

Advent 2005
Children's Time Alternatives

The following are alternatives to what appear in the Fall 2005 *Leader* worship resources.

Advent 1

1. Talk about how gardens work. Have some seeds for passing around to the children. Have them guess what kinds of seeds they are and what they would grow into if you planted them. Gardens are all about surprises. We plant seeds in the ground and then all of a sudden they pop up as living growing things. Describe the kind of seeds you have brought and what they grow into. All of these plants come from a small insignificant thing like a seed. Some tiny seeds grow so big and give us so much. God works in us like a seed too. Sometimes, we experience God in ways we think are small and unimportant. Later, these experiences sprout into something that surprises us. The crocus is a plant that surprises us every year as the first flower to burst forth from the ground with a beautiful flower from the thawing earth,.

2. Read Debi Gliori's *Flora's Surprise* (2002 Orchard Books, London). This story is about waiting to see the surprise in a seed. The story teller would need to make the connection for children between the waiting in advent and the waiting for a garden, the surprise of a plant from a seed, and the surprise of God's work in the world.

Advent 2

1. Instead of the pineapple you can also talk about smooth and rough roads. Show the children to examples of a path that a car can take one smooth and one rough. Ask them which path would be better for the car. The rough one is going to cause the most damage to the car while the smooth one will cause the least amount of damage.

2. The following books are about grief and/or being afraid. The story teller would need to talk with the children about how God is with us even when things are difficult, just as adults and older children are with the girls in these stories.

Bunting, Eve. *The Memory String.*, © 2000, Clarion Books, NY.

Burro Wes, Adjoa J. *Grandma's Purple Flowers* © 2000, Lee & Low Books.

Advent 3

The following stories hint at the idea of restoration and joy –old clothes are recycled into new, misunderstandings are clarified and people have fun together. The story teller would need to help children to see the connection between the actions that bring restoration and joy in the story and how God brings joy and restoration into the world.

Gilman, Phoebe. *Something from Nothing*. © 1992 Scholastic, NY.
Zolotow, Charlotte. *The Hating Book*. © 1969 Harper Collins, NY.

Advent 4

The main character in the following stories invites the other person or objects into the activities of the day. The story teller would need to make the connection between God's invitation and the invitations of the main character.

Gay, Marie-Louise. *Stella Star of the Sea* or *Stella Queen of the Snow*, © 1999, Groundwood Books, Toronto.
Gerstein, Mordicai. *Stop those Pants*, © 1998, Harcourt Children's Books, NY.

Christmas Morning

Any children's story of the nativity would suit this day. Brian Wildsmith's is a terrific one. The other story in this list is about imagination.

Wildsmith, Brian. *A Christmas Story*, © 1998, Eerdman Books
Gonsalves, Rob. *Imagine a Night*. © 2003, 3rd publishing

New Year's Morning

1. The Bible is a history of God's interaction with God's people. In the year that has just passed God also interacted with our lives. God continues to invite us to be part of that holy story.

Bring some old black and white photographs of your ancestors or some pictures of older members of the congregation when they were young. Talk about the past. What do the children think the past was like? (No cars, no machines, no telephones). Tell them that God was with people then and God is with us now. Ask them what they do to try to be with God now. (Go to Sunday school, pray, say grace) Look at a picture of how things might be in the future. Ask them what they think the future will be like. Tell them that God will be with people in the future, just as God is with us to day.

2. Read or tell one of the following stories: *Rabbit's Wish* is a story of two friends caught in the rain together for the day because of the rabbit's wish: this could lead into a discussion about New Year's resolutions. *Sunflower Sal* is about a girl who feels she is big and unskilled and then, with the encouragement of her family, "quilts" her family's land with sunflower rows.

Stewart, Paul and Chris Riddell. *Rabbit's Wish*. © 2001 Cahners Business Info. Inc.
Anderson, Janet S. *Sunflower Sal*. (C) 1994 NorthSouth Books Inc. NY.