



Age 3: Advent: Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: During Advent we prepare for Christmas, a celebration of love.

Book title: *The Christmas Story* by Jane Werner Watson (Golden Books, 2000)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, the children might be invited to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: “Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet.”

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:

“Today we are learning that we prepare for Christmas during Advent. On Christmas, we celebrate Jesus’ birthday. This book, *The Christmas Story*, will help us to know the story of Jesus’ birth.”

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

“Listen carefully to the story to learn about the special night when Jesus was born.”

Read aloud the story.

3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the faith theme and the story. Ask one or more of the following questions:

“Who visited Mary to tell her she would be the mother of Jesus?”

“Who brought gifts to Baby Jesus?”

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting any of them to respond.

4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as:

“Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing.”

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.



When everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s ask God to help us as we prepare to celebrate Christmas.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, thank you for sending us Jesus, your gift of love. Help us to prepare for Christmas by sharing love with others.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen.”

Age 3: Christmas - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: Christmas is Jesus’ birthday.

Book title: *Saint Francis Celebrates Christmas* by Mary Caswell Walsh (Loyola Press, 1998)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, you might invite the children to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: “Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet.”

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:

“Today we are learning that we celebrate Jesus’ birthday at Christmas. This book, *Saint Francis Celebrates Christmas*, tells us what Saint Francis did to help people remember that Christmas is Jesus’ birthday.”

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read aloud the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

“Listen carefully to learn about the nativity scenes that help us remember the story of the first Christmas.”

Read aloud the story.

3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the story and the faith theme. Ask one or more of the following questions:

“What did Saint Francis do to help the people celebrate Christmas?”

“What will you remember about Christmas when you see a nativity scene?”

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting them to respond.



4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as the following:

“Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing.”

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.

When everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s ask God to help us remember that we celebrate Jesus’ birthday at Christmas.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, thank you for giving us Jesus to show us your love. Help us to show love to others, at Christmastime and all the time.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen.”

Age 3: Easter - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: On Easter we celebrate the new life of Jesus.

Book title: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (Philomel, 1981)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, the children might be invited to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: “Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet.”

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:

“Today we are learning that we celebrate the new life of Jesus at Easter. Butterflies are one of the signs of new life we see in springtime that remind us of Jesus’ new life. This book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, describes how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.”

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

“Look carefully at the pictures as we learn how a caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly.”

Read aloud the story.



3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the faith theme and the story. Ask one or more of the following questions:

“What did the caterpillar do before he became a butterfly?”

“What other signs of new life do you see in the springtime?”

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting them to respond.

4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as the following:

“Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing.”

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.

When everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s thank God for all the wonderful signs of new life we see in springtime.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, we thank you for the gift of new life. Fill us with the joy of Easter.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen. Alleluia!”

Age 3: Halloween/Feast of All Saints - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: On Halloween/Feast of All Saints, we celebrate friends of God.

Book title: *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington (HarperTrophy, 1990)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, the children might be invited to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: “Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet.”

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:



“Today we are learning that we celebrate friends of God on Halloween and the Feast of All Saints. At Halloween, many people carve faces on pumpkins. This book, *Pumpkin, Pumpkin*, describes how pumpkins grow.”

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

“Look carefully at the pictures as you listen to the story so you can see what kind of pumpkin face is carved on the pumpkin.”

Read aloud the story.

3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the faith theme and the story. Ask one or more of the following questions:

“What kind of face was carved on Jamie’s pumpkin?”

“What kinds of faces do you like to see on pumpkins on Halloween?”

“How do you feel when you see happy faces carved on pumpkins at Halloween?”

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting them to respond.

4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as the following:

“Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing.”

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.

Then everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s ask God to help us share happiness with others as we celebrate Halloween and All Saints Day.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, thank you for happy celebrations like Halloween and All Saints Day. Help us to share happiness with others.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen.”



Age 3: Lent - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: During Lent, we grow in God's love.

Book title: *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle (Aladdin, 2001)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, the children might be invited to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: "Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet."

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:

"Today, we are learning that the seeds that grow in springtime remind us of how we grow in God's love. During Lent, we pray and do good things for others to help us grow in God's love. This book, *The Tiny Seed*, tells what helps a tiny seed grow to be a very large flower."

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

"Listen carefully to the story to see what happens when the seed becomes a flower."

Read aloud the story.

3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the faith theme and the story. Ask one or more of the following questions:

"What helped the seed grow to be a beautiful flower?"

"Who visited the beautiful flower?"

"What will happen to the seeds that the wind blows from the flower?"

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting them to respond.

4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as the following:

"Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing."

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.



When everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s ask God to always help us to grow in his love.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, we thank you for seeds that grow to become beautiful flowers. Always help us to grow in your love.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen.”

Age 3: Pentecost - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: We celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Book title: *Feel the Wind* by Arthur Dorros (HarperTrophy, 1990)

1. Set the Environment

Invite the children to sit on a rug or carpet squares, arranged so each child can see the pictures as you read the book, but with sufficient space around them to minimize distractions. Since the story will be followed by prayer, the children might be invited to sit near the Prayer Center, arranged with items related to the faith theme. If needed, remind the children of the rules for listening to storybooks: “Everyone listens to the story and allows others time for quiet.”

2. Introduce and Read the Book

Introduce the storybook and relate the story to the lesson:

“Today we are learning that God is with us always. God is everywhere, like the air and wind that are always around us. This book, *Feel the Wind*, can help us think about all the things we know about the wind.”

Invite the children to listen carefully as you read the story. You might hint at the kind of reflection that will follow by indicating something that the children should listen for as you read:

“Listen carefully to the story to learn how we know the wind is there, even though we cannot see it.”

Read aloud the story.

3. Encourage the Children to Reflect and Respond

Invite the children to reflect on the connection between the faith theme and the story. Ask one or more of the following questions:

“What do you see and hear when the wind is moving through the trees?”

“What are some things that the wind can do?”

Remember to allow enough time for the children to arrive at well-considered responses. Encourage all the children to answer each question quietly for themselves before inviting them to respond.



4. Invite the Children to Pray

Invite the children to prepare for prayer, encouraging them to become as quiet and still as possible. Give directions such as the following:

“Be sure you have space around you to be comfortable and not distracted by anyone. Place your hands quietly in your lap. Try to keep your feet very still. Listen for the sound of your breathing.”

You might suggest that the children close their eyes for prayer.

When everyone is quiet, make a simple suggestion that connects the faith theme and the prayer:

“As we pray, let’s thank God for the air and the wind.”

After a few moments of quiet, pray aloud a simple prayer:

“God, we thank you for the air and the wind, which are all around us. Help us to know that you are also with us always.”

Bring the time of prayer to a close with a simple prayer gesture, such as inviting the children to place their hands together as they say, “Amen.”