

Script 1 “Watch Out!”

Advent 1

Matthew 24:42-44

THEME

Advent starts the Church year and Jesus’ message is: “Get ready, keep awake!” The Gospel is full of these wake up calls. Jesus’ countrymen, who had waited so long for the coming of the Messiah, appear not to have noticed He’d arrived. And Jesus’ friends seem to have needed prodding as well.

So what are children to keep awake for? Christmas obviously—not Santa Claus and presents (important though they are)—but Jesus’ arrival as a tiny child on Christmas morning. It’s also worth practicing being alert, you never know when the Lord might turn up...

SET UP

- The liturgical color is Purple or Sarum Blue: highlight by wearing something purple or blue.
- An Advent Wreath.*
- A box full of stuff for Christmas, put a Bible in and then add anything you’ve got—a toy crown, a lamb, some candlesticks if you’re stuck, even a nativity figure, anything portable.
- Burglar kit: a party mask (preferably black), a striped shirt and a floppy bag or sack (like a laundry bag) labelled “loot.”
- Somebody prepared to dress up as the burglar—a grown up or an older child.
- Letter with “Wanted” poster inside (from the CD-ROM) and a small Bible with the version of the Gospel used below slid between its pages. (This goes in a Leader’s pocket.)



* Keep the Advent Wreath for all four Advent Sundays; and the loot bag and burglar outfit for next week. Note: the burglar kit gets used from time to time throughout the year.

WELCOME *the children and start the session with one Leader saying*

Leader Okay, we have a special message from Jesus today—it is...
All Leaders **Watch out!**

Lead the children in The Sign of the Cross + (p. xxxvi).

INTRODUCING ADVENT

Leader This week the color has changed in church.

Depending on what you use to indicate liturgical colors in your church, run a dialogue along these lines:

What color did we have on the Altar today? (**Purple or Blue**)

What color was the priest wearing? (**Purple or Blue**)

Check out my socks, what color are they? (**Purple or Blue!**)

The church has gone purple or blue.

When the church gets into purple or blue it's a sign we're getting ready for something. Any idea what we're getting ready for?

Give some outrageous hints (I'm ordering a turkey next week, must get a tree, etc.).

(Christmas)

Brilliant, we're getting ready for Christmas and the four weeks before Christmas are called "Advent."

Advent means "coming." So in Advent we're looking out for somebody who's coming.

Anybody know who that is?

Take all answers—one child is bound to say "Santa Claus." Sum up by saying:

We're getting ready for Jesus, when He comes as a tiny child on Christmas Day.

One way to get ready is to clear up all the things we've done wrong. Let's do that now.

THE KYRIE Lord Jesus, you came on earth to tell us how much God loves us,
Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came on earth to help us say sorry,
Christ have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came on earth so our sins could be forgiven,
Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Ask the children to repeat The Prayer for Forgiveness after you (p. xxxvi).

THE ADVENT WREATH

An Advent Wreath helps define the Sundays in Advent. The children like lighting the candles—and love the countdown. Traditionally there are three purple or blue candles (for Sundays 1, 2 and 4), a pink one for the cheerful Sunday (number 3) and a white candle in the middle, for Christmas Day. Help a child light a purple or blue candle for the first Sunday of Advent.



OPENING PRAYER

God our Father,
We thank you for sending your Son Jesus into the world at Christmas.
Help us to be really wide awake this Advent, so that we will be ready
to greet Him when He comes as a Baby on Christmas Day. *Amen.*

Leader Okay, we've started Advent.

BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Leader 2 My Advent started very strangely...

Produce letter from pocket.

I got a letter this morning, listen to this.

Open it up.

Dear *Name*,
Bill the Burglar has escaped from prison.
He'll steal anything.
Be on your guard.
Yours sincerely,
A Well Wisher
PS I enclose a Wanted Poster.

Pull out Wanted poster and stick it up.

CD1.1 That's Bill the Burglar.

Yup, he looks very dangerous—I'll keep an eye out for him.

Pull forward a chair and the prop box and sit down to go through the props. Ad lib the following, depending on what you've got.

This is obviously going to be a very exciting Advent—I'll just get the props sorted out for the next few weeks—ah a Bible, and a donkey, and a star—I wonder who'll want them? A lamb, a crown, goodness, a present—oh, it says not to be opened until Christmas Day—a candlestick...
Nice amount of stuff we've got here.
I'll have to watch out.
I'll put it all out.

Spread it on the floor.

And make a list—and, um, keep an eye on it.

Settle down in the chair.

If anyone sees anyone like that character...

Indicate poster.

Just tell me will you?

Nod off...

Enter the Burglar, who flourishes his/her loot bag and steals a couple of props. The kids will go berserk—the Burglar hides behind the chair—

Run the "Look behind you!" pantomime gag.

What Burglar?
 Behind me?
 I can't see anything.
 I shall just settle down again and have a nice nap...

Eventually the Burglar steals the last prop, takes the Wanted poster—and only then does the Leader realize that something is amiss.

Hey! Where's all our Christmas stuff gone?
 It's been stolen!
 Why didn't you tell me? (**Uproar!**)
 Oh, did you? Well, okay—we'd better get moving.
 Time for the Gospel.

Look in the prop box.

Good Heavens, the Bible has been stolen too.
 Fortunately I always carry a spare.

Pull out the pocket Bible, open it and quickly scan the Gospel—then collapse.

Oh no!

Leader 1 I think I'd better see what the Gospel says.

Take it from slumped Leader 2.

Leader 1 Ah, yes, it's a pity we didn't read this before...

THE GOSPEL *Matthew 24:42-44*

Jesus said,

"Stay awake! For you do not know when I shall come back. If a householder had known when a thief was about to break in, he'd have stayed up to catch him. You don't know when I am coming, any more than you know when a thief is about to strike. So be ready for me—stay awake and watch out!"

AFTER THE GOSPEL

Leader What does Jesus tell us to do this Advent? (**Watch out!**)
 Exactly, watch out. That's something we need to practice.

OPTIONAL ADVENT WATCH GAMES

What's the Time, Mr. Wolf?

The children advance on the wolf (who has his back to them), chanting: "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" The wolf says: "3 o'clock," and they move three steps towards him, "8 o'clock," and they move eight steps and so on. They have to be hyper alert because

when he says "Supper-time!" they run back to base before he catches them. Canny wolves let them get quite close. (Any child who manages to touch Mr. Wolf, before the dreaded "Supper-time," becomes the Wolf in his stead. It doesn't normally happen.)

Pick a Key

Blindfold a kid and put a bunch of keys just beside her: the others try to creep forward to get them, and the kid points in the direction of the sound she hears. Any child pointed at is out.

REHEARSAL

Practice your presentation for when you go back to church (see below).

FINAL PRAYER God our Father,
Help us this Advent
To watch out for your Son
So that when He comes at Christmas
He may find us ready to welcome Him. *Amen.*

BACK IN CHURCH

The children line up at the front.

Leader The Children's Church has been thinking about Advent this morning,
and have come back with a special message for the church . . .

Give them a cue.

Kids Watch out!!



(CD1.1)