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## All-Ages | All Creation Sings, An Advent Event

Welcome to this Prayer Bench resource for planning an All-Ages Advent event.

### **Theme:** *All Creation Sings*

Based on the Advent themes in Waldorf education, this resource offers suggestions for a two hour event (the timing is flexible; it could be a longer event or several shorter gatherings) inviting reflection and gratitude toward the different realms of Earth: stones and minerals, plants, animals and humankind. All “heaven and nature sings” as we await the the birth of Jesus.

The first light of Advent is the light of stones.  
Stones that live in crystals, seashells, and bones.

The second light of Advent is the light of plants.  
Roots, stem, leaf, flower, and fruit by whom we live and grow.

The third light of Advent is the light of beasts.  
Animals of farm, field, forest, air, and seas.  
All await the birth in greatest and in least.

The fourth light of Advent is the light of humankind.  
The light of love, the light of thought, to give and to understand.

You might want to check out the book, *The Light in the Lantern: Stories for Advent* by Georg Dreissig. It offers one Advent story a day based on the scenery Mary and Joseph see on their travels to Bethlehem. It reflects the four lights of Advent, stones, plants, animals and human beings. If you have the book, you can use the stories leading up to the event, or during the event, or afterwards in other Advent occasions. Families might appreciate using the book during Advent. Check it out and see what you think of the stories.

If you have questions about this resource, please email me at [janice@prayerbench.ca](mailto:janice@prayerbench.ca)

I especially appreciate your feedback. Tell me about your event, what worked and what you did differently. Should I write more All-Ages resources?

*Janice MacLean*, Host of the Prayer Bench.

## Things to Think About in Planning this Event

- Choose a planning team representing different ages and abilities. Allow the personalities of the planning group and their gifts/skills/experience e.g. music, drama, craft, to shape the event. This resource provides suggestions and you choose what works and add what is needed to best serve your context.
- Remember to plan activities to include all ages. This is NOT a children's event with adults watching. *(If you want a children's event, then plan this event for children with a few adult supporters.)* Plan your event with activities that challenge and support all ages. Not everyone has to be doing the same thing every moment. Include some "grown up" songs and songs that have actions. Decide which activities include the whole group and when to divide into small groups. Everyone needs to have an opportunity to "fall in love with God again" through this event.
- Publicize the event. You'd be surprised how often a planning team forgets to give care and attention to posters, social media, creative announcements, written invitations, etc. Make this a key part of your planning. Share responsibility.
- Decide whether you will host this event indoors or outside or maybe you will decide to have some parts outside and some inside.
- Read through the process carefully. You have several decisions to make. For example: The third section invites participants to bring an animal stuffy and/or an animal from a nativity scene. Will you do this or create the scene differently? The fourth section suggests building a manger scene with lego blocks and canned goods. You might consider asking participants to bring food bank gifts for this event or include the community of faith in collecting items to use at this event.
- You might want to consider researching and using Q codes so participants can use their phones to sing the carols. I did a little research and here are some sites to explore. You likely have someone in your community of faith who knows how to help accomplish this.

A site using a Q code to point to the words of familiar carols:

<https://josterpi.com/carols/qrcode.html>

Here is a site with the words and printed music. <https://uucsr.org/programs/religious-services/worship-services/christmas-eve-carol-sing/>

Christmas carols listening centre.

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Freebie-Christmas-Songs-Listening-Center-using-QR-Codes-968846>

A church that used Q codes at Christmas:

<https://thenewsleaders.com/qr-codes-spread-holiday-cheer/>

Explore designing your own Q codes: <https://www.visualead.com/>

- You will need four lanterns to use at the introduction of each light. If you are indoors you can use large candles. Outside, you might want to use lanterns with candles or camping lanterns. The lanterns are central to the visual focus of the event. Make them stand out!
- The event ends with a feast. It can be a feast of prayers. You may also decide to make S'mores if you have an outdoor fireplace, or share pizza together.
- Enjoy planning together.

### Permissions

You are welcome to make up to 10 copies of this resource to use in planning or to share with a group.

You are welcome to use this resource in worship or parts of it in *print* newsletters or as the basis for an Advent at Home resource for your community of faith. Please offer attribution to the: Prayer Bench, [www.prayerbench.ca](http://www.prayerbench.ca)

For other uses, please contact Janice at [janice@prayerbench.ca](mailto:janice@prayerbench.ca) I'm happy to make this resource work for what you need and to provide a WORD version of the document. A small donation to the Prayer Bench for this extra support would be appreciated.

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## Event Overview

Here is a summary of possible activities for each Advent Light section. The second column lists main items that are needed. More detail follows.

