

Star Light, Star Bright



Theme: Jesus is our only hope. Advent 3-A

Object: A Christmas star.

Scripture: "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?" Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor." Matthew 11:3-5 (NLT)

Have you ever wished upon a star? When I was a child, there was a rhyme we would say in the evening when the sky began to get dark. As soon as it was dark enough for us to see the very first star in the sky, we would say,

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might
Have the wish I wish tonight.

When we finished saying the rhyme, we closed our eyes and made a wish for something special. I don't remember if any of my wishes ever came true, but I am sure that if they did, wishing on the star had nothing to do with it.

The people who lived in Jesus' day were watching and waiting for the Messiah who had been promised by the prophets of old. Many of them watched the stars in the sky looking for a sign that would announce the coming of the Messiah. As you know, a star did appear announcing the birth of Jesus Christ. The wise men saw that star and went to find the Christ child, but for many years after that, some people were still watching and waiting.

In our Bible reading today, John the Baptist is in prison. He had heard reports about the things that Jesus was doing. So he sent some of his followers to ask Jesus, "Are you the one that we've been waiting for, or should we continue to look for someone else?"

Jesus told them, "Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard—the blind are made to see, the lame are able to walk, lepers are being cured, the deaf can hear, and even the dead are raised to life."

One of the names given to Jesus is "Bright Morning Star." (Revelation 22:16) Jesus is not a wishing star to whom we say a prayer and make a wish. He is a star of hope. Our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people.

Heavenly Father, as we see the many stars in the decorations of this season may we be reminded that Jesus is the "Bright Morning Star" and that when we put our hope and trust in him, our future is secure. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHRISTMAS TREE STAR: Children can be given a green Christmas tree cut out from construction paper and a yellow star cut out. Let children decorate the tree and star with sequins, glitter glue, etc. Tape the Bible verse or write the verse on the tree with the Bible verse "address" on the trunk of the tree or the word PEACE on the trunk of the tree. Tape or glue/staple the STAR at the top of the tree!

STAR ORNAMENT: Children can be given construction paper to draw and cut out a star (cookie cutters make great pattern for a star). Let children decorate with sequins, glitter, ribbon or tinsel, etc and write a word or idea from the story (JESUS BRINGS US PEACE, etc) for children to take home to remember today's lesson.

PADDED CHRISTMAS STARS: Teacher can give each child 2 stars to cut out and use tissues or tissue paper between the stars and then tape shut to make a padded Christmas star to hang from their door or to hang on their wall to remember our lesson today! Decorate the stars before padding. Encourage children to write JESUS on one side of their star and PEACE on the other side of the padded star!

STAR COOKIES: Each child can be given a Christmas star cookie to decorate and then to eat and to share one of their cookies with someone else as they tell this Christmas lesson.

CHRISTMAS CARDS: Give children construction paper and a pattern (cookie cutter) to draw and decorate a STAR on the front of the Christmas card to give to someone who needs to be encouraged. The children could write their own words on the inside of the card or JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE FOR PEACE, etc.

SNOWFLAKE STAR: Have children make a snowflake with a star design if they know how to do that or color a star on their snowflake when it's cut out! (Snowflake [instructions](#) on the internet.)

GO AND TELL RELAY: Divide the children into several teams or if the class is small, then each child can be their own team. When the teacher calls out a team number or team name, the first child on each team will run to the teacher and the teacher will whisper something in the child's ear. This will be ideas as in our lesson today, such as THE BLIND ARE MADE TO SEE, or THE LAME ARE ABLE TO WALK, or THE LEPERS ARE BEING CURED, or THE DEAF CAN HEAR, or THE DEAD ARE RAISED TO LIFE! The child will run back to the team and tell their team to "DO" what was told --- such as acting blind and now they can see, or unable to walk and then walking around their area, or pretending to have sores all over their body and in pain that will show on their faces and then smiling and feeling better, using sign language to each other, and of course pretending to be dead and then jumping up, etc. This could be played in many various ways as the teacher desires.

STAR OF HOPE HUNT: Before class, the teacher can hide small star stickers on little individual cards all around a designated area. When the teacher shouts out to GO HUNT FOR STARS OF HOPE... the children will find as many as they can and stick the stars on a large poster board cut out of a star or a traced and decorated star on the poster board. Let children use markers to write BRIGHT MORNING STAR, and STAR OF HOPE, and OUR HOPE IS IN THE LIVING GOD, and SAVIOR OF ALL PEOPLE.

STARS OF HOPE: Put 5 stars in an envelope for each child. When the teacher says to begin, the children will take their 5 stars out that have one word on each star so when the children put them in proper order, it will say, JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE (one word on each star). Then children can color and glitter decorate their stars. Let them dry and take them home to lay out on their kitchen table for others to see and be reminded that JESUS is our only HOPE.

CANDY CANE "J" FOR JESUS: Provide each child with a little card that will have a poem on it and then children will tape the card and a ribbon to a "J" candy cane. The poem can say, STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT, I LOVE JESUS WITH ALL MY MIGHT, or it could say STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT, JESUS IS MY HOPE DAY AND NIGHT, etc.

The Gifts that Jesus Brings



Theme: The true meaning of Christmas. Advent 3-A.

Object: A calendar and a color advertisement section from the newspaper.

