



Changed in the Waiting

CHILDREN'S TEACHING OUTLINES

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HOW TO USE

These teaching outlines are meant to help you plan your children's church services. In addition to providing the week's theme, the scripture, and the supplies needed, each outline has four main sections which you can adapt to your context to get the most out of your Advent teaching experience.



Engage

This section offers a simple formational activity to get kids ready to receive the week's message.



EXPLORE

This section introduces the weekly theme and provides space to discuss the theme with kids. It also provides language for talking about and/or lighting the Advent candles.



EXPAND

This section is where the children's sermon, or message, is given. There's a full write-up of the message, but you'll want to add to and adapt the material to your context.



EXPRESS

This section offers children the chance to respond to the week's message with creative games, crafts, or discussions that connect with the theme.



Final Blessing

This section provides a benediction for children to receive before they leave. The benediction is the same every week, solidifying it in the hearts and minds of the kids.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

There are 5 printable handouts at the end of this packet that can be distributed and used as needed.

PLAYLISTS

There is a list of songs provided each week that can be used for worship or reflection. To save time, look these songs up in advance on your preferred streaming service and put them in a playlist. Here's a list for each week if you want to set the playlists up in advance:

WEEK 1

- *Whom Shall I Fear (God of Angel Armies)* by Chris Tomlin
- *Here I Am to Worship* by Michael W. Smith
- *O Holy Night* by Selah
- *Light of the World* by Lauren Daigle
- *Cast Your Cares (Psalm 55:22)* by Seeds Family Worship
- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by For King and Country
- *Promises* by Maverick City Music
- *Living Hope* by Phil Wickham

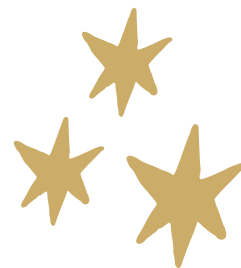
WEEK 2

- *Faithfully* by Toby Mac
- *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (any version will work)
- *God's Love Is Big* by Allstars Kids Worship
- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by For King and Country
- *Love Came Down* by Kari Jobe
- *Love's Coming Down (Isaiah's Song)* by Melanie Penn
- *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* by Meredith Andrews
- *Reckless Love* by Cory Asbury
- *God So Loved* by We the Kingdom



WEEK 3

- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by For King and Country
- *Spring Up O Well* by Listener Kids
- *To God be the Glory/Doxology* by Yancy
- *O Come All Ye Faithful* (any version will work)
- *I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy* by Sing Hosanna
- *Joy to the World* by Chris Tomlin
- *Joy to the World (Joyful, Joyful)* by Phil Wickham
- *Praise to the Lord* by Sara Groves
- *House of the Lord* by Phil Wickham
- *Happy Dance* by MercyMe



WEEK 4

- *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by For King and Country
- *O Little Town of Bethlehem* by Jeremy Camp
- *Breath of Heaven* by Amy Grant
- *Peace Like a River* by Listener Kids
- *Prince of Peace* by Monica Scott
- *Who You Say I Am* by Yancy
- *Joy to the World (Joyful, Joyful)* by Phil Wickham
- *Glory (Let There Be Peace)* by Matt Maher
- *Way Maker* by Leeland

HOPE IN THE WAITING SONG AND LYRIC VIDEO

Play this worship song video after the candle lighting, after the sermon, or during your worship time. In the download, we also include a chord chart so it can be played live.

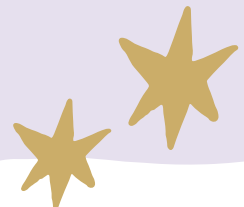
WEEK 1

Psalm 25:1-10;
Psalm 130:5-8



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Hope in the Waiting* Song and a way to play it
- Advent Wreath (wreath, 3 purple candles, 1 pink candle, and 1 white candle. Arrange the candles in the greenery of the wreath or inside it. The white candle is the Christ candle, and it goes in the center.)*
- Advent Candle—Coloring Mat Handout (optional, provided at the end of the document)**
- Advent Candle—Placing Mat Handout (optional, provided at the end of the document)**
- Purple crayons
- Suggested Songs for Worship and Reflection:
 - *Whom Shall I Fear (God of Angel Armies)* by Chris Tomlin
 - *Here I Am to Worship* by Michael W. Smith
 - *O Holy Night* by Selah
 - *Light of the World* by Lauren Daigle
 - *Cast Your Cares (Psalm 55:22)* by Seeds Family Worship
 - *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* by For King and Country
 - *Promises* by Maverick City Music
 - *Living Hope* by Phil Wickham



○ Express Option 2—For each child:

- 2 empty toilet paper rolls or paper towel roll cut into 2 tubes
- Glue or tape
- Markers
- Stickers, opt.
- 18” piece of string or yarn, opt.

