

Rearrange Our Priorities

Making a Pie Chart

Activity Objective

To motivate the participants to take time to prepare for Advent with prayer and reflection

Lesson Outcome

The participants will create a new plan of how they spend their time with a priority on prayer and reflection.

Materials:

Paper	Markers
Bible	

Activity Instructions:

- Help your learners focus on the need to re-arrange their priorities. Pass out a piece of paper to each student.
- Begin by inviting your participants to list in order of importance what they value most in life.
- Next, have them turn the paper over and make a pie chart that shows all the activities that they spend their time on in an average week and how much time is devoted to each: school, work, eating, sleeping, sports, recreation, reading, homework, surfing the internet, playing video games, and so on. Tell them to include a “slice” that shows how much time they are spending on “spiritual” activities.
- Give them time to complete their pie charts and then ask them how many included God OR their spiritual lives on their lists of what is most important to them. On the pie chart, how many of them had a very small slice to represent the time devoted to Spiritual activities?
- Discuss setting priorities—have a volunteer read aloud the Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent (Luke 21: 26–28, 34–36).
- Explain that Advent is a time for us to pause, to look at our priorities, and to rearrange them to put God first.
- Explain that we don’t become more spiritual by trying to grow the “spiritual” slice of our pie chart. Rather, we need to recognize that the WHOLE PIE is our spiritual life. Everything we do involves God.

- Emphasize that during Advent, we should strive to pause and take some quiet time to pray: rearrange priorities. By all means, provide your participants with some quiet time to reflect on their priorities and to ask the Holy Spirit to help them rearrange them so that God is their first priority.
- Now ask the participants to create a new pie chart of how they would like to reprioritize their time for the season of Advent. Even though this is a busy time of year, encourage them to make the effort to spend quiet time in prayer or other spiritual activities.
- Encourage the participants to display their pie charts somewhere they can see them and be reminded of their goal.

Joyfully Make Preparations

Preparing to Meet Someone Important

Activity Objective

To help the participants prepare their hearts for the coming of Jesus

Lesson Outcome

The participants will create charts to plan how they will prepare for Advent.

Materials:

Markers or colored pencils	Bible
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Activity Instructions:

- Explain to the participants that there are different kinds of waiting and anticipation. Sitting in a waiting room at the doctor waiting for your appointment is simply boring. Waiting for a baby to be born, however, is exciting and filled with joy. The parents-to-be are eagerly making preparations for the arrival of their child. THAT'S the kind of preparation that Advent calls us to.
- Brainstorm the name of a celebrity whom the group would like to meet most.
- Arrange in groups and pass out paper to each group.
- Have each group make a list of preparations for a reception for this guest of honor (group members assign tasks). When they are done, have them report to the large group.
- Discuss the excitement of making preparations. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Advent (Luke 3:1–6).
- Discuss how at Mass we pray that we “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.”
- Emphasize that preparations include cleaning and removing as well as decorating and adding.
- Brainstorm what we need to “clean/remove” and what we can add to our lives to prepare for Jesus’ coming.
- Create a chart with the headings Clean/Remove and Add. Have the participants complete the chart with specific actions of how they will “joyfully make preparations” for Jesus’ coming.
- Encourage your participants to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation this Advent to help them more deeply experience the joy of preparing for Jesus’ coming.
- Optional: if time allows you may wish to close with the Advent Prayer Service.

Act in New Ways

Learning a New Skill

Activity Objective

To identify the season of Advent as time to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth

Lesson Outcome

The participants will be able to demonstrate their preparation for Jesus' coming.

Materials:

Markers or colored pencils	Construction paper	Bible
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Activity Instructions:

- Provide each participant with a piece of paper and invite him or her to write out the sentence “Teacher, what are we to do?” using his or her off-hand.
- Invite each to share and comment on the difficulty.
- Talk about how we acquire new skills: practice and repetition.
- Brainstorm examples: swimming, skating, bike riding, etc. Discuss how acquiring a new skill involves a plan and commitment (purchasing equipment, signing up for lessons, etc.).
- Explain that after practice and repetition an idea becomes a belief.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Luke 3:10–18).
- Explain that John the Baptist suggests new ways of acting in order to be prepared for the coming of Jesus: sharing clothing, sharing food, working honestly, treating others fairly, and being content with what we have.
- As a group, brainstorm new ways of acting that we can begin practicing during Advent.
- Have each participant write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help him or her put the new ways of acting into practice.
- Ask for volunteers to share their prayers with the group.

Go Forth and Stir Up Life in Others

Promoting a New Business

Activity Objective

To identify ways we can spread the Good News of the Gospel through our actions

Lesson Outcome

The participants will reflect on how they live the Gospel message and choose one new way to live out the message.

Materials:

Markers or colored pencils	Paper	Bible
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Activity Instructions:

- Arrange participants in pairs and have them dream up new businesses they would be excited to open.
- Next, have them design (sketch) a homepage for a Web site that announces their new businesses.
- When finished, invite them to share their ideas and sketches.
- Talk about Web sites they know of that effectively create excitement for a product.
- Point out that our lives are a living “homepage” for the Gospel and that Mary is a perfect example of this.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent (Luke 1:39–45).
- Brainstorm ways that we can effectively communicate excitement for the Gospel and stir up life within them.
- Have participants create new homepages for their own lives. Have them include all the ways they pass along Gospel values and at least one new way they will go forth and stir up excitement in others about Jesus and the Gospel message.