

**Isa. 2:1–5**

**Ps. 122**

**Rom. 13:11–14**

**Matt. 24:36–44**

# Peace and Light

**Goal for  
the Session**

*Children will celebrate the First Sunday of Advent by identifying God’s vision of peace in Isaiah 2.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Isaiah 2:1–5

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Bruce C. Birch

This oracle is often called the “floating oracle of peace” because it also appears in Micah 4:1–3. It is apparently part of a general prophetic tradition that was available to both of these prophets as a promise of the eschatological fulfillment of God’s kingdom. Presumably this is especially important in times of difficulty when present circumstances seem unpromising; confidence that the future belongs to God gives hope in the present. In Advent we anticipate the birth of Jesus into a world in need of light (v. 5). Every generation needs assurance that the powers of the world—whether the Romans of Jesus’ time or the principalities and powers of our present age—do not determine the future.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Noel Leo Erskine

We are promised by God that as God’s gift of peace becomes real among us, Jews and Gentiles alike will stream to the mountain of God to be instructed and directed by God. The people who are taught by God will seek peace and practice violence no more. Weapons of violence will be destroyed. To receive divine instruction is to share in a vision of a coming realm of peace in which God will judge among the nations, and nations will not learn war anymore. The way forward is to walk in the light of the Lord.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Stacey Simpson Duke

In the end, what Isaiah offers is not only a vision of global transformation, but an invitation to live toward that day. “O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!” However hard it may be to believe that a new and longed-for reality will take hold some day, there is power in walking in God’s light now, one step at a time. We may feel cynical or hopeless about the prospects of Isaiah’s vision, but in his invitation lies enormous and practical power. The future belongs to God, but the first step toward that future belongs to those who have glimpsed God’s light and are willing to trust that enough light lies ahead.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Paul Simpson Duke

We are in the presence of a mystery. God’s own justice and peace will occur among the nations “in days to come.” What days? How? Perhaps all we can say is that the vision describes what God is, in fact, at work in the world to do. It is what Jesus apparently meant by “the reign of God,” which is already present and at work among us, though not yet in fullness. We saw it in Jesus, who converted fear to love, lunacy to sanity, enemies to friends. He died surrounded by swords; a spear stabbed him; nails tore him. They entered infinite love, which “melted them into light.”

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Isaiah 2:1–5**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Every child knows the fear of darkness at some time, and the consolation of light, even a light as small as a night light in the hall. They also desire peace, a time with no fighting. While God's peace is much more than the absence of fighting, that much of God's *shalom* is highly coveted by children of all ages. As children enter this Season of Advent, they can do so with the assurance from Isaiah that God desires this peace and light for them.

*God of light, as I prepare to meet with the children, may my fears that surface in the darkness be washed away with light so that your peace is spread before me. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ purple or blue cloth
- ☐ four purple or blue candles and matches or battery-operated candles
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ offering basket
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ Color Pack 1, 2, 39

For Responding

- ☐ option 1: drinking straws; wide gift ribbon; tape; *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- ☐ option 2: Color Pack 39; *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- ☐ option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 2, markers, purple or blue construction paper, staplers
- ☐ option 4: Color Pack 39; *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, determine whether you will need purple or blue cloth and candles, depending on what is used in congregational worship. Listen to and practice singing “Four Candles” (Color Pack 39, [Singing the Feast](#)). For option 1 in Responding, cut 20" strips of wide gift ribbon, four for each child. For option 3 in Responding, cut 1" strips of purple or blue construction paper.

Invite children to set up the worship table with a purple or blue cloth and four purple or blue candles arranged in a circle. Place a Bible and the offering basket.

When everything is ready, gather at the worship table. Announce that a new church year has begun and this is the Season of Advent. Ask a volunteer to light one candle. Ask the group to respond with “Come, Lord Jesus!” whenever you signal by raising your hand, and to do what you do as they say it.

