**Theme:** Much of the regular Advent and Christmas celebrations actually sidestep the central focus of Christianity, namely, “The Word Made Flesh”. The “logos”, the WORD came into being, enfleshed as a human being, combining humanity and divinity. Traditionally Advent points to the birth of the infant Jesus and Christmas centers around a baby—even if he is the Son of God. The problem is that it doesn’t go far enough!

- The dynamic of the Word becoming flesh sets a pattern for us to continue in this day and age. We too, are called to make visible, to “enflesh” the Good News so that others may experience and be drawn to the Lord. As Christians we are becoming more and more the Word, the message, the power of God. In a word: incarnate.

- Secondly, the accounts of Advent and Christmas point to the deeper reality, namely that our salvation came because of the ministry and sacrifice of the adult Christ. It is the life that He lived that we are called to follow. WE are called to make His WORD present in the world through our lives of love, compassion, forgiveness and service.

Our Advent booklets “A New Light Shines” reflect the radiance of people to believe in and imitate an incarnational God. That is the light we are called to shine brightly in a sometimes dark and weary world. We are a people of HOPE.

**Weekly Strategy:** Each week we have “The Word”- a quote taken from one of the weekend scripture lessons. With each phrase we discuss what it might look like, what is challenging or how we might make that word present-manifest-incarnated, in our daily lives. Reflection/discussion questions are provided for younger people and for older participants. It is up to each of us to see how we can make “The Word” “flesh” in our lives.
Word made Flesh

ADVENT I  November 29

THE WORD: “We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hands.” (IS 64:7)

Youth Reflection:

1. What is clay? Have you ever worked with it? What is it like?
2. What do you think the bible means when it says that you and I are clay? How do you feel about that? Why?
3. How do you make something out of clay? It is difficult?
4. What is a “potter”? How might Jesus be called a potter?
5. How does Jesus shape us? Through others? How?
6. How do we feel about Jesus shaping our lives? Scared? Happy? Why?
7. Jesus came to change us. Jesus came to change the world. Does this change how you think about Christmas? Why?
THIS WEEK: I will think about being good clay that Jesus can shape into something beautiful.

Adult Reflection:

1. What comes to mind when you think about clay?
2. How do I feel about being compared to clay?
3. What is a potter and what do they do? How do they accomplish their tasks?
4. Are there people in your life who have been “potters” for you? Who? Why? How?
5. Can you think of a time that you felt God shaped you? What was the situation? How did it change you?
6. Have you ever felt you were a potter for someone else? How?
7. A potter many times uses a wheel, spinning around to help shape pottery. What comparisons can you make between life and the potter’s wheel?
9. Is there an area that you feel you are being called to make changes in?
10. In what ways could this Advent season mold you into something new?
THIS WEEK: I will look for a way God is calling me to change.
Word made Flesh

ADVENT II
THE WORD: December 6
“Give comfort.” (IS 40:1)

Youth Reflection:

1. What does it mean to “give comfort”? What does it look like? How does it feel?
2. Can you think of times when someone gave YOU comfort? Who was it? What did they do? Did they care about you?
3. How does Jesus give comfort? What does Jesus’ comfort look like? How does the Church reflect the comfort of Jesus?
4. Jesus’ coming to earth is to bring peace and comfort. Why don’t some people believe in Jesus? Do YOU believe in Jesus? Why? Why not?
5. As people who are Jesus’ followers we are called to do what He did. Brainstorm some ways in which Christians can give comfort to people in our world.
6. Are there times you find it hard to give comfort to someone? Why? What would Jesus do?

THIS WEEK: I will find someone in need and give them comfort.

Adult Reflection:

1. What do you think the prophet Isaiah means by “giving comfort”? Read further on in that passage...what are examples of comfort?
3. Can you think of a time when someone gave YOU comfort? What was the situation? Who gave you comfort? What did they do? How did you feel afterwards?
4. Has God ever given you comfort? What did it look/feel like?
5. How does God comfort people?
6. What are ways in which we can be of comfort to others?
7. Why is it sometimes tough giving comfort?
8. Do we have to know or like those in need of comfort? Why?

