

Grades 6-8

Session 5

Advent and Christmas Joy

Advent

- As of November 27th, we're in the church season of Advent! Advent always starts four Sundays before Christmas. From the first Sunday of Advent until Christmas, we're joyfully preparing for Christ to come into the world! The Advent season is a time of preparation for our hearts and minds for the celebration of Jesus' birth on Christmas.

***Watch the video "Advent in 2 Minutes" by Busted Halo on YouTube. Click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCOFGQLBp7w) to watch the video or follow this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCOFGQLBp7w**

Waiting for Jesus

- We know that during Advent and Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus came into the world. People waited thousands of years for Jesus to come.
- When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, humanity's relationship with God was broken. The punishment for sin was death. But God loved us so much that He had a plan all along to save humanity from sin and death. God promised to send a savior for His people, and that savior is Jesus!
- Jesus came into the world to sacrifice Himself for us because He loves us so much. He freed us from the consequences of sin. Throughout history, God sent special people called prophets to tell His people about His plan to save them from sin.
- So God's people were so excited for their savior to come. They waited... and waited... and waited.
- God's people longed for their savior to come. There are also things we long for.
- We have the idea that if we could just have _____, we will be happy. Once you get that one thing you are desperate for, it'll be replaced with another thing. For example, you might want this new video game or pair of leggings for Christmas. If you receive it, you'll be happy... but only for a little while. Then, you'll find something else that you want or even feel you "need" to be happy.
- We are always looking for something to fulfill us, just like God's people were waiting for the Savior for fulfillment. Even though the promise wasn't fulfilled in their lifetimes, they knew it would happen. They didn't lose hope or faith.

- After Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple, and they met a man who clearly had waited for just one thing his entire life - the Messiah. He knew his life would be complete once it happened.
- Read Luke 2:25-32 (GNT) "At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God: 'Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace. With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.'"
- As you can see, Simeon was waiting for Jesus. The Holy Spirit told him that the Messiah would be born before he died. He was overjoyed when he received the one gift he had longed for his entire life.
- **Jesus** is the only gift that gives us true, everlasting joy. He's the ultimate gift. Jesus is the only gift we will ever need.

Finding Joy in Jesus

- Most of us have already placed our faith in Jesus, accepted Him as God, and believe He died for us and was raised from the dead. We have received the salvation that was promised to God's people thousands of years ago. Salvation means being freed from sin and its consequences. When we accept God's gift of salvation, we can go to heaven.
- **Discuss:** How do you feel knowing you've received the free gift of salvation through Jesus?
- Sometimes, it's easy to forget how wonderful this gift of salvation is. Sometimes we forget why Jesus came or think we don't need Jesus because we're good people. But we all need Jesus because we all sin. We would need salvation even if we just sinned once.
- This Advent and Christmas season, I encourage you to think about what God has done for you by sending Jesus. I challenge you to not get over the joy of your salvation and the joy that Jesus' love can bring you every day.
- **Discuss:** Jesus is the greatest gift of all time. What is the greatest gift you ever received? How did you feel when you received it?
- **Discuss:** Talk about a time you waited for something for a really long time. How did waiting so long make you feel? How did you feel when you got what you waited for?

- **Discuss:** How do you think Simeon felt when He met Jesus?
- **Discuss:** Can you think of someone in your life who spreads Christmas joy and cheer with everyone they meet? If so, who is it?

Buddy the Elf

- When I think of Christmas joy and cheer, I think of Buddy the Elf. Buddy the Elf was filled with so much Christmas cheer and brought joy to the people around him.
- We should be filled with just as much Christmas joy as Buddy the Elf. We're going to watch a clip from the movie to see how excited Buddy is to see Santa. He says, "I know him!" You're probably all familiar with the song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town."
- Guess what? Jesus Christ is coming to town too! We should be excited for Jesus like Buddy is excited for Santa. And you know what else is cool? We literally KNOW Jesus like Buddy knows Santa! We can have a personal relationship with Jesus.

***Watch the video "Elf | Ultimate Collector's Edition 'Santa's Coming' Clip" by Warner Bros. Entertainment on YouTube. Click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWQfsU9RVf0) to watch the video or follow this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWQfsU9RVf0**

- I think that if we realize the true meaning of Christmas, we'll be as joyful as Buddy the Elf!
- **Discuss:** Buddy the Elf decorated the toy store to prepare for Santa's arrival. How can we prepare our hearts during Advent for Jesus' arrival this Christmas? (Ideas: Read the Bible, come to Mass, pray more, start a devotional, volunteer, invite a friend to youth group or Mass, do one good deed a day for a family member, etc.)
- **Discuss:** We should share our joy with others like Buddy the Elf. We can tell others about Jesus and the joy we receive from Him. We can also share Jesus by serving others... we don't even have to use words to share His love. What can you do this Advent to share the joy of Jesus with others? (Example: hold the door open for someone, compliment someone, etc.)
- Write down one way you will joyfully serve somebody this week. Hang this up somewhere to remind you to fulfill your mission for the week!