



# #PICTUREADVENT



## CHILDREN'S RESOURCES 2016

### WEEK ONE: HOPE

#### Supplies

Colorful paper cups, chenille stems, craft knife or hole punch, Christmas stickers, permanent marker

#### Reflection

(Based on John 1:19-23) Jesus had a cousin named John who was a prophet, a person who spoke God's truth to the world. One of the things that John did was tell people that Jesus was God's son, the Messiah.

John wanted to help prepare people for the changes that Jesus would bring to their lives. He wanted to give them hope. But some of the people didn't want to listen to John. They thought the idea that the Messiah was coming was unbelievable. They called him names like "crazy mad man." But John had faith in God's word, and he knew that Jesus was God's son, the Messiah, and so he never gave up telling people about Jesus.

John even used scriptures from the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures to help people understand, he read verses from the book of Isaiah that said "Make straight the way of the Lord." This meant that he wanted people to begin to prepare their hearts and their lives for the good news that Jesus would bring them. John wanted the people to have hope that Jesus would change the world.

During Advent we begin to prepare for Christmas, which is when celebrate Jesus' birth. I wonder what do at church to prepare for Christmas. I wonder what you do at home to prepare for Christmas. John wanted people to have hope that Jesus would change the world, I wonder what you would ask Jesus to change about our world.

#### Activity: Paper Cup Megaphones

We are going to make a paper cup megaphone to help us tell the world about Jesus.

To prepare, use the craft to cut out the bottoms of the cups. Write the words "Have Hope" on the sides of the cups using the permanent marker. Use the craft knife or hole punch to poke two holes on one side of the cup about two inches apart, and cut the pipe cleaners in half.

In class, help the children assemble their megaphones. Insert the ends of the chenille stems into the holes you made forming a handle, and bend the ends inside the cup. Let the children decorate with stickers. Have them practice saying "Have Hope! Jesus is Love!" or "Make straight the way of the Lord" through their megaphones.



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## CHILDREN'S RESOURCES 2016

### WEEK TWO: PEACE

#### Supplies

Inexpensive Stockings or Holiday themed large treat bags, items such as hand warmers, gloves, hats, bottles of water, travel size toiletries, adult socks, small non-perishable food items, small Christmas cards, candy canes, etc.

#### Reflection

(Based on Genesis 15:4-6) In the Bible, in the book of Genesis, there is the story of a man named Abraham. Abraham loved God, and he wanted to do the right things, but sometimes worried too much. God made Abraham a promise that Abraham would have a son and a family, but it was taking a lot longer to happen than Abraham expected and Abraham began to worry again. He even began to doubt that God's promise.

This doubt and worry caused some problems in Abraham's life. He made some bad choices because he was not patient. But God still loved Abraham. One night, when Abraham was the most worried, God told Abraham to go outside. "Look at the sky. Count the stars. Can you do it? Count your descendants! You're going to have a big family, Abe!" said God.

And you know what? Abraham believed! He believed God and was filled with a great peace. God's promise was kept and Abraham had a huge family after all! Sometimes it is easier to worry than be patient. I wonder what it means to be patient when you are waiting for Christmas.

I wonder if it is easier to feel God's peace when we are worried or when we are patient. Sometimes during the holidays there are people who worry about not having enough food or gifts or their loved ones. I wonder how we can help these people feel peace during Advent. I wonder what your family or class do to help.

#### Activity: Blessing Stockings

We are going to make "Blessing Stockings" to share with those people around us who need to feel God's peace and love. We will give our stockings to a group who will give them out this month.

Help children assemble Blessings Stockings or Bags with the items collected. Have kids all write and sign in the cards, making sure to include one card per stocking. Decide if you, the children's families, or an organization that works with homeless neighbors, will distribute these bags.



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## CHILDREN'S RESOURCES 2016

### WEEK THREE: LOVE

#### Supplies

Unpainted plain star ornaments or cardstock star-cutouts with yarn loop for hanging, multiple colors of yarn, scissors, and tape. (If your kids are big enough you can give them star cookie cutters to trace, cardstock, and scissors and let them cut their own ornaments out.)

#### Reflection

(Based on Galatians 3:26-29) When Jesus came into the world there were a lot of people separated into groups and these groups had made rules that said they couldn't be friends. The rules said they weren't allowed to go to school together, or eat together, or go to the same place of worship together, or have families together. Some of these groups were part of different faiths, and some of these groups had different educations, and some belonged to different governments, and some had more or less money than the others.

Also, sometimes the groups in charge made rules that said that girls and boys couldn't do the same things, or that people who had certain jobs or who were born blind or sick weren't allowed in parts of the city. All these separations caused a lot of anger and a lot of sadness between the people. But then Jesus came, and spread the good news that God's love is for everyone.

Because of Jesus people began to learn that they didn't need the rules to keep people separate. Because of Jesus everyone began to realize that they should love one another no matter what group or job or family or religion they came from. Because of Jesus people began to realize that all people are part of one family – God's family.

I wonder what it means to be a part of God's family. I wonder how it feels to be part of God's family. I wonder what it is like to love those people who are hard to love and are different from you. I wonder how we can share the good news of Jesus' love with everyone we meet.

#### Activity: God's Family Star Ornaments

We are going to make "God's Family Star Ornaments" so we can remember we are part of God's family.

Cut one yard of each color yarn for each child. Next have the kids tape one end of each piece of yarn somewhere on their star. Next, help them wrap their stars with all the yarn. Secure ends by tying to wrapped strands. Once the kids are done remind them that this is the human family looks like, that because we are woven together because of God's love and that together we shine like a star with the love of Jesus!



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*Rio Texas*  
CONFERENCE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
*Intergenerational Discipleship*

**LEC Family**

## CHILDREN'S RESOURCES 2016

### WEEK FOUR: JOY

#### Supplies

Party hats, noise makers, bells, pompoms, etc.

#### Reflection

(Based on Luke 2:13-20) Christmas is almost here! What joy the birth of Jesus brings for us! Presents and yummy food and songs and family and dressing up; Christmas is filled with so many wonderful things! But for some people Christmas can be hard. Some people don't get to be with their families, some people don't have enough food to eat, or presents to give.

Joy can be hard to find in those situations. It is important to remember that the joy of Christmas isn't about the gifts or about being with our families, though those are some of our favorite parts. The joy of Christmas is that Jesus came into the world and brought the biggest shining light of love with him. A love that changes hearts and lives. A love that is so amazing that angels appeared in the sky to sing about it, and sheep farmers were so excited they ran all the way into town to find a little bitty baby lying in a manger.

The baby had all that love inside him already. That baby was Jesus! Jesus who loves us all, Jesus who is our friend forever, Jesus who cares more for all the lonely, and hungry and sad people than anyone else ever will. Because of Jesus no one is left out. No one is unloved. No one is alone. And that is why we have so much joy at Christmas!

#### Activity: A Joy Celebration

We are going to have a joy celebration because we know about the joy of Christmas.

Divide the kids into two groups. Give half the kids the party hats, noisemakers, bells, pompoms etc. Take them out of the room. Have the other kids lay down and pretend to sleep. After they have settled in, have the first group burst into the room making noise and celebrating, saying "Wake up! Wake up! Have joy! Love has come!" as they give the sleeping kids hugs and share their party supplies with them. If you have time, switch groups and repeat.

Afterwards gather up all the party items and talk about the experience with the kids. Ask, I wonder what it feels like to spread joy. I wonder what it feels like to receive joy. I wonder how you can spread joy in your home, at school, and in your neighborhood.