

ADVENT CLASS PROJECTS FOR ADVENT SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Group 1 "A Kiss for Grandpa". Children give much to the elderly and sick at all times but especially at Christmas. Drawings or banners made in glass or at home by the children, then shared with the elderly often are kept all year as reminders of the "Kiss of Christmas" youngsters can bring to oldsters. (The gift that is made does not have to be a drawing or a banner; it can be anything the class decides or the child decides.) The children will tell what they have made and why and explain to the congregation that they will be taking their gift to an older person.

Group 2 A Christmas Card for the Congregation. Students will make a gigantic Christmas card to be presented to the congregation the night of the Christmas program.

Group 3 "Christmas Colander". What is a colander? A colander is a kitchen utensil (you might bring one from home to show) which has holes in it. It can be used to drain water out of food. The "Christmas Colander" is a means to catch memories, meanings, and feelings about past Christmas'. The following sentences to complete might be helpful in doing this project:

1. The best thing about Christmas is ...
2. The worst thing about Christmas is ...
3. At Christmas my family and I ...
4. The most important thing about Christmas is ...
5. Christmas is fun when ...
6. Christmas makes me think about ...
7. During the Christmas season we go ...
8. At Christmas we bake ...
9. Christmas makes me feel ...
10. We celebrate Christmas because ...

The children will share their "Christmas Colander" the evening of the program.

Group 4 Family Advent Banners or Posters. Each family represented in the class will be invited to make a banner or poster, large or small, for Advent. You might spend some time in class discussing Advent themes that could be used for the banner or poster. (This project, obviously, will be done in the homes as a family project.) As the teacher for this group, you will be responsible to inquire with the families as to the progress of the banner or poster. The families will be invited to come forward with their child to explain their banner to the congregation.

Group 5 Advent Chain. Preparing for Christmas is more than buying gifts, dreaming over the Sears catalog, or staying out of Mom and Dad's way; it's thinking about how we can more like Christ and then doing something about it. Each child should have one strip of paper. On that strip will write something he/she will try to do this Christmas season to help someone else, or to be a better friend or to be better

friends with God.

As each child shares his/her intention with the congregation, they staple together their link and pass it to the next child, until they have completed their class circle and have a whole chain of good intentions.

Group 6 Advent Wreath or Log. Students will make an Advent wreath or log and share with the congregation the meaning behind the wreath and the symbolism found in each candle.

Prophecy Candle. Tells us of the time of waiting for the Light that broke over the world on that first Christmas. A light that changed the world from darkness to everlasting hope.

Bethlehem Candle. This candle stands for making ready to receive the Baby Jesus into our hearts and homes. God was present in the Babe of Bethlehem. He is also mindful of us and present with us in our everyday world.

Shepherds Candle. This candle reminds us of our responsibility to share what we have heard. They left their task and went with haste to see and returned to tell what they had seen and heard. Jesus spoke of himself as the Good Shepherd, who cares for his sheep.

Group 7 Advent Newspaper. Students in this group are assigned to recreate the **Jerusalem Gazette** (students might enjoy thinking of their own name) on the morning Jesus was born. The students might choose to write newspaper articles on the birth of Jesus, biographies of Jesus' parents, background on the Messiah, and what his birth might mean to poor people as well as to nobility and clergy, shepherds, shopkeepers, and Levites. Each student could write an article or maybe they would enjoy working teams of two or three? The students will share their newspaper articles with the congregation.

Group 8 Recycle Apples. Each student will be asked to design a message about Christmas for people in the world. Their message will be attached to a polished apple and decorated with ribbons. (Apples will be purchased through the church.) The evening of the program, the child will read his/her message to the congregation and then go out into the congregation and give the apple to someone.

Group 9 Advent Drama. This project will include a staged version or even a reading version of the **Annunciation** and the **Salutation of Elizabeth**. The students will write their own script. Students will share their production with the congregation during the program.

Group 10 The Jesse Tree. Students will furnish the tree or branch that can be used in the sanctuary of the church. This group will also be responsible for the making

of four symbols for the Jesse Tree.

History and origin of the Jesse Tree. The tree originates in the prophecies of Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

The trunk of the tree stems from Jesse, the father of David. The major characters of the Bible are represented symbolically on the branches of the tree, each symbol recalling an important Bible story. The Jesse Tree is Christ's family tree. It traces the descent of Jesus from the line of David.

