

Why does Jesus come
to save us?

Lesson 22



Advent

*"Behold, I am sending my messenger
ahead of you; he will prepare your way."*

Mark 1:2

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Gathering Prayer

Leader: In the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate Jesus' coming again into our world and wait in joyful hope for his birth at Christmas. The prophet Isaiah spoke of Emmanuel, which means "God with us."

We will pray: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel."

All: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel."

Leader: Lord Jesus, prepare a place in our hearts for your return. Come to us, Emmanuel.

All: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel."

Leader: Lord Jesus, fill us with your love as we wait for your return. Come to us, Emmanuel.

All: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel."

Leader: O God, we rejoice that you became one of us, that you sent us your Son, Jesus. Come to us, Emmanuel.

All: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel."

Activity

We prepare our hearts during Advent. Write on the heart one way you can prepare your heart for Christ's return.

As a group, choose one way to prepare for each week of Advent. Place a list of ideas next to a classroom Advent wreath.



Our hearts look forward to the coming of Christ.

Advent is a season of joy and hopeful waiting for the coming of the Savior. It is a time to pray, reflect, and prepare our hearts to celebrate Jesus' birth more than two thousand years ago. We also wait for him to come again at the end of time.

Each season of the liturgical year has its own distinct color. We see this color in the priest's vestments at Mass and also in church decorations. The color of Advent is violet (purple). On the third Sunday of Advent, the priest may wear a rose-colored vestment. We also light the pink candle of the Advent wreath on this Sunday as a sign of joy.


In Advent, we learn about John the Baptist, who called people to change their lives. His message is one that we hear in the Gospel readings during Advent. He said: "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).

When we prepare our hearts for Christ's return, we share in the joy and the hope that his birth brought to the world. God's people had waited a long time for a Savior to come.

Jesus' birth would change everything for them. His birth changes us, too.

During the season of Advent, through prayer and reflection on the Gospels, we prepare for the joyful coming of Jesus. We prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts and minds.

Did You Know?

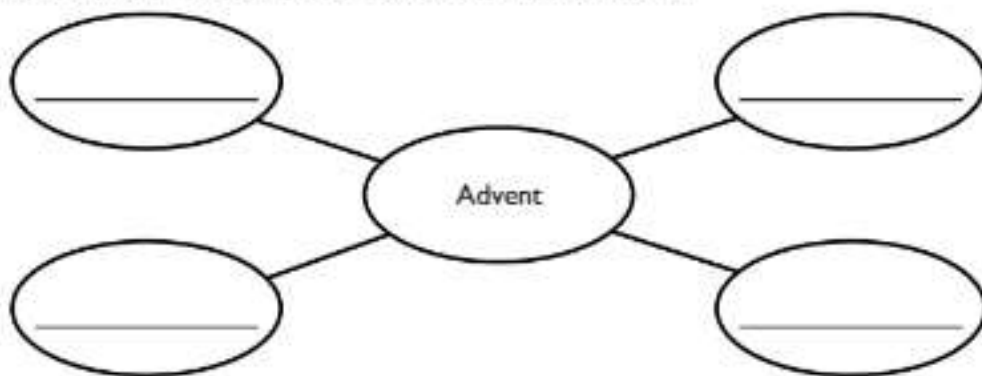
 Jesus' birth changed everything.



Advent

Activity

Prepare a word web of all the things you know about Advent.



Add your ideas to a class word web on a whiteboard.

Advent Prayer Ritual



"Christ, Circle Round Us,"

Dan Schutte

Prayer before the Advent wreath:

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us listen to a reading from Sacred Scripture from the Gospel of Mark.

"A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'" (Mark 1:3).

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

Leader: As we stand around the Advent wreath, let us ask Jesus to help us shine his light in us more brightly in our world.

We pray for the Church and her leaders, who guide us on the pathway to the love of God.

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

Leader: We pray for all government officials, that they look after our country to promote peace and justice for all of its people.

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

Leader: We pray for those who are suffering, that the light of Advent lifts them from the darkness of their lives.

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

Leader: And let us pray for all who are in our parish, that Jesus will be born again in their hearts this Christmas.

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

Leader: I invite each of you to offer a prayer in the silence of your heart, that this Advent will be a time of peace and joy as you prepare for the coming of Jesus.

(The students offer their prayers.)

All: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.



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What can I do to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

Mini-Task

During the season of Advent, we look forward with hope to the birth of Jesus.

Think about what we celebrate during Advent. Brainstorm ideas for service that young people could do as we wait for the birth of Jesus. Record your best idea in the chart below.

Advent Service Ministry	
Whom or what will this serve?	
What service will you provide?	
Where will you do the service?	
When will the service take place?	
Why is this service important?	
How does this service connect to Advent?	

