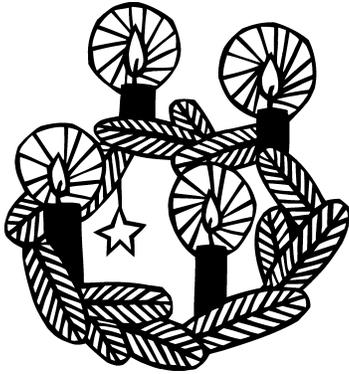


Family Sunday School Lesson 2 - The Wilderness



Introduction: We continue to wait for Jesus. This week we will compare our waiting selves to trees that have lost their leaves. We will try to appreciate this time of rest and darkness.

Start the Fun!

Listen and Watch

The Gospel of Mark has been a favorite among storytellers for centuries. Listen to today's gospel and enjoy this special presentation. The storyteller uses unique movements throughout the story to help paint images and highlight the movement of the action unfolding. (You can stop the video after the story is over or keep listening to his commentary.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RZcDAaIAZU>



Read together

Mark 1:1-8 John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way” 3 “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” 4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Discuss:

Ask: Describe John the Baptist. What were his physical traits and his personality like?

Discussion points: John lived on the fringes of society, as an outsider. He dressed in primitive clothing. He was probably not a well-known person. He was humble when he compared himself to Jesus. He had the gift of prophecy.

Ask: Although John was a somewhat strange individual, God used him for an important role. How did John prepare the people for Jesus’ birth?

Discussion points: He told people to watch for Jesus. He baptized them to cleanse them of their sins. He told them Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

Ask: Sometimes we feel lonely or sad. These times can be called “wilderness times.” Darkness can make us feel depressed. December 21st is the winter solstice, or the darkest day of the year. Daylight hours keep getting shorter and shorter until that date. What about today’s story can help us live through “wilderness times?”

Discussion points: John lived in the wilderness alone. But he knew better times were coming and he told other people about it. When we are feeling sad, we can remind ourselves that better times are ahead and we can look to other people to comfort us. When we are able, we can comfort others with the good news that Jesus came to Earth for us and that he will come again.

Pray

Thank God for rest. Thank God for dark times that help us appreciate good times. Thank God for difficult experiences that help us relate to other people's challenges. Ask God to help you use struggles to make you stronger.

Participate

Craft Time!

The Advent Wreath (Continued)

Materials:

- A wreath with evergreen boughs,
- three blue or purple candles,
- one pink candle
- (Optional: a white candle in the center; holly)

Second Sunday of Advent- light two blue or purple candles. Focus on the greenery of the wreath. Its evergreen boughs remind us that God has promised us everlasting life. The second candle, waiting, reminds us to stop our daily routines and prepare for the one who comes. As you light it this week, remember that Jesus stays with us through all the wilderness experiences of our lives.

Scratch-off Leaves

In the winter, trees rest. They do not have leaves making food through photosynthesis. When the leaves were green, they were busy little factories, but as the days grew shorter they stopped making chlorophyll. The green color started to fade and the reds, oranges, and yellows became visible. In this activity, help your child understand how leaves show their "true colors" with the help of a beautiful scratch art craft.

What You Need:

- White paper,
- Crayons,
- Dark green or black tempera paint,
- Dish soap,
- Dish for paint,
- Paint brush,
- Liquid soap,
- Toothpicks,
- Scissors.
- Optional: contact paper.

What You Do:

1. Use purple, red, yellow, and orange crayons to color and completely cover the paper with a thin layer of crayon. Create random designs.

2. If you have contact paper, stick it on top of the crayon picture. It will keep the colors vibrant and make the scratching easier. If you do not have any, you can skip to step 3.

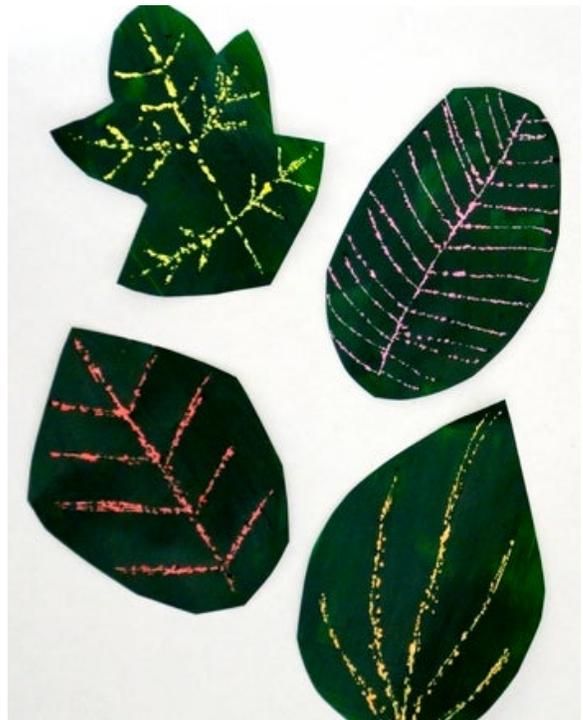
3. Pour two dollops of tempera paint and one dollop of dish soap into the paint dish and mix.

4. Paint over the crayon picture. The paint should completely cover the paper. Let the paint dry.

5. Draw some leaves on the back of your project or glue the leaf template page to the back. Cut out the leaf shapes from the paper.

<https://www.firstpalette.com/pdf/leaf-mix.pdf>

6. Using the toothpick, have your child scratch a border around the edges of the leaf, and leaf veins in the center of the leaf. As they scratch off the dark green paint layer, the autumn colors underneath will be revealed, creating a beautiful piece of art. Take this opportunity to explain to your child how this is a model of what real leaves do in the fall. They lose their green coloring and show their true colors! This project makes a beautiful piece of art for a garland or for a card to send.



Wrap Up

God loves you and has plans for you. Even if you don't think you have any qualities God can use, your true colors are on the inside and you are valuable to God.

Take a Moment to Breathe

Advent Wreath Breath

During advent, we set candles out in a circle to form a wreath. Let's pretend that you have a wreath drawn on the palm of your hand. Trace the wreath with the pointer finger of your other hand, starting at your wrist. As you breathe in, trace the left side of the wreath all the way to the top. As you breathe out, trace the right side of the wreath all the way back down to the bottom of your palm. As you take slow deep breaths, draw 4 wreaths, one for each week of advent.