The symbols can be made using any method the student chooses. They should be about the size of a piece of construction paper so the congregation can see them. During the program the students will tell the meaning of their symbol and then hang the symbol on the tree or branch.

Group 10 will be responsible for the making of the following symbols:

The Star of David. This symbol represents Jesse's family and should be placed at the base of the tree.

CHI-RHO. These Greek letters signify Christ's name and should be placed at the top of the tree.

Hand. The hand represents God the Father's love for us.

Apple. The apple stands for our first earthly parents, Adam and Eve.

Group 11 Students in this group will make the following symbols for the Jesse Tree:
Read information under Group 10 as this information pertains to Group 11 also.

Dove. The dove symbolizes God's mercy in saving Noah from the flood.

Tent. The tent represents Abraham, who had the faith to follow God.

Ram. This symbol stands for Isaac. The ram was sacrificed in his place.

Ladder. The ladder recalls the story of Jacob's dream.

Coat. We are reminded of Joseph's forgiving action towards his brothers.

Group 12 A student in this group will be responsible to tell the congregation what is the history and origin of the Jesse Tree. (See information under Group 10 as this information pertains to Group 12 also.)

Stone Tablets. The stone tables symbolize Moses and the 10 Commandments.

Crown. King David is represented by the crown.

Temple. The silhouette of a building is the great temple that Solomon constructed.

Hammer. Jesus' foster father, Joseph, is depicted by a carpenter's hammer.

Heart. Mary's love is symbolized with the heart.

CELEBRATION OF THE SEASONS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord God our Father, we confess that our lives do not always contain the dynamic of the changing seasons. We long for the life of spring, the warmth and friendship of the autumn hearth, but we let our hopes and moods live in winters of discontent. Our chilly receptions to gestures of love freeze the life from out of our relationships. God, we pray for faith that is sure of your promises; that though there be drought and still in our feeble attempts at living, still we are confident of the life which breaks forth where we had thought there was none. For we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

We have no doubts that winter will bring frosty nights, and we live in complete certainty that summer will bring days of sunshine and warmth.

And we are not surprised in the autumn when the trees turn to crimson and gold; and we wait with expectancy for the greatest miracle of the seasons, the new life at every turn, on every tree there are buds. The most insignificant patch of ground bears blades of grass and flowers appear all over.

Then why do we wonder if God will forgive us and let us put away the old parts of our lives which will keep us from growing closer to him: The ruptures and blunders which were ill-conceived and brought only despair.

God intends that we should live; live in the fullness of life, which he has provided in Jesus Christ. We should comfort one another with the assurance that, as Christians, we are forgiven.

ADVENT COMMUNION

PREPARATORY STATEMENT

Advent is the time of the year when the Christian family prepares for the coming of Jesus Christ in the celebration of his birth at Christmas. It is a time of reflection, of pondering how the coming of a Savior did and can change people's lives. Of all the seasons of the year, this is the one richest with symbolism. And at this time of the year, when autumn chills into winter, there is a special symbolism in all of nature. But there is a special message in the trees.

THE BREAD

There are two kinds of trees: The evergreen and the deciduous.

The evergreen is unique because it is what it is called: throughout the year it remains hearty, strong, and full of the deep green, rich color of life. It is a symbol of faithfulness, for it does not change; it only grows stronger. It is constant, no matter what the season.

So is the love of God in Jesus Christ for us. It is not fickle, depending on our various moods. It, too, is constant and every present.

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of his constancy and sufficiency. He said: 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst.'

LET US PRAY: Lord God, we thank you for your faithfulness. In a world where change is both a source of creativity and frustration, we know that in you we have an unchanging hold on the source of life. As we take the bread, may it strengthen us and change us making us witnesses to your changeless gifts of life and love. For we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE WINE

These are the weeks of brisk, sunny days and cold, clear nights; weather, which causes the deciduous trees to turn bright with color, as though touched by the brush of an artist. These leaves, which such a short time ago were deep green with the summer warmth, now have turned and soon will fall. And in just a matter of days, the trees will stand stripped and barren, as though they were dead.

But they are not dead. For in the late winter, they will be preparing for new life in the spring; and then buds and blossoms will proclaim that life does not die but goes on.

This is the message of the trees: that God sustains and gives new life where formerly there was thought to be none. The tree draws life from the sun in heaven as well as from its deep roots, and it is recreated.