*Leader: Advent is for looking back to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** (Shield eyes with one hand as though looking into the distance, then look back over one shoulder.)

*Leader: Advent is looking ahead to Jesus' return to rule one day.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** (Shield eyes with one hand and point forward with the other hand.)

*Leader: Advent is looking into our hearts for Jesus' presence now.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** (Cross arms over chest and bow head.)

*Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, teach us your word of peace. Amen.*

**All: Amen.** (Raise both hands above head.)

Read stanza one of “Four Candles” (Color Pack 39).

Extinguish the candle.

To introduce the theme of light for this session, ask:

- ✧ Has the electricity ever gone out at your house so you didn't have any lights at night?
- ✧ What did you do?
- ✧ What did you use for light?

Invite the group to listen for a special kind of light in today's Bible story.

## EXPLORING

Invite a child to retrieve the Bible from the worship table and open it to Isaiah in the Old Testament. Encourage the use of the table of contents. Today's story is about a prophet named Isaiah, who was God's prophet to Judah and Jerusalem. Show Color Pack 1. Have a child find Jerusalem. Explain that in the time of Isaiah, Judah was around Jerusalem and below it. Tell the story on Resource Sheet 1 (God's Light). Ask:

- ✧ Why were the people in Judah and Jerusalem worried?
- ✧ What did Isaiah tell them that might help them not to worry?
- ✧ What word pictures did you get in your mind as you heard Isaiah's message?

If necessary, read Isaiah's message again from Resource Sheet 1 (God's Light).

- ✧ How do you think people can walk in God's light?

Show Color Pack 2. Explain that the man is Isaiah. The speech bubble above his head is too small to write Isaiah's whole message. Ask:

- ✧ How would you shorten it to make a summary of the message that could be written here?

Allow time for several responses before writing what they say in the speech bubble. Read the summary. Ask:

- ✧ Why is this a good message for Advent when we are waiting for the birth of Jesus?
- ✧ Why is this a good message for the world today?

## RESPONDING

Select at least two options so children have a choice. Include one that is more challenging for children who can work on their own.

- 1. Advent Streamers** Children will make streamers to celebrate Advent and wave as they sing "Four Candles." Give each child a drinking straw and four 20" pieces of gift wrap ribbon. Note that there is one ribbon for each Sunday of Advent. Show them how to lay the ribbons side by side and tape one end of each ribbon to the straw. Demonstrate how to spread out the ribbons and wave them. Listen to the first stanza of "Four Candles" ([\*Singing the Feast\*](#)). Together plan movements to go with the music and words. Plan one movement that focuses on peace or light.



# FEASTING on the WORD

## CURRICULUM

Peace and Light

EASY  
PREP

2. **Advent Dance** Children will create a dance to give thanks for the peace of God's light and love. Read in unison the words to the first stanza of "Four Candles" on Color Pack 39 or read each line for the group to echo. Then listen to the song ([Singing the Feast](#)). Invite children to wonder why candles are an important part of the celebration of Advent. Together create simple dance movements for "Four Candles." Stress that their motions should explain or depict the words. As you plan, emphasize ways to show hope, peace, or light. Finally, as a group, perform the dance together.
3. **Advent Garland** Children will make garlands as a reminder to give thanks for God's love and light during Advent. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Advent Garland Pattern), scissors, and pens. Ask the children to think of people who show God's love to them or help them learn about being Jesus' follower. Have them write the names of these people on the candle. Be ready to help with spelling. Have them cut out the candle with its base. Set the candles aside as each child makes a paper chain with strips of purple or blue construction paper. The number of links should correspond to the days in Advent. Staple the candle to the top link. Explain that they can remove one link each day and pray for one of the persons on the candle. When they get to the last link, it will be Christmas Day.
4. **Advent Song** "Four Candles" (Color Pack 39, [Singing the Feast](#)) will be sung each week during Advent. This option will help the children sing it confidently. Play the song and have children clap softly to the rhythm. Some children may recognize the tune as "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella." Read the words together, using Color Pack 39. Ask them which words remind them of Isaiah's message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Explain that "Messiah" is the one God promised to send as a good shepherd-king, the one Jeremiah told about. Sing the song together.

