Advent Candlelighting Liturgy

ADVENT 1 - HOPE

GOD LISTENS TO US WHEN WE CRY OUT

Do you know what today is? ... It's the first Sunday in a season we call Advent.
"Advent" means "arrival" or "coming." What is coming soon? ... Yes, Christmas!
Advent is a time of waiting for Christmas to arrive, for Jesus to be born.

This first Sunday of Advent, we hear a lot about hope. In Spanish, 'to hope' is esperar,
or when we're talking about the feeling of hope, it's esperanza. In Spanish, 'to wait' is also esperar.
Hoping and waiting are sometimes the same thing.

What is a hope you have?... What are you waiting for? ...

I hope for a world where everyone is treated fairly. I hope for peace.
I hope for everyone to have a home and enough food.
And you know what? I think God hopes for those things, too.
I know God hears us when we pray and tell God all the things that we're waiting for,
all the things we're hoping for.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
Light one candle in your Advent wreath. One person reads and others echo each line:

We light this candle for hope. **We light this candle for hope.** *Light one purple candle*
The light is small, but it will grow. **The light is small, but it will grow.**
We light this candle for hope. **We light this candle for hope.**

WORDS FROM THE BIBLE
In the Bible, there are a lot of examples of people crying out to God, telling God what they hope for.
In Psalm 80, verses 1 through 3, we hear the people asking God to come and save them:
Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

PRAYER
Dear God, thank you for stories about the people who hoped you would help them.
Help us learn to hope and wait for you. **Amen.**

Advent Candlelighting Liturgy

ADVENT 2 - PEACE

GOD INVITES US TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Did you know that 1 in 20 families in the United States don't have enough food?
That's almost seven million families! If we're going to get them some groceries,
we better get started! Do you think we can deliver food to seven million homes? ...
Hmmm... I think you're right. I think that might be a little more than we can do by ourselves!

So what can we do? ... Those are all great ideas! Even when the problem in front of us
feels too big to solve on our own, we can take the first step. And if we all work together
and we all take the steps that we can, we really can do anything!

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
One person reads and others echo each line:

We light this candle for hope. **We light this candle for hope.** *Light one purple candle*
The light is small, but it will grow. **The light is small, but it will grow.**
We light this candle for peace. **We light this candle for peace.** *Light a second purple candle*
We try to live in harmony. **We try to live in harmony.**
We light these candles for hope and peace. **We light these candles for hope and peace.**

WORDS FROM THE BIBLE
Our story today is about a man named John who was calling people into the way of God's peace, one step at a time. Let's listen for what John tells people to do in the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 1, verses 1-8:

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight,' " so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

PRAYER
Dear God, thank you for the people who show us a better way to live. Help us to take the steps we can toward peace. **Amen.**

Advent Candlelighting Liturgy

ADVENT 3 - JOY

GOD ASKS US TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

I have some good news. But first, do any of you have good news to share?
Maybe something exciting that happened this week? ...
[If you know of celebrations in your community, share those with the children.] ...

Those are all great things to celebrate! When you have good news, do you keep it secret? ... No! When we have good news, we like to share that joy with everyone!

The Bible has lots of good news for us. Can you repeat some of the good news after me?
God loves me! ... God made me special! ... God forgives me when I do the wrong thing! ...
God's love is for everyone! ... Yeah! Is there any other good news you want to share? ...

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
One person reads and others echo each line:

We light this candle for hope. **We light this candle for hope.** *Light one purple candle*
The light is small, but it will grow. **The light is small, but it will grow.**
We light this candle for peace. **We light this candle for peace.** *Light a second purple candle*
We try to live in harmony. **We try to live in harmony.**
We light this candle for joy. **We light this candle for joy.** *Light the pink candle*
Speaking truth, we'll raise our voices. **Speaking truth, we'll raise our voices.**
We light these candles for hope, peace, and joy. **We light these candles for hope, peace, and joy.**

WORDS FROM THE BIBLE
Today's story is about a man named John who came to tell people the good news about Jesus. Let's listen to what he has to say in this story from John 1:6-8: *There was a man sent from God whose name was John.*
He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

PRAYER
Dear God, thank you for all the places you show up in the world. Help us to share the joy you bring with others. **Amen.**

Advent Candlelighting Liturgy

ADVENT 4 - LOVE

GOD NEEDS BRAVE PEOPLE

Do any of you like superheroes? ... Who's your favorite superhero? ... What do you like about them? ... Y ou know, one of my favorite superheroes is Captain Marvel because she's so brave! I can't fly like her, but I can be brave like her. Is your favorite superhero brave? ... How do they show their courage?

Even though we aren't superheroes, we can still be brave. Courage (which is another word for bravery) is kind of like a superpower—it helps us do things that people might think are impossible. Did you know the word "courage" comes from the word for heart? It's true! We usually think of our hearts as holding love, but love and courage go hand in hand. Sometimes we have to be brave to show love, and when we know how loved we are, it helps us be brave.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
One person reads and others echo each line:

We light this candle for hope. ***We light this candle for hope.*** *Light one purple candle*
The light is small, but it will grow. **The light is small, but it will grow.**
We light this candle for peace. **We light this candle for peace.** *Light a second purple candle*
We try to live in harmony. **We try to live in harmony.**
We light this candle for joy. **We light this candle for joy.** *Light the pink candle*
Speaking truth, we'll raise our voices. **Speaking truth, we'll raise our voices.**
We light this candle for love. **We light this candle for love.** *Light the third purple candle*
Love is tender, love is tough. **Love is tender, love is tough.**
We light these candles for hope and peace, joy and love.
We light these candles for hope and peace, joy and love.

WORDS FROM THE BIBLE
The Bible has lots of stories about regular people who did amazing things because their hearts were full of God's courageous love. Let's listen to our story about Mary, Jesus' mom, found in the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 1, verses 46-55, and see if we can name some of the brave things she does.
And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

PRAYER
Dear God, thank you for the courageous people we see all around us. Help us love enough to be brave, too, even when we are scared. **Amen.**