So it is in our relationship with God through his Son. Jesus said: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Cut off from me, you can do nothing." In offering his disciples the wine at the Last Supper, he was offering them his own life. And as he gave them the cup, he said: "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this, remembering me."

LET US PRAY: God, our Father, be with us throughout the seasons of our lives. Sustain us through our winters of doubt and despair, bringing us to the spring of recreation. In the taking of the cup, remind us of the promise of the full, rich life ever before us. For we ask these things in Jesus' name.

This is an idea for an Advent Fair:

The theme of this fair was JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM, FAMILY ADVENT WORKSHOP.

Each family received a ticket to the fair from GABRIEL TRAVELING AGENCY. There were five different sets of tickets with different routes. This allowed people in each room at different times creating similar groups which were easier to work with.

JOSEPH'S CRAFT SHOP. Three different activities to choose from. Choose one of these:

- Making bird feeders
- Making Advent calendars
- Making Advent wreaths

MARY'S HEARTH. Kitchen activities.

- Lefse making and sampling
- Donut making and sampling
- Cookie decorating for the children

HOLY DAY INN. A nativity scene was set up in this room.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH. Decorating the Christmas tree.

- Easy homemade items to make

SIMEON'S SANCTUARY. Family devotions for Advent.

We all gathered back for singing afterwards. The workshop leaders dressed up in clothes from Jesus' time.

AN ADVENT CALL TO WORSHIP: SOMETHING'S COMING

The Old Testament people lived in the hope and expectation of a Savior who would come into the world. Advent is a time when we remember this spirit of waiting for the Savior to come. SOMETHING'S COMING is a word song that celebrates the anticipation of Jesus' coming.

A word song is designed to be used as a choral reading. No music is involved in a word song. However, the words are said in rhythmic patterns. A word song provides an opportunity for the non-musical child to experience rhythm outside the realm of music.

For this word song, divide your assembly or class into two groups, a large group and a small cluster. It will be helpful if you have the group clap softly to a four-four rhythm.

Everyone is to begin speaking softly and build in volume. The last line should provide a climax strong in volume.

This word song could be used as a call to worship or part of your classroom celebration.

Large Group: Something's coming.

Small Group: Maybe it's a Savior.

Small Group: Maybe it's a miracle.

All together: Something's coming soon.

Large Group: Something's coming.

Small Group: Gotta get ready.

Small Group: Maybe it's a baby.

Large Group: Open up my heart now.
Give a gift of love, too.

Large Group: Something's coming.

All: Something's coming soon.

ADVENT WREATH

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Today is the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and the beginning of the new church year. We call it the FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT. Advent means that we are awaiting the coming of a King...and the King is Jesus Christ. Those of us who are Christians will want to use these four weeks of Advent to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord.

If you attended church this morning, you may have noticed that the altar cloth has been changed to one that is purple or violet. This color stands for humility and repentance... a reminder that we should humble ourselves before God and be sorry for our sins. All during the Advent season we will be reminded to thank God for sending the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The design of the Advent wreath has special meaning. The wreath or circle reminds us that God is everlasting...He has no beginning or end. The evergreen suggests that God is always the same...He doesn't change with the seasons. The red ribbon symbolizes God's love for us, and the candles are a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World.

The first candle is called the PROPHECY CANDLE. As we light the candle let us remember that we are preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ, the King God has promised us. (LIGHT THE CANDLE).

SCRIPTURE

Older students: Romans 13:11-4

Younger children: Isaiah 9:6

Younger children: Isaiah 9:6

HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Immanuel"

CLOSING PRAYER

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(Review) Today is the second Sunday in Advent, and our second candle is called the BETHLEHEM CANDLE. It reminds us that Jesus left the glory of His heavenly home to come to earth as a Baby. We can prepare for his coming by asking Him to forgive our sins and cleanse our hearts so there will be room in our hearts for Him. (LIGHT THE CANDLE)

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:1-7

HYMN "Abide in my Heart" (tune "Into My Heart")

CLOSING PRAYER

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(Review) The candle we light today, the third Sunday in Advent is called the SHEPHERD'S CANDLE. It reminds us to share Jesus, just as the shepherds did. We can be missionaries at home, at school, and in our neighborhoods. Every one of us can help to tell the good news of salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. This candle also serves as a reminder that we need to remember our missionaries both with our prayers and our offerings. (LIGHT THE CANDLE)

