Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children
Advent 1 (B)
Old Testament: Isaiah 64:1-9

BACKGROUND
Today we enter Advent, the first season of the church year. Advent is a time when we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. During Advent, we reflect on the hope, peace, and joy that come with the birth of Christ. We prepare ourselves for the coming of the light that will help bring God's kingdom to earth.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
Today's Scripture comes from the book of Isaiah. At first read of the passage, this might seem like a lesson that is difficult to teach to students. However, a closer reading of the story brings forth many important and significant themes. Isaiah wrote this text at a time when the people of God were facing trouble. They were attacked and exiled, and are now allowed home. Isaiah's words about God's great power brought hope to God's people at a time when they were rebuilding their lives. During Advent, we hope and wait for God to come and dwell with us, too.

THEME
Hope in God

BEFORE CLASS
Read the story in Isaiah 64:1-9 prior to the start of class. Take special note of what words, phrases, or images stand out to you as you read. You will need a Bibles to tell the story. Gather and prep materials for your chosen activities.

BEGINNING
As a class, make an Advent wreath. (Or, if time is limited, have a wreath already made for your group.) Light the first candle on the wreath. Discuss: What is Advent? Why do we celebrate Advent? What are we waiting for during this time?

OPENING PRAYER
Holy God, you are always with us. Be present with us today as we learn more about the hope we have in you. Amen.

THE STORY: ISAIAH 64:1-9
Split students into small groups of three or four each. Help students look up Isaiah 64:1-9 in a Bible. Invite small groups to read the story and work together to create a skit that

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illustrates Isaiah's prophecy. After giving groups time to create, invite everyone to share their skits with the class.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder why Isaiah would tell the people of God this lesson?
- I wonder what parts of this story would bring God's people hope?
- Do you think it's easy or hard to have hope? Why?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you needed hope? What happened? What brought you hope?

ACTIVITIES

Option 1

As a class, do some research on the Babylonian exile. Use smartphones or tablets if possible. If you are able, split students into pairs to complete this activity. Ask: What was the Babylonian exile? How did it end? Why do you think God's people needed hope during this time?

Option 2

Brainstorm some people in your parish who need hope this Advent season. Write notes or make cards to send these people. Arrange for these cards and notes to be sent.

Option 3

Make reminders of Isaiah 64:8. Provide play dough or clay. Invite students to use the dough or clay to make an object or symbol that reminds them of the story. Then, send the objects home alongside a card with the verse written on it.

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather around your class Advent wreath. How can we help bring hope to others during this Advent season?

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, you bring us hope. Help us hope in you and bring hope to others during this season. Amen.

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