



(GOD)
AMONG US

St. Paul's Youth
Advent Guide
2020

Week One

Isaiah 64.1-4

"O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him."

Reflection

Advent is all about waiting. In the church calendar Advent is the season right before Christmas. Does this mean we're waiting for presents, cookies, and all the other stuff that comes with Christmas? Well yes, but most importantly we're waiting for the person these things are celebrating: *Jesus Christ*.

Scripture promises that Jesus is God's presence among us. God loves us so much that God became a human being to be present with us and live as one of us. In Advent, we learn how to wait for God by waiting for Christ's birth. Another word for waiting in anticipation of something amazing (like Jesus!) is *hope*. This passage from Isaiah (which was written before Jesus's birth) is all about how awesome it will be when God is present with us.

What are you waiting for right now? What are you hoping for? Let's begin Advent by closing our eyes, taking a deep breath, and asking God to be present with us as we wait.

Week One

Activity: Advent Bingo

Use this Bingo sheet to track your progress throughout Advent. If you get Bingo send it to Luke for a dollar store item of your choice (whoaaaa)!

Complete
Week One's
Reading

Eat a
Christmas
cookie but
call it an
"Advent
Cookie"

Complete
Week Two's
Reading and
Activity

Go to "bible
project.com
" and watch
the video on
Luke 1-2

Come to
Senior EYC,
Junior EYC or
Confirmation

Find John 1
in a Bible
and read it

Complete
Week
Three's
Reading and
Activity

Listen to an
Advent
Hymn on
YouTube or
Spotify

Complete
Week Four's
Reading and
Activity

Week Two

Isaiah 40.3-8

"A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever."

Reflection

In this week's reading Isaiah gives us a picture of God coming to us: mountains are made low, valleys are lifted up, and a highway emerges in the desert. Nothing can stop God coming to be present among us.

On the next page is a Labyrinth to help you visualize this. You can use your finger to "walk" this personal labyrinth. Take a deep breath and trace the path in a slow, relaxing way. Try going back and forth several times. Try it with the hand you don't write with. Try thinking about what it would be like for God to be present with you. Are there any obstacles to God being present with you? Ask God to overcome them and be with you.

Week Two

Activity: Prayer Labyrinth



Week Three

Isaiah 61.1-3

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory."

Reflection

What does good news look like to you? Have you ever gotten some *really* good news about something?

