

# THE LIGHT OF ADVENT

*by Jane Boldenow*



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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# **The Light of Advent**

by JANE BOLDENOW

Candle-lighting sketches for children

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

Many churches observe the tradition of lighting the candles on the Advent wreath. The involvement of children in this meaningful activity makes them feel a part of the service, and also gives new life to this beloved old tradition.

Only a few props are needed:

1. Advent wreath and four candles.
2. Violet paraments on the altar, pulpit, or lectern.
3. Bible for Student 1 and Student 2 to read from.
4. Microphone(s) and lectern.
5. Small "supper" table and four chairs for the second and third Sundays. A round table works best, as the characters may sit in a semicircle so all are visible to the audience.

The basic structure of each Sunday is the same: first the children sing one verse of "Light One Candle," then they sit on the front pew while the sketch is performed. After the sketch, they stand and again sing that Sunday's verse from "Light One Candle" (with optional sign language motions) while the Candle-lighter lights the candles on the Advent wreath.

The recurring roles of the main characters in the sketches are two students between the ages of about eight and 11. The two students should be good readers so that they may read their scripts if not memorized. The two students are brother and sister. Mother and Father play supporting roles. If possible, find a family in your church to play these four parts. This gives the script a personal touch, and rehearsals will be easier when everyone is under the same roof.

More children may be involved by choosing a different (older) child to be the Candle-lighter each week. Four additional children may also read the Scripture references in the sketch for the first Sunday. And, of course, there is a place for all of the children in your Sunday school department in the Children's Choir that sings a verse of "Light One Candle" (featured in the back of the playbook) each Sunday. Sign language motions add interest to the song.

***PARTICIPANTS***

**STUDENT 1 (boy)**

**STUDENT 2 (girl)**

**MOTHER**

**FATHER**

**CANDLE-LIGHTER(s)**

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

*Director and students from as many grades as desired*

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*All biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version.*

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Hope

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Sings Verse 1: "Light one candle from hope . . ."

**STUDENT 1:** (*Moves from choir area to lectern with microphone and speaks to congregation.*) That's the first verse of our Advent song. We've been practicing it for weeks now, just for you. Pretty soon \_\_\_\_\_ (*CANDLE-LIGHTER's name*) is going to light the first candle of Advent for us. Did you know that the four Advent candles have names? And that they each stand for something different? That's what our choir director, Mrs. Brown (*You may substitute the name of your church's CHILDREN'S CHOIR director*) told us. (S)he said that the first candle of Advent is called the "Candle of Prophecy." Isn't that neat? The Candle . . . of Prophecy. The prophets knew, hundreds of years before Jesus was born, that he was coming. Awesome!

I've heard that before there was electricity, people lived in darkness much of their lives. That's why they described the Messiah as being a light . . . the Light of the World! Just listen to this. (*Opens Bible.*) The prophet Isaiah wrote these words about Jesus, seven hundred years before he was born:

(*Isaiah 9:2*) "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

(*Isaiah 60:1*) "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

(*Isaiah 60:3*) "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

(*Isaiah 42:6*) "I the Lord . . . will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." (*Closes Bible.*)

1           **Mrs. Brown told us that Advent means “the coming,”**  
 2           **and that during Advent we should feel the same spirit of**  
 3           **waiting and longing that Isaiah felt. The prophets knew**  
 4           **that only a Messiah could bring them — and the world —**  
 5           **salvation. The Messiah would usher in a new age for**  
 6           **mankind. That’s why Advent is the beginning of our new**  
 7           **church year. Look around us. The colors have changed.**  
 8           **You see violet . . . a royal color, but also the color which**  
 9           **symbolizes our humility and penitence. The green wreath**  
 10           **reminds us of the continuation of life, and its circular**  
 11           **shape represents eternity.**

12           **We’re going to sing our song again, with sign**  
 13           **language this time. (Optional) And while we sing of hope —**  
 14           **the only hope for our salvation — \_\_\_\_\_**  
 15           **(CANDLE-LIGHTER’s name) will light the first candle: the**  
 16           **Candle of Prophecy! (STUDENT 1 rejoins the CHILDREN’S**  
 17           **CHOIR.)**

18           **CHILDREN’S CHOIR:** Verse 1: “Light one candle for hope . . .”  
 19           *(With sign language, optional. CANDLE-LIGHTER lights one*  
 20           *candle while the CHILDREN’S CHOIR sings.)*

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Peace

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Sings Verse 2: "Light one candle for peace . . ."

