ELEMENTARY GUIDE

4

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

ADVENT - REMEMBER TO ANTICIPATE

BIG TRUTH: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

Mark 14:38; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Psalm 42:8; James 5:13; Proverbs 15:29; Matthew 21:22

BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 4:7

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus is coming soon.
- Our waiting is empowered by our prayers.
- Jesus followers wait well for Christ's appearing when we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

BIBLE PASSAGE: REVELATION 22:10-21; 1 PETER 4:7; LUKE 21:34-36

ADVENT

Advent is a special celebration and contemplation of the coming of Jesus Christ that Christians participate in during the Christmas season. Advent literally means "arrival" or "coming". During Advent season, God's people remember and rejoice in Jesus' first coming to save His people from their sins, while at the same time long with anticipation and expectation for His return. Advent centers on Jesus, the saving Son. He alone is the one true King, and He is coming again!

BIG AIMS

Every child should know that...

- Jesus has come and is coming again.
- At Advent, we remember His first coming to anticipate His return.
- We are called to wait faithfully for Jesus.

Every child should feel...

- Longing within their soul for the King.
- Dissatisfied by the things of the world.
- Awe and wonder that the King has come and is coming again.

Every child should strive to...

- Wait with purpose for the return of Christ.
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week.
- Tell someone else about the King who has come and is coming again.

Every child should want...

- Trust Christ in the everyday struggles of life.
- See and seek Jesus more than anything else this Christmas season.
- Tell others who are lost about the good news of the King.

FDP
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PLAN

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BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 4:7

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

Through Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, everything necessary for God's plan of salvation for His people has been accomplished.

"The end of all things is at hand…"

- Since man's fall into sin in Genesis 3, God has been foreshadowing His redemptive plan. All throughout the Old Testament, prophecy foretold the coming Messiah who would be the true Savior and King to His people.
- Now, after Christ's death on the cross in our place as payment for our sins and His resurrection from the dead defeating the power of sin and death and the grave, all things that were needed for God's redemptive plan have been fulfilled. Jesus said that after He ascended to heaven that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would come. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, this prophecy was fulfilled. There is nothing else necessary for Christ's return. The end of all things is at hand, and He could return at any moment.

The Jesus follower should practice self-control.

"…therefore, be self-controlled…"

- Because Jesus could return at any time, the Jesus follower must be careful not to get distracted in their waiting. We must practice self-control in order to keep focused on the things of the Lord.
- Our sinful and fleshly passions will tempt us away from what is right and toward fleeting pleasures. To be self-controlled is to not let these things drive our thought life, our decision-making, our attitudes, or our actions.

The Jesus follower should not be influenced by the powers of the world.

"'…and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

- To be sober-minded means to not have anything that is influencing your ability to see or think clearly. We must be able to rightly see and discern what is true, what is false, and where we are tempted.
- The one who is not sober-minded will be distracted by things that are lesser and will not be ready when Christ returns.

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BIG IDEA: JESUS IS COMING SOON.[1]

We must not get distracted or forget that Jesus is coming soon.

- We are naturally impatient people.
- Even when we know something is going to happen "soon," it never seems to happen as quickly as we would like.
- Jesus is coming soon, but we tend to forget or get distracted by the things of this world, because they are the things that are right in front of us.
- Scripture warns us of the danger of those who "fall asleep" or who forget that Jesus is coming again.

Talk with the children about what it will be like when Jesus comes back. You can just talk about it, or have them draw a picture of what they imagine it will be like. Tell them that even though we don't know when, Jesus is coming soon.

We must be ready for Jesus to return.

- Jesus followers should live in a way that they are ready for Christ to come back at any moment.
- This means that when the Holy Spirit makes us aware of sin in our lives, we should repent immediately, not wait.
- We should obey the commands of God's Word now, not wait until later when it is more convenient for us.
- We should take opportunities to share the gospel with other people now, not wait until later.
- No one knows when Christ will return, but His church is told to be ready.[2]

Jesus followers long for the day when Christ comes again.

- Jesus followers are not only ready for the day that Jesus comes again, but they long for and desire that day to come.
- Jesus followers are able to do this because there is nothing that they love more than Jesus. There is nothing that they desire more than to be with Jesus.

1. *In Revelation 22:7, Jesus says to John in his vision, "Behold, I am coming soon."*
2. *Matthew 24:44: Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

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BIG IDEA: OUR WAITING IS EMPOWERED BY OUR PRAYERS.[3]

While we wait, we pray.

- God has given us access to talk to Him through prayer.
- We can pray at all times of the day about anything.
- God tells us that in everything we can make our requests known to Him with thanksgiving.[4]

God works through the prayers of His people.

- God has chosen the prayers of His people to be one of the means by which He works.
- This means that God wants us to ask Him for things and talk to Him.
- When we pray, things might not always end up the way that we would like. But when they don't, we can trust that God is doing something in us that is better for us than the thing that we were asking for.
- God uses our prayers to make us more dependent on Him.

Bring in a calendar for the upcoming year. Look ahead in it and write major events on it: big events that your church does, kids' birthdays, holidays, etc. Ask the children when you should put "Jesus comes back!" on the calendar. Talk with them about how no one knows when He is coming back, but we can trust that He is. We can rejoice that He is coming again.

Prayer empowers us while we wait.

- Waiting for Christ's return can be hard.
- Prayer sustains us while we wait, because it connects us back to God.
- The Holy Spirit prays, or intercedes, for us even when we do not know what to pray for.
- This is a picture of how we have nothing to give—not even words to say in prayer, and yet God sustains us and gives us strength.

3. *Luke 21:36 tells us to stay awake while we wait for the return of Christ, and to pray so that we may have strength to withstand trials in this life and to endure until we stand before God.*
4. *Philippians 4:6-7 remind us that in everything, with prayer and thanksgiving, we can make our requests known to God; therefore we do not have to be anxious about anything.*

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BIG IDEA: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WELL FOR CHRIST'S APPEARING WHEN WE CRY, "COME, LORD JESUS!".[5]

Jesus has promised that He is coming soon, and we proclaim this promise to the world around us.

- Revelation 22:17 says, "Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."
- When we cry out to our Savior, "Come, Lord Jesus!" we are proclaiming to those around us the reality that Jesus is coming again and that He is the one who will satisfy the dry and weary soul.
- We are speaking the truth to ourselves that He is coming again and that He is the only one who can satisfy us.
- This proclamation reminds us of the picture of Jeremiah 2:13, the other things that we would turn to are like broken cisterns that hold no water.
- These things may appear promising, but eventually they leave us unfulfilled.
- There is nothing and no one in the world other than Christ that can sustain the weight of our souls. He is the only one who satisfies, and we wait with anticipation for His return.

We long for the return of the King.

- We do not hold tightly to the things of this world, but instead we willingly cast them aside as we yearn for King Jesus to come again.
- When we proclaim, "Come, Lord Jesus!" it reveals that our hope is more in the next life than it is in the current one.
- We proclaim a willingness to lay aside our desires and our ambitions and a readiness for the kingdom of Christ to come, for the old heaven and earth to pass away, and for the new heaven and earth to be ushered in.

We long for Jesus to make all things new.

- Revelation 21 gives a picture of the new creation.
- When Jesus comes again, there will be no more pain or crying.
- When Jesus comes again, the reign of the enemy will be ended and His people will no longer experience death.
- When Jesus comes again, His people will be with Him.
- When we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" we proclaim that we long for the new creation rather than wanting to hold fast to the fleeting pleasures of this life.

5. *The Bible ends with this proclamation, "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen." -Revelation 22:20-21*

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