THIS WEEK: I will find someone in need and be a source of comfort to them. I will also thank someone who has been a comfort to me.
Youth Reflection:

1. Name someone whose voice you recognize. Why is it, for example in a crowded gym, you can pick out a voice calling you?
2. If someone says “Who are you?”, you respond with your name. What do you think John the Baptist meant when he said “I am the voice”?
3. Who was he the voice of? What was his message?
4. Is there a voice you always listen to? Why?
5. Do you think God speaks to you? If yes, how? If not, why not?
6. God actually speaks to us in many ways... brainstorm some of the different ways God speaks to us.
7. John the Baptist spent his whole life speaking about/about pointing the way to Jesus. What are ways in which you and I can be “the voice” speaking to others about Jesus?

THIS WEEK: I will find a way to be a “voice for Jesus” in prayer or in conversation with a friend.

Adult Reflection:

1. Much of the time before the elections, there were people being a “voice” for those who needed to be heard. Who are some people in our society and world who might need our voice to help?
2. John the Baptist said “I am the voice”. Have you ever been a voice for someone or for a cause? What was it about? How were you a voice? What was the effect?
3. Jesus Christ’s coming was about being a voice. Give examples of Jesus voice during his ministry. But he wasn’t just talk, he was action. Name some ways Christians are called to be both voice and action on behalf of others.
4. Why are people sometimes afraid of speaking out, of being a voice? Give examples, maybe even of your own?
5. What was different about John the Baptist’s voice?
6. What is different about Jesus’ voice in the world?

THIS WEEK: I will be the voice, will speak up or out for someone who is voiceless or not being heard.
ADVENT IV  December 20

THE WORD:  “Do not be afraid.” (Lk 1:30)

Youth Reflection:

1. Read through the angel’s visit to Blessed Mother Mary (Lk 1:26-38). What do you think went through Mary’s mind when the angel said that she was going to have a baby?
2. What might be some things Mary would have been afraid of? Have you ever been afraid? What was it like? Did you ask Jesus for help?
3. The angel told her: “Do not be afraid, Mary.” How would you feel if Jesus said that to you?
4. How can we help others who might be afraid?
5. The coming of Jesus is to take away fear and bring peace. Christmas is about making Peace on Earth. What are some ways that you can help bring peace to your family? To your friends?

THIS WEEK: During these Christmas days I will try very hard to bring peace to those I love.

Adult Reflection:

1. What is difficult or easy for you in the account of the angel’s visit to Mary? What kinds of things might have been concerns or fears as she listened to the message?
2. Think of a time you were afraid, when a situation seemed impossible? What did you do?
3. Mary responded “May it be done to me according to your word.” How believable is that? Can you respond with that much trust? Why? Why not?
4. The holiday season can be the “best of times and the worst of times.” To what are you looking forward? What are your concerns? How is Christ calling you to trust and be at peace this Christmas season?
5. What message does the infant Jesus have for you this year?
6. What message does the adult Jesus have for you this year?

THIS WEEK: I will ask Mary for her peace and trust and joy as I go through these days, that I might be a sign to others of faith.
Lord Jesus, you are the WORD, the “LOGOS”,
(but not just the WORD.)

You are the WORD INCARNATE, the WORD made FLESH.

This Advent,
You call us to your WORD for our reflection and our prayer.
But you also call us to your FLESH, Your action and presence and life in the EUCHARIST.

In life you call us to live your WORD and to become your FLESH, Incarnate in the world; Becoming what we receive: Your Body broken and shared.

Emmanuel, God-with-us, You are the WORD, the WORD MADE FLESH.

Become incarnate in us that we might SPEAK and BE your WORD to a waiting world. AMEN.