

# Lesson: Patience and Promises...The Hope of Advent

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Few kids do not grow eagerly excited at Christmastime. Who doesn't look forward to new toys, flashing lights, and festive family gatherings? But why is Christmas so important, and what do we celebrate at Advent? This lesson focuses on the hope and waiting of the first Christmas, and how it relates to hopeful anticipation of Christ's Second Coming, as well.

**Lesson focus:** Waiting and hoping for God is more exciting and worthwhile than any earthly gift

**Passages:** Various

**Target Audience:** 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade (adaptable older or younger)

**Materials Needed:** Multi-colored strips of paper; glue or staples; Gift-wrapped box with small random item inside; pre-written and cut verses

### **Lesson Opening:**

Waiting and waiting...this lesson opener is a simple test of patience. Show children a large and beautifully wrapped box, and explain that they will be able to open it and look inside. But first they will have to wait. Have children sit as still as possible for at least a minute (variable depending on age), without any movement or noise. Is it challenging? Why?

Discuss briefly the struggle of patience. What kinds of things do we have to wait for? (Birthdays, visits from friends, special events, etc.). Why is it hard to wait?

Allow children to unwrap the package, revealing its contents: a toothpick (or a cotton ball, twine; anything random and unexpected). Would this be an exciting Christmas present? Well, the expectations of Jews were not quite met at the first Christmas either. Explain that we will be discussing what those early believers were waiting for and how God surprised them.

### **Bible Lesson:**

What are the best parts about Christmas? Why do we get excited about it? But why do we celebrate Christmas to begin with? What do you think people were awaiting in Jesus' time? Remind students that for many years God's people suffered, experiencing trials and oppression, slavery and fear. God sent **prophets** to give hope that a Messiah was on the way. Who were some of these messengers, and what did they say?

Explain to students that they will be playing a matching game of sorts. Pass out passages from the Old Testament that describe what types of clues and indicators would precede the Messiah. Read and discuss each verse, posting on a wall as you go...then split students into pairs or groups (depending on time and size of the group) and provide them with a few New Testament verse references. Allow students to look up the New Testament verses and decide which prophecies they line up to. Then have them match the verses with the ones on the wall.

\*Note: for younger students, type out the New Testament verse also, or even read them out loud and work on matching as a whole group.

Possible passages (not all-inclusive) include:

*And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel." -Genesis 3:15*

*But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law... -*

*Galatians 4:4*

*The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until he to whom it belongs shall come  
and the obedience of the nations shall be his. -Genesis 49:10*

*Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the  
Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." -Rev 5:5*

*May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores  
bring tribute to him.*

*May the kings of Sheba and Seba  
present him gifts.*

*May all kings bow down to him  
and all nations serve him. -Psalm 72:10-11*

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came  
to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his  
star when it rose and have come to worship him...On coming to the house, they saw the child with  
his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and  
presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:2;11*

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times." Micah 5:2*

*When he (Herod) had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked  
them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the  
prophet has written:*

*<sup>6</sup> "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel." -Matthew 2:4-6*

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a  
son, and will call him Immanuel. -Isaiah 7:14*

*<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in  
Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The  
virgin's name was Mary... -Luke 1:26*

After matching the verses, note a couple of things...Jesus came for everyone, and He clearly was who the people had waited for. But the people who claimed to "want" His presence most (church leaders, teachers) did not even accept Him! Perhaps He didn't live up to all of their expectations. They wanted a conquering king, not a suffering servant. Sometimes we do the same thing. We want to make God what we want, rather than who He really is. We

miss out on blessings He has to offer because we are waiting on something of our own design.

What else does Advent mean for us today? It is a season of hope and joy, of course...we are waiting for something, expecting something...what might that be? Well, what does "Advent" mean, anyway? (coming) The first Christmas honors the original coming of a Messiah, Jesus, born in Bethlehem. But the Bible promises Jesus will come again...

*16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,*

*19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

*20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." -Luke 4:16-21*

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." -Matthew 28:18-20*

We do not know when He will come again or what will happen then. And we needn't live our lives focused on that and abandon all else. Jesus commands us to spread the good news about Him and tell others because we don't know when the day will be. But we can live in joyful anticipation, recognizing that whether in our life time or after, we live for Jesus and He is the ultimate reason for everything. Merry Christmas!

**Craft:** Advent Calendars (varying degrees of difficulty – [click here to print](#) the sample above). For younger students, this can be as simple as a red and green paper chain to count down days until Christmas. Or have students create a flap-lifting style calendar for the holidays: Place a piece of paper atop a large piece of cardboard. Cut 24 slits out of the paper and place tiny pictures, verses, or stickers inside.

**Close** with prayer and reminder to trust and worship God...we are excited for Christmas, but even more excited for HIM. Let's live our lives daily to honor and be thrilled with His blessings.

Don't miss these other free resources from our website to help you during the Advent season:

- [Advent Lessons: Teaching through the Nativity](#)
- [Abraham, Sarah and Isaac \(Preschool Bible Lesson about Patience\)](#)
- [Advent Sunday School: Shepherds Receive Good News](#)
- [Christmas Hope: A Free Christmas Play for Children](#)
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