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:8-20 and Matthew 28:19, 20

HYMN "I Love to Tell the Story"

CLOSING PRAYER

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(Review) This is the fourth Sunday in Advent, and the last Sunday before Christmas. Our candle this morning is the candle of love; we call it the ANGEL'S CANDLE. As we light the candle, let us remember that Jesus has promised to come again to take all those who believe in Him to heaven to live forever with Him. (LIGHT THE CANDLES)

SCRIPTURE Acts: 1:8-11 and Luke 12:35-40

HYMN "Joy to the World"

CLOSING PRAYER

Candles: Candle holders made with wood blocks, beads; candles made in cupcake pans; made in Pringle cans; walnut candles; sandcast candles. The walnut candles and the cupcake candles will float in water. Stiff wicks are attached to paper clips or

small pieces of tin. The wicks are placed in the walnut shell or cupcake pan, and then the hot wax is poured in. The Pringles can candles are made with layers of different colored wax. The wick is tied into the bottom of the can.

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS IN SYMBOL AND CUSTOM

Christmas is a **world-meeting-world** event.

It's a time of re-knowing that God has come among us in the person of Jesus the Christ. It's a time of re-telling the stories of heaven meeting earth at a Bethlehem stable. It's a time of re-newing the growing world's becoming family. It's a time of re-covering (or un-covering) the traditions of the Christmas culture.

This article of JOURNEY explores some of the meanings of the traditions of Christmas. An essential part of developing celebration is probing the origins and histories of those traditions so that we can appropriate their meanings for our own time as well as develop new meanings from the symbols that are current with us.

You'll find that in many Christmas customs the element of **one-ness with creation** is a strong one. For example, the custom of the wassail bowl ("wass-heil" meaning a toast of "here's to you" or "be in health") in rural England included a recipe for roasted apples, sugar and spices in the drink. It would be a part of the custom that on Christmas eve the people would go outside and salute the apple trees so that they would be more fruitful in the coming year. This was called "worsling" or "wassailing" them.

Many Christmas customs have been **borrowed from the culture** in which the Christian faith grew. For instance, the sacred mistletoe of the Druids in the British Isles was thought to have healing powers. It was brought into the house. The Christians interpreted the mistletoe as the healing powers of Christ. Mistletoe was placed on the altars of early churches; a custom still practiced today.

Even **the food we eat at this season has symbolic meaning**. For example, mince pie has become one of the chief delicacies at the Christmas feast. It symbolizes the gifts of the Wise Men and is supposed to be made of the choicest things from the East. At one time the pie was made in an oblong shape to represent the manger in which Christ was born.

We share traditions, food ideas and gift-making possibilities with you in the hope that some of these will be useful in deepening the traditions of Christmas. While you're exploring traditions also take an imaginative look at our own time: what are the symbols of Christ's birth on earth now? What in our own culture might we infuse with new meaning?

Christmas Tree

Of all Christmas symbols none is more familiar than the CHRISTMAS TREE. The

decorating of the tree is one of the most beloved of Christmas customs and prevails wherever trees are available in either living or artificial form.

From earliest times the ancients held nature in great reverence. All things had their gods, among them water, the meadows, and the trees. Evergreen, therefore, was used not only for decorative purposes but because it was possible to thus bring a part of nature indoors. For the feast of Bacchus in Roman times, trees were decorated with trinkets. In the celebration of the pagan Yule season the ancient sun-worshipping Teutons are said to have decorated fir trees, for they likened the sun to the spreading and blossoming of a great tree.

It did not become common practice to decorate Christian homes with evergreen trees until the sixteenth century. The idea of using the decorated fir tree probably sprang up in Germany, and from there to other countries. The Christmas Tree today has become a symbol of Christ as the Tree of Life, offering His gifts of Light, Life and Wisdom.

Gifts

The GIFTS brought to the Christ Child by the Wise Men may well have been the origin of our present-day custom of gift-giving at Christmas. On the other hand, it may have grown out of the desire to emulate the unselfishness of Christ. Whatever the origin, the practice has become universal. There is always a feeling of good will inspired by generosity. Joyousness and merry-making usually accompany gift-giving. Some authorities believe that gift-giving at this time of the year was a carry over from the pagans. The Romans gave presents during the celebrations of Saturnalia and Kalends. Early religious leaders denounced New Year's gift-giving, and Christmas gift-giving took its place. It was taught that lesser expensive gifts be substituted at Christmas, but that they should carry the spirit of good will, kindness and generosity.

