

Advent I

Today's lesson, together with the next three, helps children anticipate the Mystery of Christmas. Together we journey toward Bethlehem, guided by the prophets (in today's lesson), and then joined by the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi (in the next three lessons). Finally, we arrive at the birth of Jesus, when the light of Christ is lit.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about the picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You

are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:

- five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church's custom)
- optional: candle snuffer
- optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called "Miniature Advent," available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplay.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation

A king is coming, but not the kind of king that people thought was coming. This king has no army, no great house and no riches. This king is a baby who is born in a barn.

The coming of this King is a mystery. A mystery is sometimes hard to enter. That is why this time is important—the time of Advent. Sometimes people walk right through this mystery and don't even know it is there.