**The sensory experience of the colors, the lighting, and reading or listening together can be significant. You can even increase the sensory experience by incorporating something to feel (like a small piece of greenery cut from the wreath for children to hold, a small candle or piece of wax, or a piece of purple cloth, which is the color of Advent). The more the senses are engaged, the richer the experience will be. (Even if you decide to blow out the candles shortly after the reading for safety reasons, the Advent readings and candle lighting can be significant for your students.)*

***You can use the Advent Candle Mat Handouts in lieu of or in addition to lighting actual Advent candles. You can also send a copy of the mat home with each child. See the instructions and the printable handout at the end of this packet for instructions to engage this activity.*



PLAY:

Play a simple game of / Spy. Demonstrate by going first. Say, “I spy, with my Advent eye, something _____.” Fill in the blank with the color of the item you have chosen. Let children take turns trying to guess which item you chose. The child who guesses the correct item can go next.

ASK & DISCUSS:

- How is looking for something different from just looking around? (i.e.: When you are looking for something, you are focused and eager.)
- What types of changes do you notice around Advent?

SAY:

In our scripture this morning, the writer is waiting, and while he is waiting, he is looking for something!

EXPLORE

(You'll notice in future weeks that we repeat these first two paragraphs each week to continue to remind kids about the meaning of Advent while also allowing kids who have missed previous weeks to hear these words as well. You can say them just like it is written, or you can adjust them a little each week for variety.)

SAY:

Advent is a season of waiting, and waiting is hard. Usually, we want what we want when we want it—and when we want it is NOW. But waiting can also be exciting because we know something good is coming. Being focused and eager as we look for the good ahead of us is an important part of waiting well.

During Advent, we eagerly focus on two things as we wait. First, we look forward to Christmas, the celebration of Jesus's birth. Jesus's birth brought hope to a weary world. Next, with Advent, we look forward to the day Jesus will come again and make everything right. Our hope in his return is not just a wish—it is a reality we can stand upon. It changes everything for those of us who follow Jesus. God's willingness to come to earth as a baby and to come again is an invitation to us to live with the hope that God brings light to our world.

Maybe that is why the first Sunday of Advent is the Sunday of HOPE.

While we wait and look forward to Christmas and to Jesus's return, it is okay to remember that waiting is hard. While we wait, it is okay to recognize that everything is not yet the way we want it to be.

But it is also important to remember that what we are waiting and watching for is wonderful, so we can wait and watch with hope!

ASK & DISCUSS:

- Why is waiting hard?
- Does knowing something wonderful is coming make it easier or harder to wait?
- What is biblical hope? (i.e.: Trust that what you are waiting for is going to happen.)

INTRODUCE CANDLES:

We light the first Advent candle today, the candle of hope, as we remember that we put our hope in God.



PRAY:

Thank you, God, that we have much to celebrate and much to look forward to. Help us to be focused and eager as we look forward to celebrating Christmas and as we look forward to your return. Thank you that we can put our hope in you because you love us, and you save us. Amen.

LIGHT CANDLES:

Light the candle of Hope and/or give kids a few minutes to color the Hope candle purple on their Advent Candle—Coloring Mat.

Play the *Hope in the Waiting* Song now or after the sermon.



EXPAND

ASK & DISCUSS:

- Who likes Christmas morning?
- What do you like about Christmas morning?
- Is it hard to wait for Christmas morning? Why?

SAY:

Most of us eagerly wait for and look forward to Christmas morning. Listen carefully to this Psalm and see if you can hear who (or what) the writer is eagerly waiting and looking for.

Read **Psalm 130:5-6**.

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

SAY:

Did you hear it? Who is he waiting and watching for?

Yes! He says he waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.

A watchman was a soldier. He stood on a tall, thick wall that protected the city, and he kept an eye out for bad guys. If he saw any, he would blow a big horn. The horn woke everyone up

so they could protect themselves and their city. Make a circle with your fingers and thumb and pretend it is a horn. Let's all blow our horns and warn the city! (*Demonstrate by holding your hand to your mouth and making horn sounds.*)

The watchman's job was important, and if he blew his horn, he would be a hero. But what about the nights when nothing happened? He probably felt lonely and scared standing guard all by himself. Some nights he might have gotten bored waiting and wondering if anything would ever happen.

Do you think sometimes the watchman's eyelids felt heavy? Do you think he wished he could crawl into a cozy bed and sleep? Make a sleepy face and show me how you feel when you are very tired. (*Demonstrate by blinking your eyes and letting your head droop.*)

Oh, no! That's not how to be focused and eager, is it? We'll never find what we're looking for that way. A watchman can't get lazy and sleepy!

Instead, he must keep his eyes wide open. Show me your wide-open eyes. (*Demonstrate by using your fingers to hold your eyes open.*) Just like you looked carefully around the room to find the items in our *I Spy* game, the watchman would look all around him to be sure everything was safe. He also watched carefully for the first signs of morning.

When the sky began to lighten and the sun started to rise (*put your hands together to make a "sun" and raise it over your head*), his long night of waiting would end. Another soldier would take his place. Finally, he could rest. All was well. How do you think the watchman felt when he saw the sunrise?

