

HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE - ADVENT!

by Firley Pickens



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Hope, Peace, Joy, Love — Advent!

Four sketches for
the Advent wreath

by Firley Pickens

PRODUCTION NOTES

The four brief Advent sketches in this collection center our focus on the hope, peace, joy and love which have inspired God's people through the ages. The messages are simple and simply presented as contemporary messages for the congregation by characters ranging from children to any age of adults.

The naming of the characters is left to the choice of the director. Some may wish for the actors to use their own names to make the sketches more personal to the congregation. Others may wish to use character names.

The action should take place on the opposite side of the platform from the pulpit, with the Advent wreath at its side. Then, as the action of the sketch ends, the actors drop their characterizations and end the program as themselves, crossing to the wreath, reading the Scriptures at the pulpit and lighting the candles on the wreath.

No costumes are required, although the women in the Love sketch (fourth Sunday of Advent) should be in outdoor wear suitable for shopping.

The sketches could all be done without props. However, in the first sketch, the child might be "reading" a book or playing with a hand-held electronic game until the parents make their entrance. In sketch two, the class might sit on chairs while the teacher stands before them. The students may take their chairs with them as they leave after the candle lighting, thus clearing the platform area. The women in sketch four could be carrying packages, or one of them might have a shopping list that she is intently studying until the two meet mid-stage.

For each sketch, the Bible should be on the pulpit or podium, turned to the Scripture that will be used during the lighting of the candles.

The Scriptures to be read are passages that emphasize each Sunday's theme. Not all were originally related to Advent, but they do stress the themes. Although the New International Version is used in the script, the director may substitute any favored translation that best fits the congregation.

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Hope

The First Sunday of Advent

CAST: MOTHER, FATHER, CHILD (a girl or boy age 6–8)

(MOTHER, FATHER and CHILD enter and stand at Center Stage.)

FATHER: *(To CHILD)* _____, *(Insert his/her name)* last Sunday after church, Pastor _____ *(Insert pastor's name)* asked your mom and me if our family would like to help start off the Advent season by lighting the first candle on the Advent wreath.

CHILD: So, are we going to?

MOTHER: We said that we would be happy to do that. You *do* want to help us, don't you?

CHILD: Well, I guess so ... but what is an advent anyway?

FATHER: Last year you were probably too young to really understand the significance of Advent.

CHILD: Do you mean the importance?

FATHER: Yes, that too.

MOTHER: An advent is when something new comes into being.

FATHER: It's sort of like when you were born. We anxiously awaited your birth. We were so excited just knowing that you were coming to join us. And then, God sent *you!*

MOTHER: Your arrival made us a real family.

CHILD: It did?

FATHER: Of course it did!

MOTHER: And Advent is all about how God's people needed someone like Jesus. God sent his own Son to make us all part of his family.

FATHER: Right, _____, *(Insert MOTHER's name)* and that's what makes these weeks before Christmas so special.

- 1 CHILD: Is that why we light the candles? To let God know
 2 how anxious we are for Jesus' birthday?
- 3 MOTHER: That's part of the reason.
- 4 CHILD: But why don't we light all the candles each
 5 Sunday?
- 6 FATHER: Good question!
- 7 MOTHER: You see, dear, each candle represents one of the
 8 qualities Jesus brings to our lives. There's hope, the
 9 candle we will light, and peace and joy and love. Each
 10 week, different people from our church will talk about
 11 one of those qualities. Our family will remind the
 12 people in our congregation that we light the candle of
 13 hope because people had been hoping for a Messiah for
 14 such a long time before he finally came.
- 15 CHILD: Kinda like I've been hoping for a new Game Boy?
 16 *(Or any other appropriate gift)*
- 17 FATHER: Well, it would be more like you were hoping for a
 18 new Game Boy for better than a thousand years.
- 19 CHILD: Wow!
- 20 MOTHER: So you see, _____, *(Insert CHILD's name)*
 21 each week another candle will be lit, adding more and
 22 more light. Then, on Christmas Sunday, the final
 23 candle, the Christ candle, will be lit, representing God
 24 sending Jesus, his greatest gift, to be the Light of the
 25 World ...
- 26 FATHER: *(Continuing MOTHER's thought)* So we can see who
 27 God is and learn to know him and love him better.
- 28 CHILD: And it all starts with a lot of hope!
- 29 FATHER: You've got it!
- 30 CHILD: No wonder you told Pastor _____ *(Insert*
 31 *pastor's name)* that we'd light that first candle. I'm ready.
 32 Let's do it. *(FATHER, MOTHER and CHILD move to*
 33 *Advent wreath. Father opens his Bible and reads the*
 34 *Scripture.)*
- 35 FATHER: Psalm 130:5-7. "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

1 and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the
2 Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more
3 than watchmen wait for the morning. O Israel, put your
4 hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love
5 and with him is full redemption.” *(He stands back as*
6 *MOTHER and CHILD light the first candle.)*

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Peace

The Second Sunday of Advent

CAST: TEACHER (of a Sunday school class); STUDENTS 1, 2 and 3.

