

God Has Heard Your Prayers – Middle to Older Elementary

Luke 1:5-25, Isaiah 11:1-5, Malachi 3:1

November 26, 2023

GATHER

Make up name tags for each of the kids in Sunday school. Place them around the table space. When the kids arrive, greet them by saying, "Hello, NAME, we were expecting you! We prepared a place for you!"

Say: Before you arrived today, I prepared a place for you. I got ready for you by writing down your name and collecting everything needed for our time together.

Ask: How did you prepare to come here today? How did you get ready for church?

Say: We are starting our discussion of Advent early because we will be preparing for the Christmas play and won't have 4 weeks to discuss this important season. Next Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent. The word 'advent' means arrival or coming. Advent starts four Sundays before Christmas. In this season, we prepare ourselves for celebrating again the birth of Jesus. Advent is the beginning of a new Christian year.

Ask: Can you tell me a time you had to wait for something special? What were you waiting for? How hard was it to wait? Was the waiting worthwhile? **Say:** Today is the first day of our waiting and preparing for the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear God, you welcome all people into your presence. You love us and show us how to live. Thank you for sending prophets to tell about Jesus' arrival. Help us use this time of waiting to talk to you and to think about this wonderful gift you have given us. Amen.

Open the Bible

Say: We're going to start by learning about a promise that God gave that a Savior would come. This is in the Old Testament. Isaiah was a prophet, and these words were written before Jesus was born.

Isaiah 11:1-10 [YouTube](#)

Elizabeth and Zechariah – [YouTube](#)

Discussion

- What did God tell us in Isaiah was going to happen?
- Who were Elizabeth and Zechariah?
- What did they pray to God for?
- How did God answer their prayers?

Use time after this part of the lesson to practice the play with those kids who have speaking roles. Otherwise, continue to one of the activities below.

Activate Faith

Prepare the Way Every Day and Everywhere -Activity

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Give each child a piece of paper and markers. Have them fold the paper in half lengthwise and then again widthwise so they have four quadrants. Have each child trace the fold lines with a marker.

Say: In the Bible, there are many stories about angels appearing to people. Zechariah was in the Temple, going about his work, when suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him. Zechariah was so surprised! God had a special message for the angel to give him, even though Zechariah was in the middle of his work. Sometimes we are just doing our normal daily things when God shows up!

Invite the children to think of four places they go in their lives (for example, home, school, church, the car or bus, the playground, and so on).

Have the children draw what God might tell them in each of these places.

Say: God shows us how to live with love and peace every day. We don't have to be in special places to know God, because God shows up everywhere. God is with us all the time.

Turning Toward God - Activity

Tell kids you are going to say an action, and they must decide if the action helps people turn their hearts toward God or away from God. The children should face you if the action is "toward God" and they should turn away from you if the action is "away from God."

1. Push someone on the playground
2. Tell the truth when you break something.
3. Help your parents or guardians clean up at home.
4. Call someone a mean name that makes them cry.
5. Share a hug with someone when they are hurting.
6. Write letters to someone in prison.
7. Take food away from hungry people.
8. Throw a tantrum when you don't get your way.
9. Welcome someone to church.
10. Clean up a polluted river.\

Ask: Which actions were easy to know if you were turning toward God or away from God? Which actions were hard to decide on?

Say: Before John was born, the angel of the Lord told Zechariah that John would help turn people toward God. We turn toward God when we do things that are kind, generous, loving, peaceful, and just. This is one way John would prepare the way for Jesus.