We understand why the watchman waited eagerly for morning, but what about the psalmist? Why was he so focused and eager as he looked for the Lord? The next verses say:

Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.
—Psalm 130:7-8



The psalmist was looking for Christmas—the first Christmas! When the psalmist wrote these words, Jesus had not yet been born. For hundreds—even thousands—of years the psalmist and many others longed for and prayed for and watched for Jesus's arrival.

Why? What was special about Jesus, that people were so focused and eager as they looked for his birth? The psalmist lists two reasons to look carefully for Jesus:

(*Hold up one finger.*) The first reason is love. Make a heart with your hands. (*Demonstrate by curving your hands into the two halves of a heart.*)

The psalmist says he looks eagerly for the Lord—Jesus—because Jesus loves us with an unending love. Jesus's love for you *cannot* fail. It will never stop! You can trust Jesus's love. You don't have to be good enough, or smart enough, or attractive enough to earn it. He already loves you, just as you are. You can safely put your hope in his love. (*Curve your hands into the two halves of a heart.*) Like that tired watchman when morning finally dawned, once you put your hope in Jesus, you can rest. All is well.

(*Hold up two fingers.*) The second reason is salvation. Make a cross with your hands. (*Demonstrate by forming a cross with your pointer fingers.*)

The psalmist looks eagerly for the Lord—Jesus—because Jesus redeems us. He can save you from your sins. Jesus offers you a real relationship with God. You no longer have to be separated from God because of your wrong actions and attitudes. You don't have to do everything right or make all the right decisions to earn a relationship with God. He offers it as a gift. You can safely put your hope in his salvation. (*Form a cross with your pointer fingers.*) Like that tired watchman when morning finally dawned, if you choose to accept Jesus's gift of salvation, you can rest. All is well.

At the end of class, we will take some time to pray together. Maybe some of you want to accept Jesus's love and salvation, and I want to give you a chance to do that.

Maybe some of you have already asked Jesus into your heart. You might think, on the inside, all is well. In your soul, all is well. But what about on the outside, in the world around us? Is everything well there?

Some people don't have enough to eat. Some people are sick, and others are hurt. Some people are angry or mean or sad.

These situations remind us that parts of our world are broken. This brokenness makes us sad. We need Jesus to come again and make everything right. And he will! He has promised to return, and he will keep his promise. He will wipe away every tear. When he returns, there will not be any more sickness or pain or death. Everything that is broken will be made whole.

And so, like the psalmist, we Christians are focused and eager as, with hope, we look for Jesus's return.

Because Jesus loves us (*make a heart with your hands*) and saves us (*make a cross with your hands*), it is right to be focused and eager (*use your fingers to hold your eyes wide open*) as, with hope, we await Christmas morning, when we celebrate Jesus's birth.



Because Jesus loves us (*make a heart with your hands*) and saves us (*make a cross with your hands*), it is right to be focused and eager (*use your fingers to hold your eyes wide open*) as, with hope, we await the day when Jesus will come again and make everything right.

Would any of you like to accept the best Christmas gift: Jesus's love and salvation? If so, pray this prayer with me.

PRAY:

Jesus, I need your unfailing love. I have made wrong choices. I want to turn away from what is wrong and turn to you. Thank you for saving me and inviting me to belong to your family! Thank you for loving us enough to come at Christmas. Thank you for loving us enough to come again. I put my hope in you. Amen.

EXPRESS

OPTION 1: Family Worship Activity

Choose one or more of the *Family Worship Activities* for Week 1 to help kids reflect on the truth of God's Word.



OPTION 2: Watchmen Binoculars

1. For each child, glue or tape the 2 cardboard tubes together. To add an optional strap, poke a hole in the outside edge of each tube about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top and tie each end of the string to a hole.
2. Allow children to decorate their binoculars. Encourage them to imagine they are watchmen, using their binoculars to keep an eye out for danger. Next, encourage them to imagine they are focused and eager, watching for Jesus.

ASK & DISCUSS:

- Why were the watchmen so focused and eager as they watched for morning?
- Why are we focused and eager as we watch for Jesus?
- What do we celebrate on Christmas?
- What will Jesus do when he returns?

OPTION 3: Watchmen Watching (Red Light/Green Light)

Choose one child to be the leader. The leader will stand by one wall while the rest of the group stands against the opposite wall. When the leader faces the wall and says, “Green Light,” the other children should walk or run toward the leader’s wall. At any time, the leader can turn around and say, “Red Light.” Any child the leader sees moving must go back to the start. The first child to reach the leader’s wall becomes the new leader.

ASK & DISCUSS:

- Who was the leader watching for?
- Who are we focused on and eagerly watching for during Advent?
- Why are we excited about Jesus’s arrival?



Invite kids to hold out their hands to listen to and “receive” this final benediction.

Go from this place knowing the night is almost gone. The day of salvation will soon be here. Let God’s hope, love, joy, and peace fill you, and let your life be a light to the world. Amen.