Ships

Christmas legends concerning SHIPS undoubtedly have their origin among people of sea-faring countries. St. Nicholas comes to Holland from Spain by ship. St. Basil sails to Greece each Christmastide in a ship laden with gifts. The traditional English carol, "I Saw Three Ships", describes the arrival on Christmas morning of the SHIPS bearing Jesus, Mary and Joseph. A carol of German origin, "Song of the Ship", likens Mary to a SHIP bringing us her Baby "whose love shall make us free."

Bells

For centuries BELLS of churches of every land have pealed forth the glad tidings of the birth of Jesus. In medieval times, the BELLS tolled for an hour before Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, and then on the hour, their voices changed to joyous ringing. This tolling was to warn the powers of darkness of the approaching birth of the Savior. It was believed "the Devil died when Christ was born" and in England the tolling was known as "Tolling the Devil's Knell." As a result, BELLS have become a part of our Christmas decorations and imagery.

Creche

To inspire greater religious feeling, and help in the understanding of poverty in the story of the birth of Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi conceived the idea of building a life-size representation of the Nativity scene. The Pope gave him permission to do so, and in 1223 he built a full-sized stable next to the church in Graecia, a village near Assisi, in Italy. In it he created the Nativity scene with living people and animals. The villagers were much impressed. From this beginning the idea spread all over Europe. The CRECHE was used in homes as well as in churches, and through the ages it has been built in all forms, large and small, from the crudest to the most elaborate.

Rooster and Horn

Both a ROOSTER and a HORN can symbolize the season of Advent, the Coming of the Savior. They symbolize watchfulness and proclamation. Watchfulness is the state of the person who waits...alert...ready, for an event of which he knows neither the day nor the hour. Proclamation is the task of those who know beforehand the time and day of the event, and are ready to shout it out.

Rose

The ROSE is shown as the symbol of the messianic promise. The prophet Isaiah foretells that "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as a ROSE." The form of ROSE in the symbol is conventional and it is said to have originated about the 13th century.

Cookies

In ancient Rome, cakes in the forms of animals and people were presented as gifts to the senators. They become more and more elaborate and were eventually adopted by Christians for use at Christmas time. In old England it was the custom to give cakes to poor women who sang in the streets during Christmastide. The idea of baking special kinds of cookies and cakes at Christmas time spread to many countries. They have taken on forms symbolic of the season. The name COOKIE has been traced to HOLLAND where a tiny St. Nicholas cake called "Koekje" was put in children's stockings.

We share with you some delightful COOKIE recipes, which you might like to make as gifts or treats during the holiday time. These recipes were chosen because they are such fun to make as family or group projects.

CRIMSON APPLE GLOGG

Make 24 cups or 48 servings of 1/2 cup sized portions.

In a large kettle combine:

- 1 gallon apple juice
- 2 quarts cranberry juice cocktail
- 3 cinnamon sticks (each 2 to 3 inches long)
- 8 whole cloves

Heat to simmering. Pour into a large punch bowl; stir in 1/4 cup lemon juice and garnish with thin unpeeled orange slices.

THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath with its candles is a reminder. Advent means *coming*. It means a time to think about one who is coming. "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

In ancient days, the people of Israel waited a long time for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. Today we use the four weeks just before Christmas to think about the coming of God's son, as a baby in the manger, as the Lord of our lives, as one who will come again in glory. The Advent wreath provides a focus for our thinking and talking about Jesus and his *coming*. It helps us look forward to Christmas when we light the Christ candle.

There are many elaborate Advent wreaths, some so fragile or so located that they can never be handled by children. A very simple and inexpensive Advent wreath can easily and quickly be made by children in Grade 2 and beyond from these simple directions. The younger children will need some help with the simple wreath; older pupils will use their originality to produce a wreath uniquely their own.

