

First Sunday of Advent

Jesus will return

INTRODUCTION

Today we begin our preparation to celebrate the birthday of our savior, Jesus Christ. During Advent we think about the past, our lives today, and what will be in the future.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the altar candles and the first candle on the Advent wreath. Each Sunday the light will grow brighter as we draw closer to Christmas day when Jesus, the Light of the World, was born.

SORRY

Advent is a good time for us all to make a fresh start, to think of ways to welcome Jesus, and to show how much we really love him. Spend a few moments talking to Jesus in silence, before singing Sorry Song 1 together.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing the Advent Song.

GOSPEL (LUKE 21:25-28, 34-36)

Jesus said to his disciples: "When you see the signs in the sun and moon and stars, you will know that the time has come for the Son of God to return. Do not be afraid when all these things happen, but be filled with joy to see the power and glory of God. Stay awake and be ready, because only my heavenly father knows when this day will come."

DISCUSSION

"There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars...." No one knows what this means or what exactly will happen, but just as everyone on earth can see the sky, so everyone will know that the end of time has come.

Everyone is very busy getting ready to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. What else must we be ready for? Jesus is living in our world today, and we know that he will return in glory at the end of time. We must be ready to welcome him into our hearts and lives today and every day.

How should we do this? Jesus came to share his love, forgiveness, peace, and happiness with the world. If we share these gifts of his love with the people we meet everyday by small acts of kindness or goodness, then we will be ready to fully enjoy the celebrations which take place at Christmas and at the end of time.

ACTIVITY

Over the four Sundays of Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, two different activity schemes are suggested to be continued each week. Choose whichever is more appropriate for your particular group or the facilities you have available.

1. *The Jesse Tree*

A Jesse tree traditionally represents the family tree of Jesus, but here we have adapted it to show most of the important characters involved in the Christmas celebration. Construct a free-standing tree from colored cardboard, as shown in the diagram.

Each week add more characters and discuss their importance with the children. Use the drawings as a guide or ask the children to do their own. The pictures can be stuck directly onto the tree, or drawn onto round shapes and hung as decorations. Be imaginative!

On Christmas morning, place a silver star on top of the completed Jesse tree.

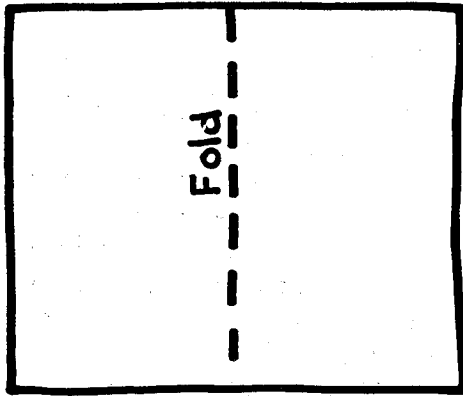
2. *An Advent Frieze*

The frieze should illustrate the characters and events leading up to Christmas day: beginning with the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary and ending with the joyful scene at Bethlehem, on Christmas day, when the Holy Family is added to the frieze.

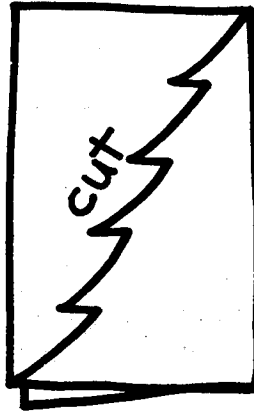
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CLOSING PRAYER

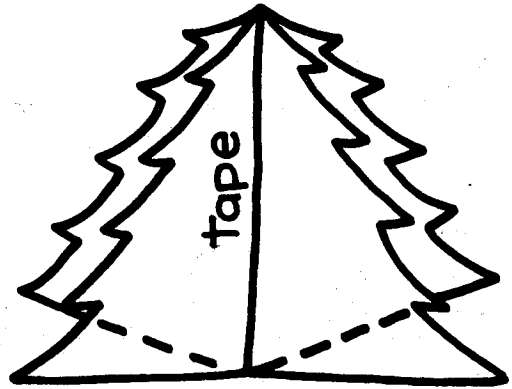
Lord Jesus, help us to get ready
to greet you at Christmas
and at the end of time.



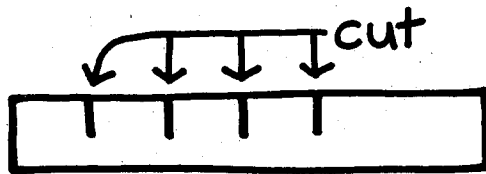
1. Fold four large sheets of green card in half.



