



Age 4: Advent - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: We prepare for Jesus' birthday.

Book title: *Waiting for Christmas: A Story about the Advent Calendar* by Kathleen Long Bostrom (Zonderkidz, 2006)

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 to celebrate Jesus' birth during Advent. Let's count how many days until Christmas. [Show a calendar and count the days to Christmas.] It isn't easy to wait patiently for Christmas. This book, *Waiting for Christmas*, tells the story of how a boy and his family waited patiently for Christmas."

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 this family did to count the days until Christmas."

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 does Gerhard do to count the days until Christmas?"

"How is your family preparing for Christmas?"

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 be patient as we prepare to celebrate Christmas.”

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

“God, we thank you for this season of Advent, when we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth. Help us to wait patiently and prepare well for Christmas.”

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 4: Christmas - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: On Christmas we celebrate Jesus’ birth

Book title: *The Friendly Beasts* by Tomie dePaola (Putnam Juvenile, 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, 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 Christmas is a celebration of Jesus’ birth. At Christmas, we set up scenes of the first Christmas with statues of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Many of these scenes also show animals because Jesus was born in a stable, a place where animals stay. This book, *The Friendly Beasts*, helps us imagine what the animals saw the night Jesus was born.”

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 and imagine what it was like on the night 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:

“What did the animals do to show love to Jesus on the night he was born?”

“What gifts of love can you give to others at Christmas?”



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 celebrate Jesus’ birth with joy.”

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

“God our Father, we thank you for showing us your love by sending us Jesus, your Son. Help us share love with 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 4: Easter - Special Seasons and Days **Faith Theme: On Easter we celebrate life.**

Book title: *My First Story of Easter* by Tim Dowley (Moody Publishers, 2005)

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 Easter is a celebration of new life. The signs of new life we see in the spring remind us that Jesus is alive and gives us new life. This book, *My First Story of Easter*, tells the story about Jesus that we remember and celebrate at Easter.”

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 how Jesus died and rose again to give us new life.”

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 angels tell the women who went to Jesus’ tomb?”

“What do we remember about Jesus when we celebrate Easter?”

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 remember the Easter story that tells us Jesus is alive.”

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

“God, thank you for the gift of new life we celebrate at Easter. We praise you with joy forever.”

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

Faith Theme: Halloween is the eve of the feast of All Saints.

Book title: *The Pumpkin Book* by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House, 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 Halloween is the night before the Feast of All Saints. This book, *The Pumpkin Book*, will help us learn about pumpkins and how they help us celebrate Halloween and All Saints Day.”

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 in the story to see the many ways pumpkins can be decorated for Halloween, and how the light shines through the carved pumpkins.”

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 interesting ways have you seen pumpkins decorated for Halloween?”

“How does it make you feel to see the light shining through carved 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.

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

“As we pray, let’s thank God for beautiful pumpkins we decorate for Halloween.”

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

“God, thank you for pumpkins and the way the light shines through them when decorated for Halloween. Help us to remember that your light shines through us when we share joy 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 4: Lent - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: During Lent, we follow Jesus and show our love for God in our deeds.

Book title: *My Day with Jesus* by Alice Joyce Davidson (Zonderkidz, 2005)

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 during Lent, we follow Jesus and show our love for God. When we do good things for others, we show our love for God. This book, *My Day with Jesus*, tells the story of a donkey who is chosen to do a good thing for Jesus on a very special day.”

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 the two things that Jesus taught the people.”

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 donkey do for Jesus on this special day?”

“What two things did Jesus tell the people to 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 ask God to help us show love in our deeds.”



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

“God, thank you for showing us how to love. Help us to love you always and to show our love in our deeds.”

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 4: Pentecost - Special Seasons and Days

Faith Theme: The Holy Spirit brings peace.

Book title: *The Fruit of the Spirit is Jesus in Me* by Dandi Daley Mackall (Standard Publishing Company, 2005)

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 Jesus gave us a special helper, the Holy Spirit. This book, *The Fruit of the Spirit is Jesus in Me*, tells about some of the ways the Holy Spirit helps us every day.”

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 how the Holy Spirit brings us peace.”

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 are some ways the Holy Spirit helps us?”

“How can you share peace with others?”

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 share peace with others.”

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

“God, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to be our helper. May we always be filled with your love and peace.”

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.”