Materials needed for the wreath:

1. Round tops from large oatmeal boxes (or plastic tops from coffee or shortening tins)
2. Supply of 8 1/2" by 11" construction paper, green and white
3. Scissors, paper cement or paste
4. Supply of 3 1/2" candles, four white and one red per wreath

Procedure

1. Cut green wreaths for smaller children (prior to class?); for older pupils cut several patterns they can use themselves in cutting wreaths.
2. Measure circumference and height of lid to be used (unless it is the plastic variety) and cut a green paper strip as wide as the height of the lid and an inch longer than its circumference. Adhere it to the vertical surface, lapping ends.
3. Cut a pattern for 5" white circles to cover lid tops. Let pupils cut out the white circles and mark locations for candles, then glue circle in place on the lid.
4. Cut "x" slits at locations for candles. The tool best for this is a thin knife blade. Do not let children make these incisions themselves. Push eraser end of pencil gently through slits once to make insertion of candle easier.
5. Apply paper cement on inner edges of green wreath, center it on lid base, and press it into place.
6. Supply each wreath-maker with four white candles and one red candle. Show them how to insert candles but send base and candles home unassembled.

Talk with your class about what the Advent wreath means. If you have access to a copy machine, you may wish to prepare a flyer on the Advent wreath for the children to take home. It could be a very simple description. First, use the two beginning

paragraphs of this article. Then, something about how to use the wreath and what the focus is each week, such as the following:

To use the Advent wreath, insert the red candle in the center hole and the white candles in the other holes. On the first Sunday of Advent (four Sundays before Christmas) light the first white candle. (Burn it while you sing an Advent hymn, read the Scriptures, and have family devotions.) This is the candle that reminds us of the promises that there would be Messiah. Blow out the candle. On the second Sunday, light the first candle again and a second white candle reminding us of Bethlehem where Jesus was born. On the third Sunday light candles one and two and a third white candle for the shepherds who came to see Jesus. On the fourth Sunday light all four candles, the fourth to remind us of the angels who sang at his birth.

On Christmas, light all the white candles previously used and the red candle. The waiting is over; the Advent season for this year is now past. "For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior" (Luke 2:11). It is Christmas!

ADVENT EVERYONE'S BIRTHDAY

The twenty candles on the cake stand for the twenty centuries since Christ's birth.

Birthdays are unique days. We plan celebrations in honor of those we love. This is especially meaningful for Christmas, Christ's birthday.

A birthday celebration is cross-generational. Everyone can relate to celebrating birthdays, even 1-year olds.

In a congregational setting, invitations may be sent out, gifts may be shared with people in need in the community, party games may be played.

CHRISTMAS IS THE BIRTHDAY OF EVERY PERSON. By giving gifts and sending greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, we are acknowledging that through him we are born again.

What is a birthday celebration?

How do we prepare for a celebration?

How do we celebrate?

What do we celebrate?

How do we plan for a visit by a special friend?

P.S. Don't forget the birthday cake. The candles on the cake may symbolize the centuries mentioned above or the years since the congregation has been organized.

THEMES AND THINGS AT A GLANCE

Draw names within your family. During Advent, each person does special favors (secretly) for the family member whose name has been chosen.

Place photos or self-portraits of all church school classes with headline: "Christ comes to all people."

On the Third Sunday of Advent, celebrate Gaudete, the "joyful" Sunday. Read the scripture passages which tell of the joy the coming King brings. Celebrate with a feast of joy, and exchange stories of happiness and events that bring joy to family members.

Go "Christmasing." Bring Christmas cookies or bread, candy or carols to lonely people in your neighborhood or congregation.

Learn a new Advent carol or hymn each week.

Make an Advent mobile.

LIGHTING the candles of the Advent wreath adds anticipation to your family worship in this season of preparation for the coming of the Savior. Each candle in the wreath reminds us of an Advent theme. The first candle is the Prophecy candle, symbolic of the long years of waiting before Christ's nativity. The second, the Bethlehem candle, represents the preparations made for the coming of the Savior. The Shepherds' candle, the third candle, represents the responsibility of God's people to share his gospel. The fourth is the Angels' candle, symbolizing Christ's love and his second coming.

The FIRST Sunday in Advent, four Sundays before Christmas Day, is the beginning of the church year. Advent means coming. It is a season of preparation in which Christians look forward to the coming of their Lord. During Advent God's people not only anticipate the celebration of the Savior's nativity in Bethlehem, but they also acknowledge their expectation of his glorious second coming. Purple, the color associated with kings and royalty, is the color for Advent.

A Christmas Card for the Congregation. Students will make a gigantic Christmas Card to be presented to the congregation the night of the Christmas program.

Recycle candles. Melt old ones down to make bigger candles for Luminaries.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world!

Submitted by Lutheran Resource Center, Clear Lake, Iowa.