyes.

Sit back for a moment. Look at everything that has been placed before the children. Look around at the children. Touch the materials of the lesson laid before you all. Then say:

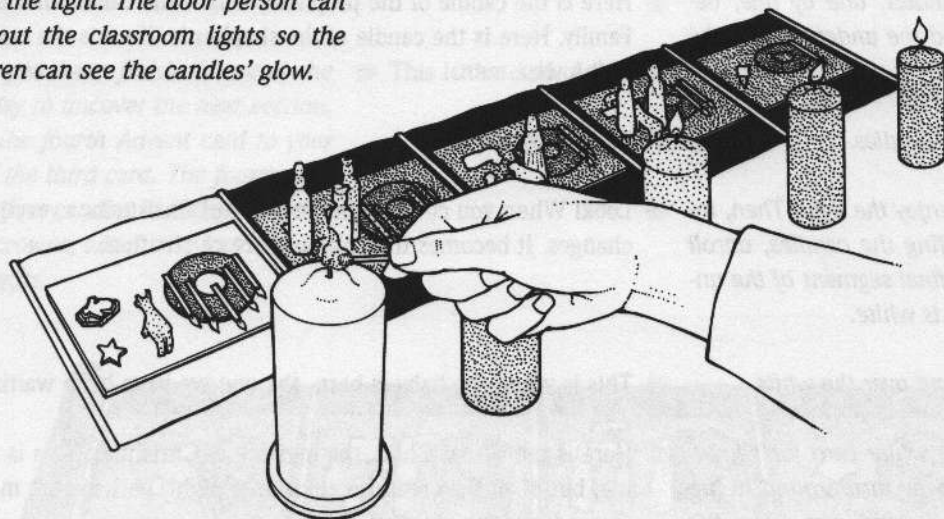
Wait. Something is missing! I wonder what it could be?

Wait. The children will probably discover quickly that the white card needs a candle, too. This is the Christ Candle that sits to the left of the Holy Family material, on the top shelf of the focal shelves.

This is the Christ candle. Now, let's enjoy its light, too.

Place this candle in the line with the four Advent candles.

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



LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

MOVEMENTS

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 all the candles slowly.

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 candle 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

Now watch. I am going to change the light.

Now I am going to change the light of the Christ candle. Look. It too is spreading out to fill up the room. As it spreads out, it gets thinner and thinner until you can't see it at all. That doesn't mean that it's gone. It only means that you can't see it. You can still feel the Christmas light. It is filling up the room with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds and the three kings. Anywhere you go, you can come close to them.

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