Discuss your idea with a partner. Share suggestions for ways your idea could be put into action.



Want to do more? Go to your Portfolio to continue this activity.

At Home

As a family, talk about events that have changed you, like the birth or death of family members, or a move to a new community. Talk about ways that Jesus' birth has changed each of you and the world.

How did the Son of God
enter human history?

Lesson 23

Christmas

*"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; . . .
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace."*

Isaiah 9:5

Gathering Prayer

Leader: In the season of Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. He is the very presence of God in human form. God loves us so much that he became one of us to teach us how to live and share in God's love.

All: All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God.

Leader: A light has shone on us this Christmas, as promised by the prophets in Scripture. Let us be glad and rejoice!

All: All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God.

Leader: Christ our King was born in a stable, surrounded by animals and straw. God lives among the rich and poor. Let us be glad and rejoice!

All: All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God.

Leader: We ask Mary to help us say "yes" to God's call in our daily lives. Let us be glad and rejoice!

All: All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God.

Leader: With the choir of angels that sang at the birth of Jesus, we sing:

All: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

Activity

Work in small groups to read the account of the Nativity in Luke 2:1–20. Fill in the chart with what you learn.

Who was present?	
What were they doing?	
What did they say?	
What lessons do we learn from them?	

Ask another group to tell the events of Jesus' birth.

At Christmas we celebrate the Incarnation.

Christmas is a celebration of the Incarnation, the Son of God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ. We recall the events of the Nativity, Jesus' birth.

The birth of Jesus took place in a stable. The Gospel tells us that animals were standing near the manger where the baby Jesus was laid. The child slept quietly in the night. Yet that is not why Christmas is a season of peace.

Christmas is a season of peace because Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Jesus shows us the way to peace with God and peace with one another. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise announced by the prophet Isaiah: "A child is born . . . they name him . . . Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:5).

During his earthly life, Jesus told people about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of justice, love, and peace. Jesus called his followers to enter that kingdom and to become peacemakers, too.

It was not enough for Jesus himself to be peaceful. He also showed his disciples how to find peace in their hearts and how to build a more peaceful world.



Jesus taught us that the way to peace in our hearts is through prayer. We discover true peace by staying close to God. He also taught us to build peace in our world. We do this through acts of justice, mercy, and forgiveness.

Jesus came into our world at Christmas. He is our Savior who continues to show us the way to peace.

Christmas

Did You Know?



God shares his peace with us.

Activity

Christmas begins on December 25 but does not end until Epiphany on January 6. Write three ways you can celebrate the Christmas season. Be sure to include ways that you can share the peace of Christmas with those who are less fortunate. Share your favorite idea with the class.

Christmas Prayer Ritual



"Joy to the World"

Leader: Let us make the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord God, you sent your Son, Jesus, to be born of the Virgin Mary. He brings peace and joy into our hearts. Bless all of us who stand now to praise the newborn King. Let it remind us of how Jesus was born into the world and into our hearts.

Let us listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the giving of good news from a mountaintop:

"How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the one bringing good news,
Announcing peace, bearing good news,
announcing salvation, saying to Zion,
'Your God is King!'" (Isaiah 52:7).

We go to the mountains, the hills, and everywhere to raise our voices in praise to Jesus at his birth:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Leader: We sing from the mountaintop that Jesus brings joy into our hearts:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Leader: We sing from the mountaintop that Jesus brings peace into our hearts:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.



Leader: We sing from the mountaintop that Jesus brings love into our hearts:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Leader: We sing from the mountaintop that Jesus brings mercy into our lives:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Leader: We sing from the mountaintop that Jesus brings justice into the world:

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Leader: May the peace that Jesus brings to the world be with you always.

All: And with your spirit!

Leader: Now offer each other a sign of peace.

(All go around the room and offer a sign of peace to one another.)

Leader: Go out into the world and share the peace of Christmas with everyone you meet!

All (sing): Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

What meaning does the birth of
Jesus have in my life?

Mini-Task

The Christmas season is a time of peace. We celebrate the birth of the one we call the Prince of Peace: Jesus. We work for peace in the world.

Recall what you have learned about the season of Christmas. Brainstorm ideas for service that young people could do inspired by Jesus as Light of the World and Prince of Peace. Record your best idea in the chart below.

Christmas Service Ministry	
Whom or what will this serve?	
What service will you provide?	
Where will you do the service?	
When will the service take place?	
Why is this service important?	
How does this service connect to Christmas?	

Discuss your idea with a partner. Share suggestions for ways your idea could be put into action.



Want to do more? Go to your Portfolio to continue this activity.

At Home

Talk with your family about ways you can build a more peaceful world. Choose something to do this week.