

Family Connections

December 2-23



Advent

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Unit 3 Advent: Dec. 2 - Dec. 23

During the season of Advent, our lessons will focus on the prophecies of Isaiah, and the visitation of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah and to Mary. We will end the unit with a lesson on the Jesse Tree.

The book of Isaiah was written and assembled over the course of several centuries so there was actually more than one contributing writer. Our older students will be focusing on six different passages scattered throughout the book. Since we will be doing a lesson on the Jesse Tree, it is important to understand how the prophet ties the birth of the Messiah to the family of Jesse and to King David. After King Solomon, many of the kings of Israel were corrupt. The formerly mighty nation put their trust in other nations rather than in God, and was overtaken by their enemies the Babylonians. Isaiah gave the people hope by telling them that, although it seems “Jesse’s tree” (the Davidic line) has been cut down, a shoot will come out of it. A savior, or Messiah, was coming.

Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist. He was a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth were childless. One day, as he was serving in the temple, an angel appeared to him and told him that Elizabeth would have a child who would be named “John.” Since Zechariah had a hard time believing this (he and Elizabeth were very old), the angel caused him to be mute until the child was born. Once Zechariah confirmed that the child’s name was “John,” his speech was restored. The angel Gabriel also appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a son who would be named “Jesus.” Through faith, Mary accepted the angel’s message as true, even though she was a virgin. Some of our students will learn about Mary’s song, “The Magnificat” (Luke 1:46-55.)

Finally, on the last Sunday of Advent, the children will make symbols for a “Jesse Tree.” The symbols focus on important characters of the Bible beginning with “Creation” and ending with “Jesus.” We will trace Jesus’ family tree from Rahab, to Boaz (husband of Ruth) through Obed, Jesse, David and Solomon and will review many of the stories covered in our fall lessons. For a description of the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham, see the Gospel of Matthew 1:1-17.

Please sign up to bring special snacks to our

Advent Celebration on December 23rd!

December 2nd - 9th Elizabeth and Zechariah

Zechariah was frightened when he was visited by an angel. How do you think you would feel if you saw an angel? When angels appear to people in the Bible they often say, “Don’t be afraid!”

Why was it hard for Zechariah to believe that he and Elizabeth were having a child? (They were very old).

It is hard for us to believe in things that we cannot see like God, or angels, or eternal life. But we can see the effects God has on people in our world.

Where do you see signs of God’s goodness in the world?

December 9th: Angel Gabriel Visits Mary

PS&K, 1&2: Continue with Elizabeth and Zechariah

3rd, 4th & 5th

Mary wanted her life to “magnify” the Lord. **What message would you like to magnify with your life?**

December 16th:

PS&K, 1&2: Mary and Gabriel

- Another angel visitation! We have already heard about Zechariah who couldn’t talk because he didn’t believe the angel’s message. **Did the same thing happen to Mary?** Why not? (She believed and accepted what the angel told her.)

3rd, 4th & 5th: Stir up!

- We baked a dessert that helped us to focus on the Collect for 3rd Advent: *Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.*
Amen

How are you using the Advent season to help prepare your hearts to receive Jesus?

December 23rd: Advent Celebration - Jesse Tree

- The children made symbols for a Jesse Tree and reviewed the genealogy of Jesus through stories from Creation to his birth.
- Jesse was the father of David. His symbol appears near the middle of the Jesse tree, when the nation of Israel was in exile. The people were very sad - they thought their nation had ended, like a tree that was cut down. But Jesse represents a new shoot that grew up out of the stump of that tree.
- Have you ever cut a tree down in your yard and had a shoot come up from the stump or roots? This is a great way for the children to see what this story means.
- This is a story of hope. Even when the people thought that they were finished, God was able to make something new. When sad things happen to us, we need to trust that God is able to bring life in new and different ways. **Do you have an example of this that you can share with your children?**
- **Create a family tree at home.**