(TEACHER and STUDENTS 1, 2 and 3 enter and stand at Center Stage.)

TEACHER: I want to thank the three of you for agreeing to help me light the candle of peace in our Advent wreath this morning.

STUDENTS 1, 2 and 3: *(Ad-lib simultaneously)* Sure ... No problem ... You're welcome.

TEACHER: Did you all remember to do some quiet thinking about what peace means to you personally this week?

STUDENT 1: Well, I've got to tell you, I don't think there is any such thing as peace anymore. For social studies this month, we all had to go through a newspaper every day and look for places where wars and conflicts are going on. Then we had to take our lists to class and put pins in a map to show where all the hotspots are. You wouldn't believe all the pins in that thing!

STUDENT 2: At my house, my dad would say that peace is any time all of us kids are asleep ... or gone.
(STUDENTS 1 and 3 nod in agreement.)

STUDENT 3: Yeah! Does he yell something like, "Can't we have a little peace and quiet around here?"

STUDENT 2: Exactly!

TEACHER: Peace in the family is important, but rather than just external kinds of peace, I was hoping that you might think in larger terms and include the sense of peace in our hearts that we always hope for, especially at this time of year.

STUDENT 3: Wow! I didn't even think about it that way.

STUDENT 1: Neither did I, but I guess I should have.

1 STUDENT 2: Do you mean like in the Bible where Jesus
2 said he left his peace with us?

3 STUDENT 1: And we shouldn't let our hearts be troubled?

4 TEACHER: Now you're getting it.

5 STUDENT 1: And even if our family and all the world
6 around us is in conflict, we need to remember God's
7 peace. Remember that even the prophet Isaiah said
8 that Jesus would be called the Prince of Peace.

9 STUDENT 3: So when we light the candle, is it OK if we are
10 thinking about all kinds of peace? Inner peace and
11 outer peace and family peace?

12 STUDENT 2: Like with God and with our families ...

13 STUDENT 3: (*Finishing*) And with the whole world?

14 TEACHER: I think God will be very pleased with you.

15 (*TEACHER and STUDENTS approach the Advent wreath.*
16 *The TEACHER reads the Scripture.*) Isaiah 9:6. "For to us
17 a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government
18 will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful
19 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of
20 Peace." (*STUDENT 1 lights the candle lighter, either from an*
21 *altar candle already lit or with a lighter, and hands it to*
22 *STUDENT 2, who lights candle one. STUDENT 2 then hands*
23 *the candle lighter to STUDENT 3, who lights candle two.*)
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Joy

The Third Sunday of Advent

CAST: MAN 1, MAN 2 (members of the congregation)

MAN 1: Hi, _____. (*Insert MAN 2's name.*) Are you ready to light the Advent wreath in the service today?

MAN 2: I think so! We are going to light the joy candle, and just walking through the church doors a few minutes ago made me feel happy.

MAN 1: Weren't you happy before?

MAN 2: I wasn't unhappy, but with all of the decorations, the tree, the candles and all ...

MAN 1: Yeah, you're right, and people do seem to be much more cheerful the closer we get to Christmas.

MAN 2: Last week when the kids' Sunday school class was lighting the peace candle, I suddenly thought of that old chorus we sang when we were kids.

MAN 1: Which one?

MAN 2: Do you remember "I've Got the Joy"?

MAN 1: Sure, that one stays with you forever, but why did you think of joy when they were talking about peace?

MAN 2: Actually, I began thinking about the second verse that says, "I've got the peace that passes understanding ..."

MAN 1: OK, and that leads us to ... ?

MAN 2: Well, it came to me that joy goes beyond just being happy. Happy is a beautiful sunny day or an apple pie or a call from a friend ...

MAN 1: Or a beautifully decorated church ...

MAN 2: Exactly! But all those things are transitory. I think that once we know God's love and peace, we have a joy that lifts us above rainy days or misunderstandings with friends or any of the negative things that hit us. It's a special God-given joy!

MAN 1: I see what you mean. And during times like Advent



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