

Advent Wreath Readings – 2011

Prepared by Gwennyth J. Redhead

Week 1: Ways we know him: The Promised Servant

Reader 1: For the next four weeks our Children's Times are going to focus on the lighting of the candles on this wreath. *(To child, children who have been chosen to participate)* Do you know the special name that is given to this wreath?

Child 1: Is it called an Advent Wreath?

Reader 2: That's right. But do you know what the word "Advent" means? (pause) It means "coming". Whose coming do Christians celebrate at Christmas?

Child 2: Jesus

Reader 1: That's right - we celebrate Jesus coming into our world as a tiny baby. But during this Advent season we are going to think about lots of different ways we can know Jesus – because he is so much more than a boy born at Christmas.

Reader 2: Today we are going to think about him as "The Promised Servant." (name) is going to read some verses from the Bible where God explains to the prophet Isaiah what the word "servant" means, and tells him that Jesus is going to come as a servant. While.....(name) reads, I am going to help you light the first purple candle, the candle of the servant *(candle is lit as verses are read)*

Reader 1: ***"Take a good look at my servant...He's the one I chose, and I couldn't be more pleased with him. I've bathed him with my Spirit....He'll set everything right among the nations. He won't call attention to what he does....He won't brush aside the bruised and the hurt and he won't disregard the small and insignificant, but he'll steadily and firmly set things right."** (Isaiah 42: 1 – 3, MSG)*

Reader 2: Now let's pray that God will help us to have servant hearts, too. "Dear God, you know we are looking forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas. We pray that you will help us to be your servants, too, by being kind and loving especially to any people we know that are hurting. Amen."

Week 2: Ways we know him: Son of Man

Reader 1: This week we are going to light two candles on our Advent wreath. That means the light will be a bit brighter, and help us to know that Christmas is a little bit closer.

Reader 2: Let's remind ourselves that during this Advent season – this time of waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are thinking of different ways that we can know him.

Reader 1: Do you remember that last week we thought of Jesus as the Promised Servant?

Reader 2: Today we are going to think about him in a way that might seem strange to us – but it is the way that Jesus most often referred to himself. He didn't say: *"Who do people think I am?"* or *"I am going to do this or that."* He referred to himself in a way that may seem strange to us. He referred to himself as *"The Son of Man."* Who are you the son of?

Child 1: *(names a parent or parents)*

Reader 1: That's right. And that means you have a very special link with him/them. And one of the reasons Jesus referred to himself as *"The Son of Man"* was because he wanted to show to the people he spoke to, and healed, that he had some very close links with them all. Isn't it lovely to think that Jesus wants to be close to all of us?

Reader 2: Sois going to read some scripture verses, and while they are being read.....(girl) is going to help me light the purple candle that was lit last week, and the pink candle to help us all remember that Jesus, the Son of Man, is close to girls as well as boys. *(Candle is lit as verses are read)*

Reader 1: *"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?.....The Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory... and he will reward each person according to what he has done. " (Mt. 16: 13, 27, NIV)*

Reader 2: Now let us pray that we will have open hearts to learn more about who Jesus is during this special Advent season. *"Dear God, we thank you that Jesus is so much more than a baby in a manger. We thank you that he is a person who can be very close to us, if we let him, so we pray: 'Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay close by me for ever and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven to live with you there.' Amen."*

Week 3: Ways we know him: Son of God

Reader 1: How many candles do you think we are going to light on our Advent Wreath this week?

Child 1: Three?

Reader 2: That's right – then the light will be brighter still, meaning that Christmas Day is closer than ever.

Reader 1: Do you remember how we thought about Jesus on the first two weeks? As the promised servant, and with the rather strange phrase: The Son of Man.

Reader 2: Today we are going to see what the most well-known verse in the Bible tells us about Jesus. Do you think any of the grownups here will know which verse it is?

Child 2: They might.

Reader 1: Shall we ask them? *(Pause for response. If someone responds- John 3: 16, continue on. If no one responds add: I'll give you a clue. It is found in John 3 - and pause again.)* That's right – John 3:16

Reader 2: *(to children)* Listen carefully while *(name)* reads, because it tells us about another way we can know Jesus.

Reader 1: ***“This is how much God loved the world. He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help us, to put the world right again.”*** (John 3: 16, 17, MSG)

Reader 2: So this verse tells us that Jesus is –

Child 1: God's Son.

Reader 1: That's right. Jesus is the Son of God. So let's light 3 candles as we celebrate again who Jesus is.

(Reader 2 help children light 3 candles)

Reader 1: Now let us pray: *Dear God, we thank you for giving us the gift of your Son. Help us to get ready to receive him, for as the carol says: Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in. Amen.*

Week 4: Ways we know him: Word of God

Reader 1: So here we are on the last Sunday before Christmas Day, so how many of the coloured candles do you think we should light today?

Child 1: Four

Reader 2: That's right, and then we will have a complete circle of light. So let's remind ourselves again of the ways we can know Jesus –

Reader 2: As the Promised Servant

Reader 1: As the Son of Man

Reader 2: As the Son of God

Reader 1: And today we are going to learn that we can know Jesus as the Word of God.

Reader 2: What do we use words for?

Child 2: To ask questions?

Reader 1: What else? When you ask questions what do people use words for?

Child 1: To give us the answers? To explain things?

Reader 2: Right on- and Jesus does all that and more – there's lots and lots we could say about him, but I'm just going to read just one wonderful verse while you light all four coloured candles: *(candles are lit as verse is read)* ***"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into our neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."****(John 1: 14, MSG)*

Reader 1: Let us pray: *"Dear God, we thank you that when we see Jesus we see you. You are so generous; you give, and give, and give again. Help us to be generous, too, and to try to be like Jesus in the way that we live, not only at Christmas, but always."*