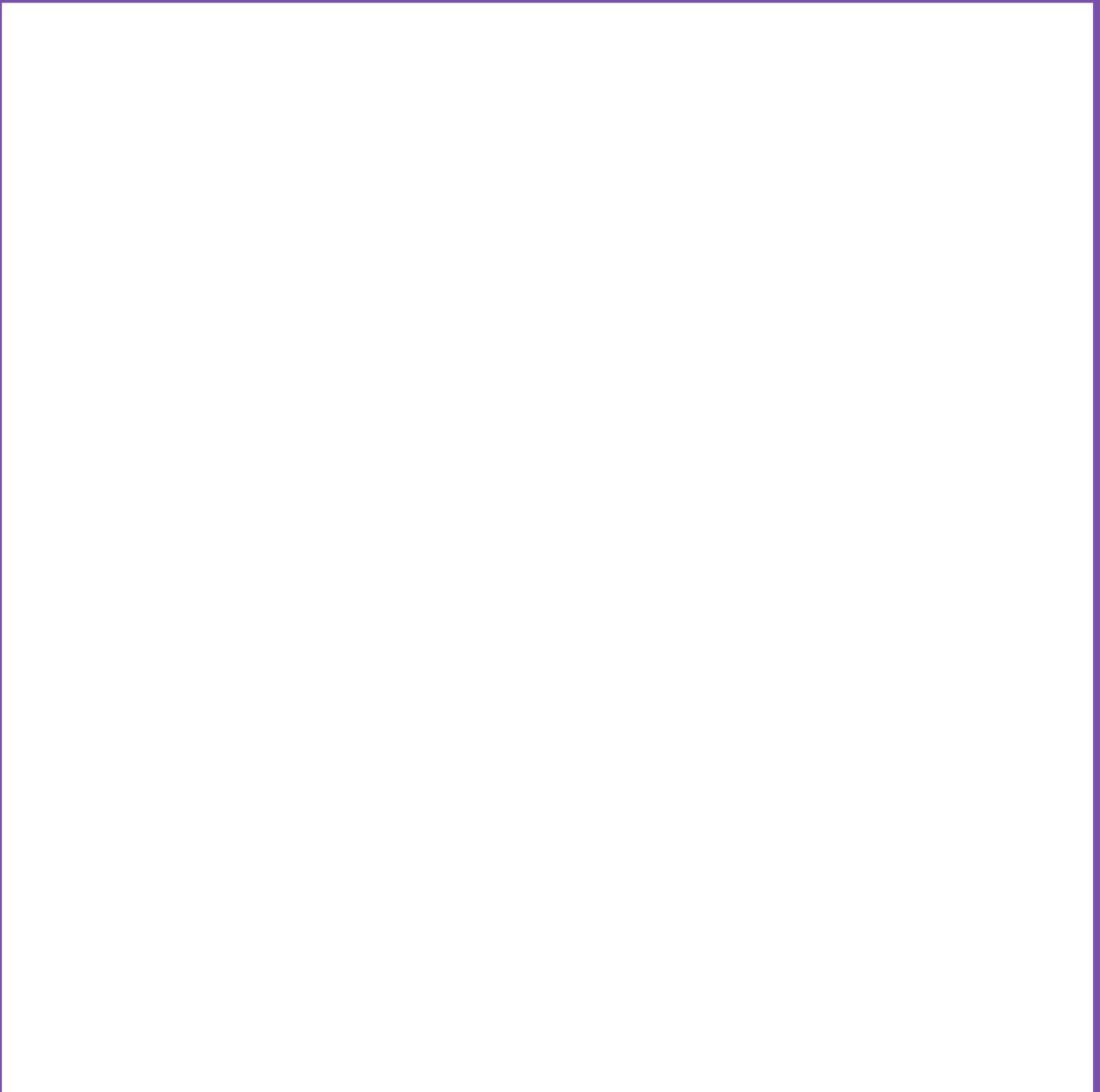
The people Isaiah was writing to really needed some good news. They'd been conquered and taken away to a land far from their home by the Babylonian Empire. Isaiah tells them the good news that God will deliver them from their oppression. This is good news *for us* too! Why? Because it shows that God is a God who liberates the oppressed, frees those in captivity, and comforts those who mourn.

Jesus, who is God among us, takes this passage sort of as his "mission statement" in Luke 4 (check it out in your bible). The good news Isaiah proclaims *is personified in Jesus Christ*. Now that's some galaxy brain content!

On the next page is a blank box. Fill in what good news looks like to you. What good news do you need to hear from God? Is there anything from Isaiah that is good news for you? Be creative. Draw. Write. Doodle. Paint. Use whatever medium works for you.

Week Three

Activity: What Is Good News?



Week Four

Luke 1:45-55

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *

in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *

and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *

to Abraham and his children for ever."

Week Four

Reflection

This week's reading is Mary's song of praise, commonly known as the *Magnificat* (it doesn't have to do with magnificent felines, but it's still very cool). Mary sings this song in response to the Angel Gabriel's announcement that Mary will give birth to Jesus, the one who will be God among us. You may have noticed it's a song on the last page because of how it's broken up into verses.

We often use songs, and other forms of art, to help us express something that we see. What does Mary see? She sees the good news of who God is, what God has done, and how that connects to *what* God promises to do through her and her child. That baby is Jesus, who is God among us. As Mary's song tells us, this is very very good news. God promises to be God with us and *keeps* that promise by being present through Jesus Christ.

Activity: Songs of Praise

Mary sings a song to proclaim God's promise and presence. Are there songs that help God be present with you? That gives you a sense of peace? That help you express things about or yourself that you couldn't otherwise?

Here's a couple to check out:

- Cardiphonia Music, "Canticle of the Turning" (a contemporary version of the Magnificat)

- Sufjan Stevens, "O Come O Come Emmanuel" (a good version of an Advent Hymn you've probably heard before)

