

A Great Light-

A Community Advent Event

Overview

This Christian Advent Event is centered on Isaiah 9:2, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.” (ESV). Ideally the event will last 1.5 hours to include a fellowship dinner.

Funding for 50 families:

Advent wreaths and tapers: \$400

Commissary dinner and supplies (you can do whatever you like, but we did meatball subs): \$300

Advent devotions and children’s activities: \$300

Greenery 50 1yard pieces ready to place on wreath: \$500

Schedule:

Welcome and prayer before meal followed by dinner: 30 minutes

Group Devotion: 10 minutes

Idea Stations: 20 minutes

Advent wreath making: 30 minutes- while families are making the wreath, someone can tell them about the symbolism and how to use the wreath at home.

A Great Light - Devotion



Material: Large board, black cloth, an empty manger (big enough for a doll), glittery stars (one per person in attendance) with some way of sticking to the board (tape or pins), soft instrumental Christmas hymn

A large board is covered with black cloth for effect. It should be blank, no stars to start the devotion. The manger should be empty.

A glittery star should be placed at each person's seat.

The devotion is for all ages and everyone there should participate.

To start, have someone turn off the lights (warn little ones prior). Quickly turn them back on and ask what happens when the lights go out? (answers may be unable to see, fear, surprise, etc)

Contrast this with light- Talk about how light is often associated with the presence of God and used during worship as a symbol of his presence.

Have someone read Isaiah 9:2.

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Highlight that during Advent we wait for the great light prophesized by Isaiah and that light is Jesus. Tonight we will talk about and experience ways that will help us remember throughout this busy holiday season that we are preparing our homes and hearts to receive the Light- Jesus. Light comes in many forms. At Christmas time we often read about a great star that led the wise men to Jesus and marked his location. Each one of you has a star in front of you.... A really glittery star. Start the soft music. Ask each person to come up, one table at a time, and place their star on the board.

The board will go from dark to light. Nothing to Amazing. This is symbolic of the world before and after Jesus.

Large group prayer.

Closing Prayer: to end the event

Call the group again to attention. Ask a small child beforehand to bring up “baby Jesus” doll when the leader prays.

Group prayer should begin something like, “As we wait prepare for the birth of Christ this Advent season... .” Short and simple. Instruct attendees to take the Light of Christ (a star on the board) with them as they go; this serves as a reminder of His light as they start their Christmas preparations.

Advent Stations

Four stations can be set around the fellowship hall. Stations will focus on ideas and examples that will help families center their Advent season on their faith. Tables start at different stations and will be notified to switch every 5 minutes. It is helpful to have someone man the station and explain or help. These are four examples.

1. Jesse Tree- A sample Jesse Tree will be set up. At the station, families can grab the directions and verses (with symbols) used for a traditional Jesse Tree. See handout.
2. Wassail- Wassail is a traditional mulled cider. Focusing on the aroma and using that as an analogy of how we anticipate the birth of Jesus. Everyone can try the wassail and grab a recipe. An aromatic will also be there with instructions- in case not everyone wants cider, but likes the aroma. Basically... it's water with spices and fruits you can simmer on the stove or a crock.
3. Fill the Manger- Example provided. This is an activity to do with children at home. Families can make a small manger from popsicle sticks. Each day children can add a soft cotton ball if they have really loved others. By Christmas, Jesus will have soft place to rest his head, hopefully.
4. Bethlehem Tree- Handouts will be there to explain and example of tree with suggested places to get the supplies available.

Advent Wreath

An Advent wreath can be added to your home as a daily reminder of the anticipation of Christmas. Placing the wreath in a place where you are sure to see and remember its significance, can help. Many people use the wreath as the center of family dinners and pray prior to dinner or just after dinner.

Symbolism:

Circle: God is eternal.

Evergreens: God is with us and will never change.

Candles/Light: Presence of God in our lives

Purple: Time of waiting and penance.

Rose/Pink: Joy

White: Purity and truth of God

Daily Prayers for Lighting the Advent Wreath

(You can pray in any way you like as a family, the following are simple, suggested prayers)

Week 1- (Purple) Hope

O Emmanuel, Jesus Christ,
desire of every nation,
savior of all peoples,
come and dwell among us.

Week 3- (Rose) Joy

O Key of David,
Jesus Christ,
The gates of heaven open
At your command,
Come and show us the way to salvation.

Week 2- (Purple) Peace

O King of all nations
Jesus Christ,
only joy of every heart,
come and save your people.

Week 4- (Purple) Love

O Wisdom, holy word of God,
Jesus Christ,
all things are in your hands,
come and show us the way
to salvation.