

Lesson Name: The Prophets and Bethlehem

Opening Prayer:

While lighting the service candle.

The Light and Peace of Jesus Christ is with us. *Thanks be to God.*

Scripture Lesson:

Micah 5:2—But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Story:

Spread out the felt underlayment.

The Church learned a long time ago that people need a way to get ready to enter or even come close to a Mystery like Christmas. The Church set aside four weeks to get ready. This is such a great Mystery that it takes that long to get ready. During this time, we are all on the way to Bethlehem.

Take the Bethlehem model and place above purple material. Place the votive candle in the center of the model and light it.

We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, so let's go with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, the Magi and all the rest to make the journey that was not just back then. It is also now.

Take the prophets card and place it on the felt.

Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. They pointed the way to Bethlehem. They didn't know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew this was the place.

This Sunday is the time we remember the prophets. Here is the hand of a prophet pointing the way to Bethlehem, showing us the way, too.

Stop. Watch. Pay attention. Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem.

This is the light of the prophets.

Light the first candle on the advent wreath.

Prophets are the people who know the most important things. They knew which way to go. They are the ones who showed us the way. Now we can go to Bethlehem, too.

Light the other candles as appropriate for this week.

Advent II – This is the candle of the Holy Family.

Advent III – This is the candle of the Shepherds. (rose candle)

Advent IV – This is the candle of the Wise Men.

After lighting the candles take a moment to enjoy them.

Let's enjoy the light.

I want to show you something very strange and very important. Look. I want to show you what happens when the light is changed. Sometimes people don't pay attention to this. They miss this part.

Look. Do you see how the flame is in just one place now? It is right here. When I change the light, it will no longer be in just one place. You can't see it after it spreads out all over the room, but it is there.

Blow out the candles.

Watch. Do you see it? It is no longer here in this one place. Now it is spreading out. Getting thinner and thinner as it fills up the room with the light of the prophets. Anywhere you go in this room you will be close to the prophets. There may even be one sitting in this circle. Prophets can be boys, and prophets can be girls. They pay attention. They know things.

Hymn: #79 "O little town of Bethlehem"

Lord's Prayer:

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you have a plan for us. It is a good plan. Thank you that you can use small places and small people to change the world. As we journey to Christmas, as we decorate and think of gifts, help us remember the little town of Bethlehem and the greatest gift of all. *Amen.*