



Honoring
GOD

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THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my A.M.E. Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

A.M.E. Discipline

DEVOTION: FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Faith, hope, and love. Faith is a belief—it is based in your being, in your heart. Hope is a perspective—it is based in your thinking, in your daily outlook. Love is an action—it is based in what you do, in your behavior.

Many of us know this verse from 1 Corinthians. Even if you didn't grow up in the church, you may have heard it read at weddings. It is the final verse of what has been nicknamed "The Love Chapter." First Corinthians 13 talks about the different traits of love and how love is meant to be the driving force in all we do.

This month we are focusing on hope. The Love Chapter tells us that love hopes all things. When we live a life based in love, mirroring as best we can the sacrificial love of Jesus, we are able to live with a sense of hope about the world and about our lives.

As you reflect on this verse, silently consider what it means to show your faith, hope, and love as a disciple of Jesus. What do you do to show faith, hope, and love to the world? Do your actions reflect Christ in all that you do?

Close your time with this prayer: *God, my faith in you allows me to live in hope each day. When I am hopeful, I love others boldly. Help me to be brave enough to do so this week. Amen.*

Add your thoughts about this devotion here:

Focal Scripture Verse

Faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

OVERVIEW

Unit 1 HOPE: Because of GOD

During this unit, we will observe Advent—a hopeful but reflective time to prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of Jesus. We will reflect on the gifts and nature of the God who comes to live among us.

LESSON 1

We don't always choose what happens to us, but when we can, it's important to consider how God's call affects our choices and how we can respond with trust and hope.

LESSON 2

Expressing hope requires us to understand where we come from and where we are going. God loves us and, much like our ancestors and our descendants, we play an essential role in God's eternal story.

LESSON 3

The Israelites were living in exile in a foreign land when Isaiah promised them a servant leader who would bring about justice. It's important to remember what this message means to people who are living in pain.

LESSON 4

Joseph was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, but he had no idea his fiancé would be the Messiah's vessel. We must be patient when life doesn't work out as we expected.

LESSON 5

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told his followers he would send his Spirit to guide them. The Holy Spirit is with us every day, helping us live as followers of Jesus.

TRUSTING WITH HOPE

Do You Trust Me?

Look over the list of challenges below. Who could talk you into doing each of these activities? Are there people you trust enough to even try? You don't need to know the people in real life. They can be friends, family, celebrities, historical figures, or even fictional characters. Write a different name beside each activity.

1. Drink a jar of pickle juice: _____
2. Audition for a singing show: _____
3. Parachute out of an airplane: _____
4. Present the sermon in church: _____
5. Wear a Halloween costume this Tuesday: _____
6. Give up your favorite video game for a month: _____

GENESIS 12:1-9 (NRSV)

- 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
- 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.
- 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
- 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
- 5 Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan,
- 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.
- 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.
- 8 From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and

there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord.

9 And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

ON THE MOVE

Form groups of three, with each group reading one of the following passages: Exodus 19:1-2; Ruth 1:16-19; Matthew 2:13-15; Acts 8:26-29. In your small group, talk about who is on the move in your assigned Scripture. Then discuss the following:

- Why do you think there are so many stories about moving in the Bible?
- Where do you see God in the story that you read?
- What level of trust is required to follow God’s call?
- How can we use these journeys to help us understand the need for trust in our lives?

KEY VERSE: *The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your land, your family, and your father’s household for the land that I will show you.”*
 — Genesis 12:1 (CEB)

THE BIG MOMENTS

Use the space below to describe three moments in your life so far that have been major transitions and three moments you expect to be major transitions in the future.

Past Transitions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Future Transitions:

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

Now create a timeline that lays out these moments in chronological order. When you have finished, partner up and share your timeline. Explain why the events you noted have been and will be important transitions to you.



POEMS OF HOPE

In the space below, write a short poem about the idea of hope. If you wish, partner up and write a poem together.

HOPE

LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE: WEEK 1

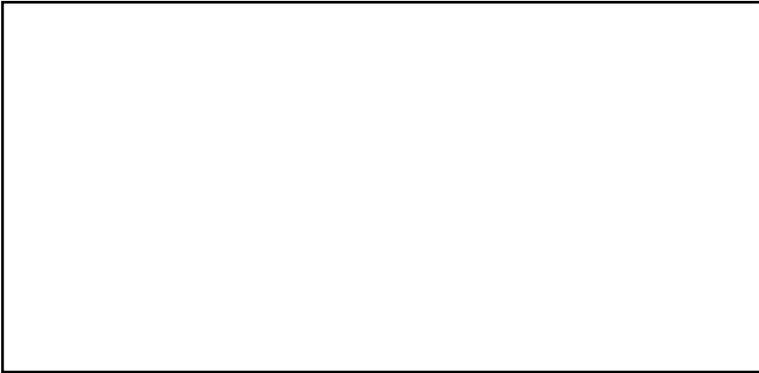
Today we begin the season of Advent. Lighting the Advent wreath is a ritual that offers us a rhythm to remember each week as we prepare ourselves for Christ's coming during this season. Say the prayer below with your leader.

“God, we light this candle of Hope. Because we trust in you, we can hope for goodness each day. We know you walk with us along our journeys and through all of life’s transitions. Thank you for your faithfulness to us. Amen.”

FAITH AND HOPE

Family Tree

In the space below, draw your family tree and record as many family members as you can and as far back as you can remember. Add as many branches as needed to reflect a blended family or to include distant family members. Draw an actual tree with leaves, or present your family tree in some other form. Be creative!



HEBREWS 11:1, 6-16 (NRSV)

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

HEBREWS 11: 6-16

- 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
- 7 By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.
- 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going.
- 9 By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.
- 10 For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

- 11 By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised.
- 12 Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”
- 13 All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth,
- 14 for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.
- 15 If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return.
- 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

KEY VERSE: *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out without knowing where he was going. — Hebrews 11:8 (CEB)*

FAITH—OUR HEART AND SOUL

Use your Bibles to look up the following Scripture references and match them to the verse quotes below. Write the number of the matching reference in the blank beside each quote.

- 1. Ephesians 2:8
- 2. Matthew 17:20
- 3. James 2:17
- 4. 2 Corinthians 5:7
- 5. 2 Timothy 1:5
- 6. Luke 7:50

_____ a. In the same way, faith is dead when it doesn't result in faithful activity.

_____ b. “Because you have little faith,” he said. “I assure you that if you have

faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Go from here to there,’ and it will go. There will be nothing that you can’t do.”

____ c. You are saved by God’s grace because of your faith. This salvation is God’s gift. It’s not something you possessed.

____ d. I’m reminded of your authentic faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. I’m sure that this faith is also inside you.

____ e. Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

____ f. We live by faith and not by sight.

GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU’VE GOT

“ . . . and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” — Mark 12:30

Write your thoughts on what this verse means: _____

PEACEFUL POEM

“So let’s strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.” — Romans 14:19

Use the letters of the word *Peace* to create an acrostic poem about how our faith calls us to strive for peace.

P _____

E _____

A _____

C _____

E _____

LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE: WEEK 2

“God, we light this candle of Peace. Scripture has passed down the stories of the faithful, and like them we hope to reflect our faith through our hopeful and peaceful actions. Grant us the courage to live with hope and peace this week. Amen.”