Scripture: Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Matthew 11:4-5 (NIV)

Look at this calendar! Can you believe it? We are only a few days from Christmas! (Count the days remaining until Christmas.) Have you finished all of your Christmas shopping? The newspaper will be full of ads for those who have some last-minute shopping to do.

I did some research to see what the top-selling gifts are this year. Here are just a few of the most popular gifts for kids:

Big Hugs Elmo - I know you probably think this is just for younger children, but it was on every "Top Ten Toy List" I found. There are many ways to play with the Big Hugs Elmo and it comes with more than fifty animated sounds and phrases!

Furby Boom! - Sorry parents, Furby is back, but it's not the same old Furby from past years. There is a whole new generation of Furby critters out there! You can even interact with the new Furby using an iPad, iPod, or iPhone!

Doc McStuffins Check-Up Center - Kids will have all the tools they need to enjoy imaginative play as they heal toys and give checkups just like Doc McStuffins on the popular TV show.

Nerf Rebelle Heartbreaker Bow - This looks to be this year's hottest Nerf gun. It's a nerf weapon that comes in pink and is being marketed to girls!

Nerf N-Strike Elite Centurion Blaster - Don't worry, boys. There is a Nerf gun for you too!

Flutterbye Flying Fairy Doll - Unlike other fairy dolls, this one actually flies.

Well, those may be some of the best-selling gift items that children will find under their Christmas tree this year, but they don't compare with the gifts which we receive from the Christ of Christmas.

In our Bible lesson today we learn that John, even though he was in prison, was hearing about all of the wonderful things that Jesus was doing. He sent a message to Jesus by some of his friends. "Ask Jesus if he is the Messiah we have been expecting, or should we continue to watch for someone else?"

When Jesus was asked the question, he answered, "Return to John and tell him what you have seen and heard. You have seen the blind receive their sight, the crippled and lame are able to walk, those with leprosy are being cured, the deaf are able to hear. Even the dead have been raised and the good news is being preached to the poor."

If you were blind, what better gift could you receive than to be able to see? If you were crippled, what better gift could you receive than to be able to walk? If you were dead, what better gift could you receive than the gift of life? Oh, by the way, that last gift I mentioned... the gift of life. That is the real meaning of Christmas. Jesus came to earth to give us life -- eternal life! What a gift!

Father, every good gift we receive comes from you and the greatest gift is eternal life brought down to us through your Son. Father, we thank you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: ["The Gifts that Jesus Brings"](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

GIFTS TO WRAP: The teacher should have small boxes available for children to wrap a small piece of candy or some other small gift that they would like to give to someone who needs encouragement. Each little gift should have a slip of paper to place inside that will say JESUS IS THE BEST GIFT... or THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IS JESUS COMING TO EARTH TO GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE.

UNWRAP A GIFT: Have gifts hidden around a designated place for children to HUNT for the gifts. INSIDE each gift place a small candy and a slip of paper that will have something written on it that Jesus gives to us. The children will take turns opening their gift and reading something that Jesus gives to some or all of us. This could include such things as hearing, sight, walking, health, parents, church, and His Word.

CALENDAR ART: Give each child a calendar for December to decorate with JESUS BIRTHDAY and what THEY would like to GIVE to JESUS at Christmas! JESUS' BIRTHDAY can be drawn or written on the 25th and the other days can have the other ideas of "What can I give to JESUS"? (Suggestion for children to say "I'll give him ME"!

JESUS/CHRISTMAS ACROSTIC: Make a large poster with JESUS written down on one side and CHRISTMAS written toward the other side. Children can give ideas for each letter of things that JESUS gives to US and the children can then give ideas on the CHRISTMAS side of what WE can give to JESUS!!

"JESUS IS THE BEST GIFT" POSTER: Let the children cover a large piece of poster board or a piece of light weight wood with a solid color Christmas wrapping paper and decorate it with a wide ribbon and then add large, brightly-colored cut-out letters for JESUS IS THE BEST GIFT. (If the class is small, one child could tape or glue on the letters for a whole word on the poster).

BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR JESUS: Have a cake for Jesus decorated with ribbon and a bow to look like a GIFT. Have the children sing HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Jesus and enjoy a piece of the cake for His birthday!

"WHO GETS THE GIFT?" GAME: The teacher can tell the children that some gifts last for a short time and some gifts last for a long time, but Jesus lasts FOREVER! The teacher can give a GIFT to one child but whenever a whistle is blown, the child will hand the gift back to the teacher who will hand that gift to someone else! This game can last for the duration of the classtime. Explain to the children that THIS GIFT is only for a short time, but JESUS' gift of eternal life is FOREVER when we repent and trust in Him! The teacher can then give each child a little gift to open or take home, if desired.

GIFTS RECEIVED GAME FUN: Have all the children scatter around a large designated area. When the teacher tells the children to be BLIND, they will all mingle around with their eyes shut tightly until the teacher says, "You receive your sight". Then the teacher will tell the class that they are crippled and lame and they will mingle around the area as if their arms or legs or backs are hurting (a little groaning sounds would be good here) and then the teacher will say that they are healed... and they'll all stand up and jump up and down until the teacher says to sit in a circle. Then the teacher will say that they all have leprosy and explain what that is to the children. As children sit in a circle and scratch and moan, the teacher can share parts of today's lesson and then tell them that their leprosy has been healed. Continue to play as being deaf or dead and all the GIFTS that Jesus gives when He is healing these diseases.