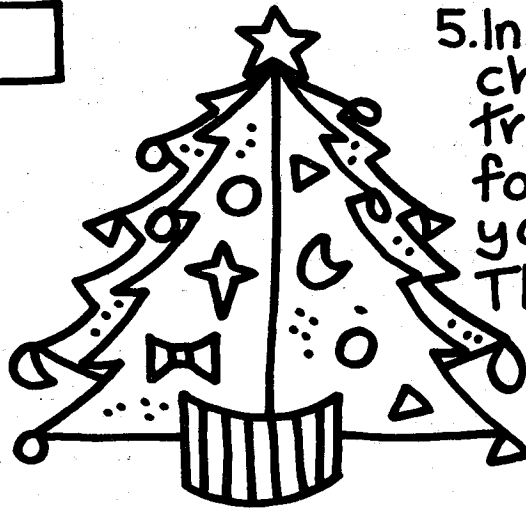
2. Trace the shape of the tree on each and cut out.



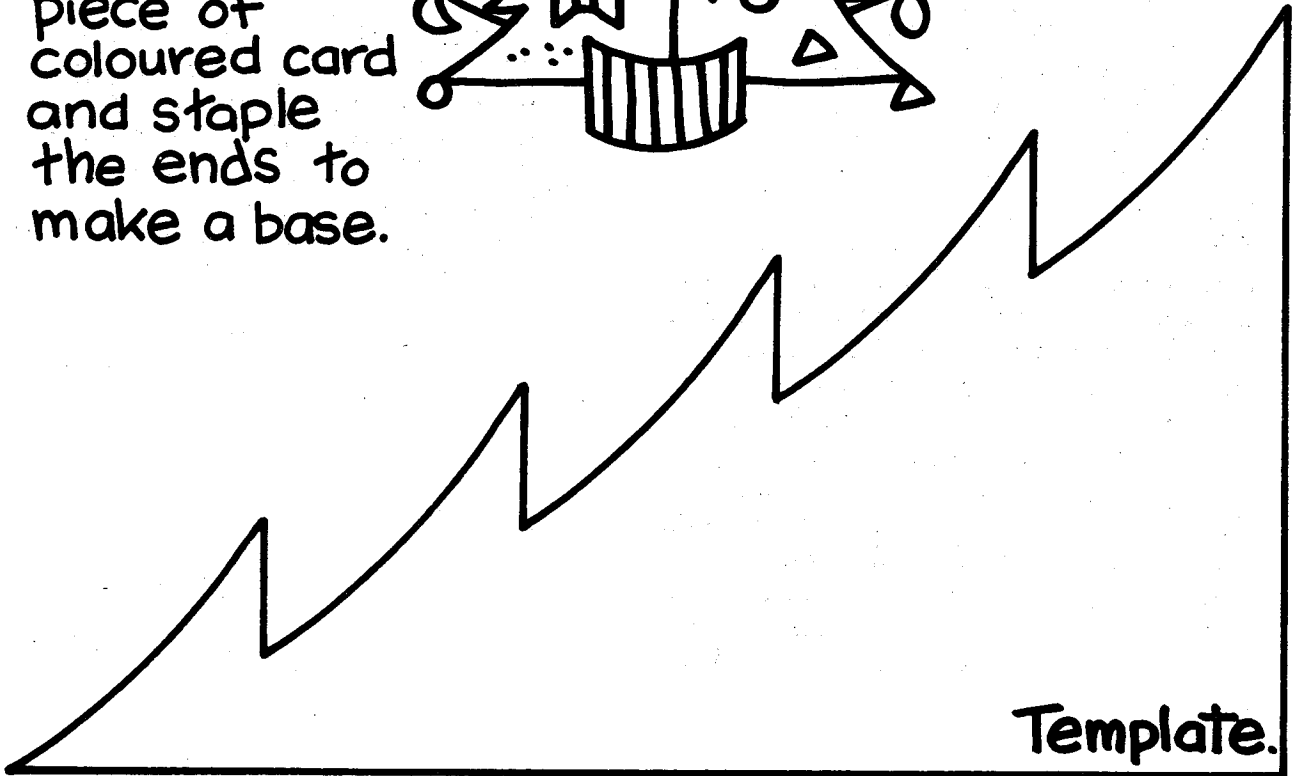
3. Tape the four shapes together along the folds.



4. Roll another piece of coloured card and staple the ends to make a base.



5. Insert the christmas tree into the four slits you have cut. Then decorate.



Template.