

## The Announcement Advent Lesson

### Luke 1:1-23

#### Welcome Question

“What is the thing you’ve waited the longest for?”

#### Introduction

Good Morning! I hope y’all had a great week! We’re now getting into Christmas! Yay! And there is so much good stuff about Christmas! All the decorations, the tree, the lights, the cookies and treats, and of course, the presents. I mean, that’s the main show, am I right? In fact, this is so weird, I found this present just sitting here this morning. It says, “to (*your group’s name*)”. Should we open it? Who wants to? Don’t you love just ripping open a present to see what’s inside? Since this is to all of us, should we open it? Eeeee, NO, we better wait.

#### Large Group Lesson

Speaking of waiting, have you ever noticed in the Bible that there is kind of a gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament? Like a 400 year gap? At the end of the book of Malachi this is what it says, “*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.*” What on earth is that talking about? Basically, he’s saying there will be a guy that comes to make way for the Messiah, the Rescuer. And then nothing. Silence. For 400 years.(dramatically) Until the Big Announcement.

(Go back to the present)Well, since we’re waiting for the big announcement...should we open up the present? I kind of want to...I really want to see what’s in it...but we better wait. That just reminded me of our “Welcome Question”, “What is the thing you’ve waited the longest for?” (*review answers and discuss*)

None of those answers seemed like you had to wait 400 years. That would have been crazy. 400 years with no prophets, no one proclaiming what God was saying and then BAM big announcement. And this announcement came in kind of a funny way...

Let’s watch a video on this announcement in Luke 1.

**Zechariah & Elizabeth Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJXrSRxSX-Y>

Zechariah was just told by the angel of God that his son, John, will make the way for the Savior of the world. And Zechariah is shocked! Why? Because he’s old! He can’t believe he gets to have a child and one that will announce the coming Savior.

**18** And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” **19** And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. **20** And behold, you will

*be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."*

And now after 400 years of silence, he's the only one that knows...and he can't speak. In fact, Zechariah can't speak until John is born! Then Elizabeth becomes pregnant as an old lady. God is full of surprises!

Speaking of surprises, I wonder if we should open our present now?? (*Shake the box*) Oh man, it sounds like something really good is inside. Maybe we should wait a little longer.

Back to our story, do you think Zechariah was happy to wait 9 months until his son was born to speak? Y'all have a hard time not talking for 9 minutes, let alone 9 months! Waiting is hard. We don't like waiting. We want everything now. **Lamentations 3:25** says, "*The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.*" The Lord sometimes wants us to wait because He has something better for us. Elizabeth was an old lady, she and Zechariah wanted to have children for so long, but God had a special plan for them. All in the Old Testament there are prophecies of the Rescuer, the Messiah coming, but God's people had to wait and wait and wait.

Let's open up this present now. (*get a child who has waited patiently to open it, in it is the advent supplies*). Does anyone know what these are? These are Advent candles. What does the word advent mean? The word advent is actually a Latin word that means "coming". And when someone is coming, that means others are waiting. Advent is all about waiting for the coming of who? Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Sometimes we think that waiting to open presents on Christmas Day is what is most important. Advent helps us remember why we're waiting and WHO we are waiting for.

Let's light the first candle. This candle represents Hope. Think about Zechariah. He was a priest, he knew that the Messiah would one day come and now he had real HOPE that He was coming and his own son would get to be apart of it.

We have hope too, that Jesus will one day return for us. So let's keep waiting and watching, even if it takes 400 years! And this Christmas, we'll also wait together and keep focused on the birth of Jesus, the whole reason we do Christmas in the first place.

**Close in Prayer**

## The Promise

### Small Group Questions

#### Discussion:

Introduce yourself and learn the kids names. Then use the following questions to lead a discussion.

- Who was Zechariah? *A priest of God*
- What had Zechariah and Elizabeth wanted for years? *A baby*
- What was the name of the angel that came to Zechariah? *Gabriel*
- What was Zechariah's consequence for doubting? *Couldn't speak until the baby came*
- Why was this baby important? *He would make the way for the Messiah.*
- How long was there between Malachi and the "big announcement" of John? *400 years*
- 400 years is a long time of waiting. Sometimes we can hardly wait 4 minutes for something!
- What is the longest thing you've ever waited for?
- How can waiting be a good thing?
- What do patience and waiting have to do with each other?

#### Bible Challenge:

**This week's Memory Verse:** *"The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him."*Lamentations 3:25

Go over the verse for this week. Practice it together several times.

#### Advent Activity:

Using the supplies provided, children will create a banner with the word "Hope" on it. Each week they will make one for the four weeks of Advent. They will also attach their Bible verse for the week to the banner.

**Prayer:** Ask children if there is anything they need prayer for. Close your small group time in prayer.

If time allows, return to Large Group. Choose one child to share what they learned for Large Group Recap.