**STUDENT 1:** (*Moves from choir area to lectern with microphone and speaks to congregation.*) That's the second verse of our song to you. Now that it's the second week of Advent, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Substitute CANDLE-LIGHTER's name*) will light the first candle and the second candle, symbolizing the increasingly brighter light of Jesus' coming.

You remember that last week I talked about the first candle as being the "Candle of Prophecy." Do you know what the second candle's name is? It's called the "Candle of Bethlehem."

Tell me . . . what do *you* think about when you hear the word "Bethlehem"? (*Pause*) Do you think about Jesus, born in the stable? (*Pause*) Do you think of peace? Of simplicity?

**STUDENT 2:** (*Comes down from choir area and interrupts.*) Yes, I think of all those things, John, (*May substitute STUDENT 1's real name*) but do you know what troubles me about peace and simplicity? Everything's so hectic at Christmastime. So *unpeaceful*. And gifts are so *expensive*! Where's the simplicity?

**STUDENT 1:** (*To audience*) Oh . . . excuse me for a moment . . . this is my sister, Sarah. (*May substitute STUDENT 2's real name. To SARAH*) Sarah, what do you mean by interrupting the program this way?

**STUDENT 2:** I'm sorry, but I just can't help it. There's something I have to say. When we were singing about lighting one candle for peace a minute ago, I got a knot in my stomach. You know how Mom's been these days.

**STUDENT 1:** Yes, I know, but do we have to tell the whole congregation?

1 **STUDENT 2:** Why not? They're probably feeling the same  
2 way. They're probably feeling tired from all the extra  
3 activities of Christmas, and broke from buying Christmas  
4 presents.

5 **STUDENT 1:** That's true. Well, as long as you brought it up,  
6 Sarah, let's just show everyone exactly what happened  
7 last night. Maybe they *will* identify with what our family  
8 is going through. (*JOHN and SARAH walk over to opposite*  
9 *side of stage and sit at small "supper table" with MOTHER and*  
10 *FATHER. STUDENT 1 to audience, while walking to table*) It  
11 all came to a head after supper. We were finished eating  
12 and everyone was ready to leave, when Mom said:

13 **MOTHER:** Where's everyone going? Can't someone stay and  
14 help with the dishes?

15 **STUDENT 1:** But I've got a test to study for.

16 **STUDENT 2:** And I have *tons* of homework.

17 **FATHER:** And there's a football game that I wanted . . . but  
18 that can wait. (*To CHILDREN*) I think we can all help out  
19 here. Your mother's busy too, kids, and it's only fair that  
20 we all chip in and help around the house.

21 **MOTHER:** That would be appreciated. Thank you. I'm sorry  
22 I'm on edge, but I have a headache from thinking about  
23 all the things I have to do before Christmas comes. I  
24 haven't done any baking. I haven't addressed any  
25 Christmas cards. I need to do some shopping and  
26 wrapping. Tomorrow night we have caroling, and the  
27 next night is our employee Christmas party. I just don't  
28 know when I'm going to get everything done. What I could  
29 really use is some peace and quiet. No TVs, no stereos —  
30 just some *time* for myself, *and* for my family.

31 **STUDENT 2:** Why don't we sit around the Christmas tree and  
32 sing like we used to?

33 **MOTHER:** There's no time for that.

34 **STUDENT 1:** Yes there is, if we all chip in and help, like Dad  
35 said. I'll help you wrap gifts tonight.

**FATHER:** Ahem . . . *(Clears throat.)* While we're on the subject of gifts, maybe this is a good time to tell you that we don't have a lot of money to spend this Christmas, and we don't want to use credit cards.

**STUDENT 1:** Ahem . . . *(Clears throat.)* We don't have a lot of money to spend on presents either, do we, Sarah?

**STUDENT 2:** Maybe, instead of giving each other lots of presents, we can just give each other "time" together. We could drive around town and see the Christmas lights. We could play a game. We could pop popcorn and watch a movie. When you stop to think about it, we really don't need to spend a lot of money to be happy. *(STUDENTS 1 and 2 go back to lectern with microphone at other side of stage and MOTHER and FATHER move Off-stage.)*

**STUDENT 1:** Well, that's what happened.

**STUDENT 2:** You know, now that I look back on it, I think our family learned a lot last night. From now on, we're all going to share in the Christmas preparations around our house. And we're not going to feel like we have to spend lots of money to have a meaningful Christmas.

