

# Seasons and Days of the Church Year

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**Purpose:** This activity is designed to help children look at the church year and the way in which the church year helps tell the story of our faith.

**Uses:** This lesson can be used as a Sunday School Lesson or in a week-day program for children and can be used with a class of any size. It can also be used by parents/grandparents in the home to help give direction to prayer time together as a family.

These materials may be photocopied or adapted to meet the needs of the children and families in your church. If you have any questions please contact Rachel Christopher by email at [rachelc25w@embarqmail.com](mailto:rachelc25w@embarqmail.com) or telephone (850) 482-8118.

## Seasons and Days of the Church Year (Lesson Plan)

A. **EXPLORING THE CALENDARS WE USE EVERY DAY** (May want to have one to look at as you discuss the questions below.)

Questions:

1. How many months are there in? What is the first month of the year and what is the last month of the year?
2. What month has the shortest number of days?
3. How many days are there in each week?
4. What things are printed on our calendars? (Days of week, special days of celebration such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Veterans Day, etc.)
5. What are dates that your family might mark on the calendar? Birthdays, Anniversaries, vacation days, etc.
6. Why are calendars helpful to us in our everyday lives?

B. **EXPLORING THE CHURCH YEAR**

1. The church, like every family, has special times or days that we celebrate.
2. These celebrations center around the events in the life of Jesus and His people.
3. The church has seasons (periods of time) in which we get ready for these celebrations. These seasons help us remember, prepare and celebrate our faith all year long.
4. The church year is made up of six different seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time.
5. In each of these seasons there are special church days that we celebrate (just as there are special days in each month of our family calendars).

C. **PREPARATION OF ACTIVITY TO USE WITH THIS LESSON**

1. This activity can be prepared ahead of time by the teacher or can be prepared by each person present at the time the lesson is used.
2. Needed for each person present:
  - a. Seasons and Days of the Church Year – Blank to be added to as part of the lesson

- b. Seasons and Days of the Church Year – Filled in with pictures and words to be cut into smaller pieces
  - c. Scissors and glue stick or tape
3. Preparation steps:
- a. Cut along the dotted lines so you have 7 cards for each: 7 Season/Days , 7 Symbols, 7 Key Words, 7 Colors, 7 Hymns. (Keep these in a pile together to use during the lesson or place in an envelope to give to each young person when the lesson begins if you want to do the advance work!?!?!)
4. Use of the activity sheets:
- a. Each person should be given a Seasons and Days of the Church Year sheet and a set of cards that they have cut out or has been prepared for them.
  - b. As each Season or Day of the Church Year is discussed find the appropriate card to place on your sheet. You can have each person glue the card in place as you discuss it, or you can have them place it on the sheet (as you do in Bingo) and then at the end have them glue everything in place. This may depend upon how much time you have for your session.

#### **D. *EXPLORING THE DIFFERENT SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR***

##### **1. ADVENT**

- Church Calendar Year begins with the celebration of Advent.
  - Begins 4 Sundays before Christmas and ends at midnight on Christmas Eve
  - A time of actively waiting and getting ready for Jesus' birth
  - A time to remember God's promises to this people and to us today
- ❖ Symbol – Advent Wreath with 4 candles, one for each Sunday in the Season
  - ❖ Key Words – Lord, Come
  - ❖ Color – Blue or Purple (depending upon the choice of the individual church)
  - ❖ Hymn – “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

##### **2. CHRISTMAS**

- Begins with Christmas Day and continues for 12 days
  - Time for remembering Christ as the light of the world and our Saviour
  - Ends on the day of Epiphany (January 6) Epiphany is the day we remember the magi (wisemen, kings) who came to see Jesus. Word “Epiphany” means “showing forth” and refers to Jesus being shown to the magi.
- ❖ Symbol – Manger (Jesus was wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger)
  - ❖ Key Word – Birth
  - ❖ Color – White
  - ❖ Hymn – “Silent Night”