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| <b>FIRST LIGHT: Stones</b><br>Welcome & Making Star Name tags<br>Milling to meet one another<br>Reading verse "The First Light"<br>Light the first lantern<br>Each participant receives a stone.<br>Make a Caring Stone pathway.<br>Music with Q code, consider especially <i>Joy to the World</i> . | <b>Materials to make name tags.</b><br><b>Music</b><br><b>4 Lanterns.</b><br><b>Stone for each participant.</b><br><b>Stone cutout &amp; markers</b> |
| <b>SECOND LIGHT: Plants</b><br>Place second lantern<br>Reading verse "The Second Light."<br>Apple Story and Activity<br>Music with Q code, consider <i>Jesus Christ the Apple Tree</i> .                                                                                                             | <b>Apples</b><br><b>Knives</b><br><b>Items based on activity you choose.</b>                                                                         |
| <b>THIRD LIGHT: Animals</b><br>Place third lantern<br>Reading verse "The Third Light."<br>Story<br>Animal Show & Tell Activity<br>Music with Q code especially <i>The Friendly Beasts</i> .                                                                                                          | <b>storybook</b>                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>FOURTH LIGHT: Humankind</b><br>Place fourth lantern<br>Reading: "The Fourth Light"<br>Touch the Story<br>Build-a-Scene with lego blocks and the gifts for the food bank<br>Music with Q code, consider especially <i>Silent Night</i> or <i>Away in a Manger</i>                                  | <b>Lego blocks</b><br><b>Food bank items</b><br><b>Items for Touch the Story.</b>                                                                    |

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| <b>FEAST</b><br>Prayers of Love and Concern around the manger.<br>Enjoy S'Mores or Pizza together. | <b>Ingredients for S'Mores or pizza</b> |
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## **FIRST LIGHT: Stones**

### **Welcome & Making Star Name tags**

As participants arrive invite them to make a name tags shaped as a star. Decide if you want to have some star shapes pre-cut or invite participants to design their own star shape. You might consider having different colours of paper for your star. This makes an easy way to divide into small groups by star colour. You'll need markers for writing names and lots of glitter for decoration.

### **Milling to Meet One Another**

*The leader might say something like this:* This is a special time to celebrate stones and plants, animals and humans. All creation sings today (night) as we wait for the birth of Jesus. We'll sing too.

*Play familiar carols and invite people to mill about the room, singing and moving to the music. Explain that when the music stops there is a chance to say hello to the person closest to them and get to know one another.*

*Plan several rounds sharing names and responding to a different question each time the music stops. Here are some getting-to-know-you questions to get started.*

1. What's your favourite ice cream flavour?
2. Where would you like to travel? How would you get there?
3. Would you rather live in a house made of cheese or a house made of cookie dough?
4. What is your favourite fruit to eat?
5. Would you rather be Rudolf or a Christmas Elf?
6. Tell about your pet or the pet you wished you had.
7. If you were a superhero, what would be your superpower?
8. What are three things you do every day?
9. What is your favourite Christmas song?

### **Lantern Lighting and Reading verse "The First Light"**

Gather participants in a circle (seated or standing)

Create a sense of ceremony and stillness while lighting the first lantern/candle.

Carry it to a focal area.

Say:

“The first light of Advent is the light of stones.  
Stones that live in crystals, seashells, and bones.”

Enjoy the light.

### **Make a Caring Stone Pathway**

To introduce this activity, you might want to read the first story in *The Light in the Lantern* called “The Rocky Road to Bethlehem.” It’s about the jagged stones that were hurting Mary’s feet. An angel helps Mary by transforming the sharp edges of the stones. They become as clear as crystal and sparkle brightly.

*If you don’t have the book, then you might introduce the activity with words like this:*

Mary and Joseph and the donkey are on the way to Bethlehem. There are lots of sharp stones along their path.

I wonder if you’ve ever walked barefoot on stones.

I wonder how the donkey felt about walking on the sharp stones.

I wonder how Joseph might use his stick to help him walking on the stony road.

I wonder what would help Mary on the rocky road to Bethlehem.

Break into Star groups by colour (if you used different colours to make the star name tags). Each group has a basket of stones and paper with an outline of a stone and markers. (Google “stone colouring page” for some great templates.)

Wonder together.

*I wonder how we can help care for one another at Christmas.*

Each group comes up with ideas. Write one response on a stone or on the stone colouring page.

When the groups are ready, play music, and together create a pathway toward the first candle with the stones and stone pages.

Once the caring stone pathway is complete, gather in a circle around the pathway and sing, *Joy to the World* using a Q code. Note how the words of this carol reflect the first light of Advent (nature sings.)

## SECOND LIGHT: Plants

### Place Second Lantern

Gather around a table with bowls of red apples and the second light. Again, create a sense of ceremony and stillness while lighting the second lantern/candle.