### Four Candles

Light one candle, Messiah  
is coming;  
wait and watch, for his  
Advent is near.  
He will meet us on God's  
holy mountain;  
how shall we prepare for  
his coming?  
One. One candle to light  
the darkness.  
One. One candle to light  
his way.

## CLOSING

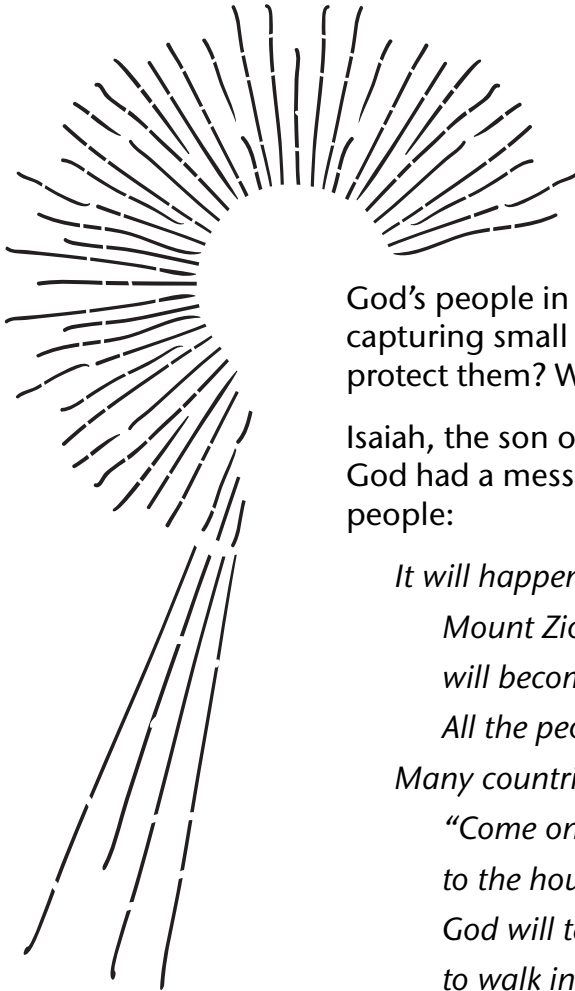
Gather at the worship table.

Light the candle lit in Gathering as the group sings or listens to the first stanza of "Four Candles" (Color Pack 39, [Singing the Feast](#)).

Ask the children to name a way they will walk in God's light this week.

Tell the children that you look forward to seeing them next week. To each child, say:  
(Name), *remember that God's love can be found in peace and hope. Amen.*

**God's Light**  
based on Isaiah 2:1-5



God's people in Judah were worried. The Assyrian army was capturing small nations near them. Would they be next? Would God protect them? Would there be war or peace?

Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was God's prophet in Judah and Jerusalem. God had a message for the people there. This is what Isaiah told the people:

*It will happen that*

*Mount Zion, where God's house is,  
will become the highest of all mountains.  
All the people will go to it.*

*Many countries and peoples will head that way and say,  
"Come on, let's go up the mountain  
to the house of God, Jacob's God.  
God will teach us the way  
to walk in God's paths."*

*Teaching will come from Mount Zion;  
God's word will be heard in Jerusalem.  
God will be the judge when nations disagree.  
God will settle their arguments.*

*They will make their swords and armor  
into plows and farming tools.  
No nation will fight another nation.*

*No one will ever learn how to make war again.  
Come, let us walk in God's light.*

Isaiah couldn't tell the people when this would happen, but Isaiah told them it was God's promise to them.

## Advent Garland Pattern