##### **3. LENT**

- Begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday
- 40 days (not counting Sundays)
- Includes Holy Week and the celebrations of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the events of Jesus' last week on earth
- Time for remembering and reflecting on the last days of Jesus' life

- ❖ Symbol – Ashes (Sometimes placed on the forehead in the shape of a cross on Ash Wednesday and shows the beginning of the season of Lent)
- ❖ Key Word – Repentance  
Looking at our own lives and ways that we have failed to live as true followers of Christ, asking for forgiveness and promising to try to live more in His way each day.
- ❖ Color – Purple
- ❖ Hymn – “Lord, who throughout these 40 Days”

### **Maundy Thursday**

- The Thursday before Easter Sunday
  - The day when we remember the Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and celebrated a last meal with them (which we remember each time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper in our churches)
  - The word *Maundy* comes from the command (mandate) given by Christ at the Last Supper, that we should love one another.
- ❖ Symbol – Cup and Bread
  - ❖ Key Word – Last Supper
  - ❖ Color – Purple
  - ❖ Hymn – “Let us Break Bread Together”

### **Good Friday**

- Good Friday is observed on the Friday before Easter Sunday.
  - Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross is remembered
  - Many Christians spend this day in fasting, prayer, repentance, and meditation on the agony and suffering of Christ
- ❖ Symbol – Cross
  - ❖ Key Word – Crucifixion
  - ❖ Color – Black
  - ❖ Hymn – “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)

## **4. EASTER**

- Fifty days beginning at sunset of Easter Eve
  - Ends 50 days later on the Day of Pentecost (the giving of the Holy Spirit)
  - Time to remember and celebrate the raising of Jesus from the dead and the appearances he made to his disciples and followers
- ❖ Symbol – Empty Tomb
  - ❖ Key Word – Resurrection
  - ❖ Color – White
  - ❖ Hymn – “Jesus Christ is Risen Today”

## **5. PENTECOST**

- Day of Pentecost brings the Easter Season to a close
- Occurs fifty days after the Resurrection
- Day to remember God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church
- Reminds us we are never alone – the Holy Spirit is with us ready to help us carry out Christ's will here on earth

- ❖ Symbol – Descending Dove
- ❖ Key Word – Holy Spirit
- ❖ Color – Red
- ❖ Hymn – “We are One in the Spirit”

## **E. BRINGING THE LESSON TO A CLOSE**

1. Finish gluing the pieces on the chart so that all is complete
2. Questions for Discussion if time allows:
  - a. What is your favorite season of the church year and why?
  - b. Why do you think it might be helpful to have the different seasons of the church year?
  - c. What are ways that “we” celebrate the different seasons of the church year in our own church?
3. Close with Prayer

### ***Resources used in the Preparation of this Lesson***

Preparing for the Messiah by Doris Williams and Patricia Griggs (Griggs Educational Service, Copyright 1977)

Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church – W-3.2002








Get Ready! Get Set! WORSHIP! by Sue Lou, Jean Floyd Love, Mickey Meyers and Sylvia Washer (Geneva Press, Copyright 1999)

A Rainbow of Seasons, A Leaders' Resource for Living the Church Year by Sharon Lee (Augsburg Publishing House, Copyright 1983)

## Seasons and Days of the Church Year

SEASON/DAY	SYMBOLS	KEY WORDS	COLOR	HYMN
ADVENT				
CHRISTMAS				
LENT				
MAUNDY THURSDAY				
GOOD FRIDAY				
EASTER				
PENTECOST				

# Seasons and Days of the Church Year (Cut on Dotted Lines)

SEASON/DAY	SYMBOLS	KEY WORDS	COLOR	HYMN
ADVENT		Lord, Come	Blue	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
CHRISTMAS		Birth	White	Silent Night
LENT		Repentance	Purple	Lord, who throughout these 40 days
MAUNDY THURSDAY		Last Supper	Purple	Let us break bread together
GOOD FRIDAY		Crucifixion	Black	When I survey the Wondrous cross
EASTER		Resurrection	White	Jesus Christ is Risen Today
PENTECOST		Holy Spirit	Red	We are One in the Spirit