**STUDENT 1:** Now can we sing the second verse of our song? Since you aired your feelings, I think you're feeling better about the idea of peace.

**STUDENT 2:** It does begin at home, doesn't it? *(STUDENTS 1 and 2 rejoin the CHILDREN'S CHOIR.)*

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Verse 2: "Light one candle for peace . . ." *(With sign language, optional. CANDLE-LIGHTER lights two candles while students sing.)*

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Love

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Sings Verse 3: "Light one candle for love . . ."

**STUDENT 1:** (*Moves from choir area to lectern with microphone and speaks to congregation.*) Well, here I am again. It's the third Sunday of Advent. Today \_\_\_\_\_ (*CANDLE-LIGHTER's name*) will light *three* candles: The Candle of Prophecy, the Candle of Bethlehem, and . . . what do you think the *third* candle is called? I'll give you a hint: it has to do with the first people who shared the Good News of Christ's birth. Of course! It's the Candle of the Shepherds. It is said to be a symbol of *our* act of sharing Christ with each other. As you watch \_\_\_\_\_ (*Name of person*) light the candle, think about its symbolism . . . about how *you* share Christ in your life, as the shepherds did immediately. (*Opens Bible and reads from Luke 2: 16, 17.*) "And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child."

How *do* we share Christ? Do we keep him to ourselves? Do we keep him only to our family?

**STUDENT 2:** (*Comes down from choir area and interrupts.*) Why don't you tell them what happened at our house last night?

**STUDENT 1:** Good grief, are you going to interrupt me again?

**STUDENT 2:** Well, it fits right in with what you're saying, doesn't it? You remember . . . Mom started out by saying she felt "down" for some reason . . . That she didn't know why, but that she just couldn't pull herself out of the doldrums and get into the Christmas spirit.

**STUDENT 1:** All right, all right. Let's just show everyone exactly what happened, word for word. (*STUDENTS walks*

- 1           *to opposite side of stage and join parents at small "supper table.")*  
 2   **FATHER:** (To **MOTHER**) Did you have a hard day at work  
 3           today, honey? You look kind of tired.  
 4   **MOTHER:** No . . . I mean yes . . . I mean . . . I don't know. It's  
 5           always busy at work. I guess at this time of year it's busier  
 6           than usual. I don't know *why* I feel blue. I should be happy!  
 7           We're working out our problems here at home.  
 8           Everyone's helping out, I haven't spent as much money  
 9           on gifts as I did last year, and for the first time in fifteen  
 10          years of marriage, my husband addressed all the  
 11          Christmas cards. Maybe I just need a good night's sleep.  
 12   **STUDENT 2:** I know what Mrs. Brown would say.  
 13   **MOTHER:** Your choir director?  
 14   **STUDENT 2:** Yes. She's been talking to us about the real  
 15          meaning of Advent, and what we should be doing in our  
 16          lives to prepare for Jesus' birth.  
 17   **FATHER:** What do you mean? I got all the Christmas cards  
 18          addressed.  
 19   **STUDENT 1:** Not *that* kind of preparation, Dad.  
 20   **FATHER:** Oh?  
 21   **MOTHER:** So what *did* she mean?  
 22   **STUDENT 2:** Well, she says that it isn't enough to feel good  
 23          about what you do for yourself and your family. You're  
 24          supposed to remember what Jesus said about loving one  
 25          another: "I was hungry and you gave me food . . . I was  
 26          sick and you visited me." (*Matthew 25:35, 36*)  
 27   **FATHER:** Ohhhhh.  
 28   **STUDENT 1:** That's right. I almost forgot. When Mrs. Brown  
 29          talked to us about sharing Christ, she asked us to close  
 30          our eyes and think of one person who might be lonely or  
 31          alone at Christmas. When I closed my eyes, I couldn't see  
 32          anyone. Then, later, I thought of old crabby Mr.  
 33          Quakenbush. But forget it . . . he'd never want *me*  
 34          pestering him.  
 35   **MOTHER:** I don't know about that. I'll bet that if you took