Carry it to a focal area near the first candle.

Say:

The second light of Advent is the light of plants.

Roots, stem, leaf, flower, and fruit by whom we live and grow.

Enjoy the light.

### Apple Story and Activity

In this activity we celebrate the wonder of the star at the centre of an apple.

Read/Tell a story.

*Note to leaders:*

There is a story, "Why Apples Have Red Cheeks" in the book, *The Light in the Lantern*.

You might also visit these websites:

<https://sugarspiceandglitter.com/our-waldorf-apple-story-with-a-montessori-twist/> to read a lovely story about how the apple got its star.

<https://jugglingwithkids.com/2011/10/little-house-with-no-doors-no-windows.html> to read "The little house with no doors, no windows and a star inside.

Keep googling. There are other storybooks and you tube videos of Christmas stories about the wonder of a star in an apple.

### Suggested Activities

Cut an apple in half through the middle to show the star. Enjoy eating your apple. Or if you have a longer event, you might make baked apples together or apple pie. Be sure to sing grace, *Johnny Appleseed!*

If you have a yoga teacher in your community of faith, you might consider teaching poses like the Star pose or Tree pose. (Google for information.)

End this section with singing or listening with Q code, consider *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* (google for videos.)

### **THIRD LIGHT: Animals**

#### **Place Third Lantern**

Gather in a circle.

Again, create a sense of ceremony and stillness while lighting the third lantern/ candle. Carry it to a focal area and place near the first & second light.

Say:

The third light of Advent is the light of beasts.

Animals of farm, field, forest, air, and seas.

All await the birth in greatest and in least.

Enjoy the light.

#### **Activity**

If you asked participants to bring an animal stuffy or an animal from their nativity scene, bring them out now for show and tell. Take time to hear about and enjoy the story of what each one brought.

Alternatively, you might read a Christmas story featuring an animal. (*Pippin, the Christmas Pig* by Jean Little is one of my favourites. *Room for a Little One* by Martin Waddell is another.) You likely have your favourites or ask families for recommendations.

End this section with a gratitude litany. Can you make a A-Z prayer with the names of animals “of farm, field, forest, air, and seas.” Thank you, God, for Antelopes, Bears, Cats, etc. Intersperse your prayer with a response: “They await the birth.”

If you land on reindeer or Rudolf for the letter R, consider a chorus of *Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer!*

End your your gratitude prayer with music using Q code singing, *The Friendly Beasts*.

## FOURTH LIGHT: Humankind

### Place fourth lantern

Gather in a circle.

Again, create a sense of ceremony and stillness while lighting the third lantern/ candle. Carry it to a focal area and place near the other lights.

Say:

The fourth light of Advent is the light of humankind.

The light of love, the light of thought, to give and to understand.

Enjoy the light

### Touch the Story

*I'm not sure where I first got this idea. I've used it several times. If you know the source, please let me know and I'd properly credit.*

*Before gathering, prepare a tray with these items that relate to parts of the Christmas Story:*

*Census, a rolled-up piece of a paper like a scroll. Write the names Joseph and Mary on the census. Have pens or markers available.*

*Hay or shredded brown paper or burlap to represent hay,*

*A baby blanket or wool or strips of cloth.*

*A shepherd from your nativity set and/or a sheep stuffy,*

*A heart cut from red paper or fabric and/or candy hearts.*

Slowly read Luke 2: 1-20 (see below) and pause and pass around the story items where indicated. Let the item go around the whole group before resuming the story. You might choose to use a number of voices.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. *[Pass around the rolled-up "census" page and notice Mary and Joseph's name. Participants might enjoy writing their names with a colourful marker.]*

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger,

because there was no place for them in the inn. *[Pass around hay or shredded brown paper or burlap to represent hay.]*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." *[Pass around a baby blanket, wool, or strips of cloth. Allow silence for the wonder of a Baby.]*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"  
*[Invite everyone to shout "Glory to God! Glory to God!"]*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." *[Pass around a shepherd from the nativity or a sheep stuffy. You might walk the shepherd and sheep around the room to make a journey.]*

The Shepherds went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. *[Pass around a red heart or red heart candies to enjoy.]*

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At the end of the story, sing using Q code, *Silent Night* or *Away in a Manger*.

### **Build-a-Manger-Scene & Closing**

Have legos or wooden building blocks available along with the gifts to the food bank. Work as a group to build a manger scene.

Here is a nativity scene from one church. Use your imagination.



## FEAST

Once your manger is built, bring the four Lights near the manger and gather in a circle.

Turn down the main lights to create a gentle darkness.

Invite participants to make silent prayers of love and concern for people, animals, places in the world needing peace. Enjoy making silence and end with "Amen."

Enjoy S'Mores or Pizza together.