1           him some Christmas cookies, he'd invite you in.  
2   **STUDENT 1:** Invite me in? I wouldn't know what to say to  
3           him, Mom.  
4   **MOTHER:** Well, why don't you try it? I'm starting to feel  
5           better already, just thinking about the smile on Mr.  
6           Quakenbush's face.  
7   **STUDENT 1:** Sure, that's easy for you to say, Mom. Why don't  
8           you go instead of me?  
9   **MOTHER:** Maybe we should *all* find a person to share Christ  
10           with — someone to "adopt" — for the holiday season.  
11   **STUDENT 1:** Good grief, look what Mrs. Brown started.  
12   **MOTHER:** I think it's a great idea. It can be our family goal  
13           for the week. And let's not stop sharing when Christmas  
14           is over. Let's show our love all year. (*STUDENTS 1 and 2*  
15           *return to lectern and MOTHER and FATHER exit Off-stage.*)  
16   **STUDENT 1:** Well, now you know what Sarah was talking  
17           about. Tonight I get to visit my adopted person and share  
18           Christ with him. I'll let you know what happens next  
19           week. (*STUDENTS 1 and 2 rejoin the CHILDREN'S CHOIR.*)  
20   **CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Verse 3: "Light one candle for love . . ."  
21           (*With sign language, optional. CANDLE-LIGHTER lights three*  
22           *candles while students sing.*)

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Joy

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** Verse 4: "Light one candle for joy . . ."

**STUDENT 2:** (*Moves from choir area to lectern with microphone and speaks to congregation.*) Hello. My brother told me that I should start the talking this time, and he would do the interrupting. Well, it's the fourth Sunday of Advent already. Our preparations for Christmas should be almost complete. Or, as Mrs. Brown would say, "You should be as ready for the birth of Jesus as Mary was." That's not as easy as it might sound. Sure, there's a lot that goes into preparing for a baby, but that's only the beginning. Ask any new mother or father about that! Your life becomes changed. You have a new purpose and reason to live. The preparations were exciting, but now comes the real joy.

I see that \_\_\_\_\_ (*Name of CANDLE-LIGHTER*) is almost ready to light the fourth candle of Advent for us. Do you remember the names of the first three? The Candle of Prophecy . . . the Candle of Bethlehem . . . the Candle of the Shepherds . . . and now, the Candle of the Angels. (*Opens Bible, reads from Luke 2:10, 11.*) "And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'" And just as the angels sang of joy, we are also ready to sing . . .

**STUDENT 1:** Just a minute, Sarah. Before we sing, I want to tell everyone about my week . . . about sharing Christ with my neighbor. Well . . . it wasn't so hard after all. Mr. Quakenbush liked the cookies. He didn't smile when I first showed up at his door. He didn't even invite me in. But then I went back with a Christmas wreath I made for him. I thought he was going to cry. He asked me to

1        come back again on Christmas Eve. I have a feeling he's  
 2        busy doing something . . . either fixing up his house so  
 3        that he can invite me in, or maybe making something for  
 4        me. I don't care if I get anything back. I'm just looking  
 5        forward to seeing him again.

6        **STUDENT 2:** We all felt good about sharing Christ this  
 7        week. Now my mother says she knows why she was  
 8        feeling down in the dumps before. She says it's because  
 9        she wasn't truly reaching out, as Christ wants us to. She  
 10       has a little magnet hanging on our refrigerator now, with  
 11       a verse that says: "To ease another's burden . . . is to  
 12       forget one's own." That about sums it up for Mom, and  
 13       for me, too.

14       **STUDENT 1:** How lucky we are that Jesus was born. Without  
 15       him, we would not be here today, singing of hope, peace,  
 16       love, and joy. How thankful we must always be, to know  
 17       that the prophecies of Isaiah did indeed come true. (*Opens*  
 18       *Bible and reads Isaiah 9:2.*) "The people that walked in  
 19       darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the  
 20       land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light  
 21       shined."

22       **STUDENT 2:** (*Isaiah 60:1*) "Arise, shine; for thy light is come,  
 23       and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (*STUDENTS*  
 24       *1 and 2 rejoin the CHILDREN'S CHOIR. Congregation may rise*  
 25       *and join children in singing.*)

26       **CHILDREN'S CHOIR:** "Light One Candle:" verses 1, 2, 3, 4.  
 27       (*Children may sign, optional. CANDLE-LIGHTER lights all*  
 28       *four candles as the children sing — one candle at the beginning*  
 29       *of each verse.*)

*LIGHT: same as "Candle," below, plus show motion by lifting hands up.*



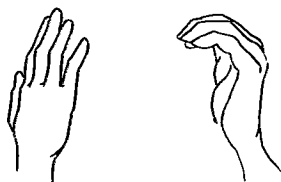
*ONE: hold up index finger.*



*CANDLE: right hand index finger is placed at palm of left hand; wiggle fingers.*



*HOPE: hands face each other and wave (left hand raised to left shoulder).*





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