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# “Hopeful Waiting: Parable of the Fig Tree”

Sunday School Lesson from Mark 12:24-37  
about the Second Coming of Jesus

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Watching and waiting...this Gospel marks the beginning of the church calendar year, and the first Sunday in the season of Advent. As we eagerly await the celebration of Christmas and the original coming of Jesus to Earth, we also look forward to His eventual return. In this passage, we remember that no one knows when that Second Coming will be, so we remain alert in the faith and prepared for the “great someday.”

**Lesson focus:** This lesson focuses on waiting with hopeful longing for Christ’s return. It also emphasizes the beauty of God’s promises and the assurance that we can rely on Him. A lot of things might change, pass away, and seem to crumble around us. But we know that the Word of God remains, no matter what. We can find peace in knowing that the Lord will protect us and love us, whatever else happens in the world.

**Passage:** Mark 13:24-37

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (variable for activity emphasis)

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, scissors, decorations, glue, string, hole punch, paper bags or plates, calendars, markers/crayons, Bible (optional, depending on crafts and activities of choice).

- You can watch a teaching demonstration of this [children’s sermon](#) on our [YouTube](#)
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# Lesson Introduction and Games

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**Lesson Opening:** There are several potential angles to hone in on with this lesson, so opening activity possibilities range, as well. You might wish to emphasize the start of the “church year,” the opening of Advent, the message of hope, or the importance of being watchful and ready. Choose your attention-grabbers accordingly. Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Red light, green light: focus on being prepared for anything by playing “red light, green light” or another game of rapid changes and unpredictability.
- Musical chairs...similar to “red light/green light”, musical chairs emphasizes the point that the music can stop at any time, and it’s important to be ready for it.
- “Get ready relay”: Have students form teams and race from one end of the room to another. Throw in a twist with each participant, such as hopping on one foot, performing odd tasks at the end of the line, or carrying a stack of items as they go.
- Group drawing: create a group collage by having students draw or cut and paste pictures depicting things that bring them hope or joy.
- Waiting for Advent: celebrate the start of Advent by making a paper chain to count down the days, or a simple Advent calendar with stickers and pictures.
- Stay awake! Have students pretend to sleep in a seated or prone position. Ring off a bell or timer at random intervals, and see who can get up and run across the room fastest.
- Happy New Year! Make confetti poppers or music makers in honor of the church calendar beginning.
- Earth and Heaven tag (best played outside): Form two lines of students, and have them stand back to back with one crew designated “heaven” and one “earth” (or other names of your choosing). Call off teams randomly, and have them chase the other team across a designated area in attempts to tag students.

Explain to students that our Gospel today focuses on a wonderful and exciting truth. Jesus has promised to return one day. We don’t know when it will be or exactly what it will be like, but we can take hope that it will be amazing.

**Ask:** What are some things we have to wait for? Why is waiting hard? Have you ever had to wait for something, but not known when it was going to happen?



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# Parable of the Fig Tree (Mark 13:24-37)

## Bible Lesson for Kids

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**Bible Lesson:** The entirety of this Gospel passage comes from words spoken by Christ. Depending on the age group of your students, it might be good to take turns reading verses, have kids read silently a bit at a time, or read it out loud and discuss as you go. Choose whatever method of reading or describing fits your audience.

Set the scene by explaining that Jesus is here describing how things will be at the end of the world. There are actually some frightening elements mentioned in His words. Some of them can be difficult to fully understand or interpret. But we will be on the look-out for a message of hope woven in the passage.

*“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup> And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. -Mark 13:24-27*

Sun darkening, moon and stars giving out...doesn't this seem a bit bleak? It would appear that there are some tough things going on here. We don't know all of the details, but we know the end of the world won't be pretty. It will be hard and painful and challenging. When and how will this take place? What does it mean?

**Ask:** Have you ever felt like things were overwhelming? Do you think life is a struggle? Why?

Explain that Jesus is describing what will happen at the end of all things. We know that there will be a lot of hardship. In that time (perhaps as now) it will feel like there's no hope...but there is! Look in the next few verses for a note of promise:

*“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. -Mark 13:28-31*



Do you notice anything here? Well, as far as the fig tree, that could be Israel, or it could partly be us, too. The important thing is noting the final verse. Everything will pass away. All things will end someday. But the words of Jesus will always be true. His promises remain, no matter what! This is a message that gives us joy and hope in life. We can count on our Savior!

*“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard, keep awake.<sup>[a]</sup> For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants<sup>[b]</sup> in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup> Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows,<sup>[c]</sup> or in the morning— <sup>36</sup> lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.” -Mark 13:32-37*

When will Jesus return? Well, we don't know. Nobody knows, and if someone tries to claim that they do, that's not Biblical. What does it mean to “stay awake”? We recognize that we are eager and excited for Jesus to come back. If we know that we love God and accept the gift of Jesus for our salvation, we're ready! We pray, we love God and live in His presence. But we don't have to worry or fear for the end of things. We can “stay awake” joyfully and be glad that Christ will come back!

**Ask:** How do you know you're ready for Jesus? Even if He doesn't return in our lifetime, we can be excited. What does this mean to you?

**Close** with a prayer thanking God for His promises and for Jesus. Ask for patience and hope as we eagerly await His eventual return.



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## “Crafts: Jesus is Coming!”

Sunday School Craft Ideas on Mark 12:24-37 about the Second Coming of Jesus

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Have Hope! Jesus is Coming!  
Craft Ideas for the Advent of the Second Coming

The crafts for this lesson are based on messages in the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus foretold descriptions of the end of the age. Our focus is on the hope found within those words. We know that God’s word remains, even if everything else seems to crumble around us. We also recognize that Jesus will come again, and we can await that future day with longing and joyful hope. In these crafts, a wide-eyed rooster puppet (or decoration) reflects on the verse admonition to “stay awake”. A calendar provides reminders to focus on positive blessings. And a special bookmark serves to recall the importance that God’s Word will remain, whatever else (even stars) may fall.



### Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider...

- *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. -Mark 13:31*
- *“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. -Mark 13:32-33*
- *Stay Awake! Jesus is Coming!*
- *Heaven and Earth Pass Away...God’s Word Remains!*
- *All Things Change...God Stays the Same.*
- *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever.*
- *Look for God’s Blessings...One Day at a Time!*

### Bible Passage: Mark 13:24-37

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# Craft one: “Stay Awake Rooster”

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## You will need:

- Construction paper or card stock
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- Glue and/or Tape
- Scissors
- Feathers
- Paper bag, cup, or plate
- Google eyes (optional)



## Procedure:

1. Decorate your bag, plate, or cup with crayon, marker, and verse captions.
2. Add paper/decorative or drawn elements: eyes, beak, etc. Make sure eyes are quite large.
3. Attach feathers (paper or craft feathers). Use as a puppet, magnet, or decoration and remember to “stay awake” in preparation for Jesus!



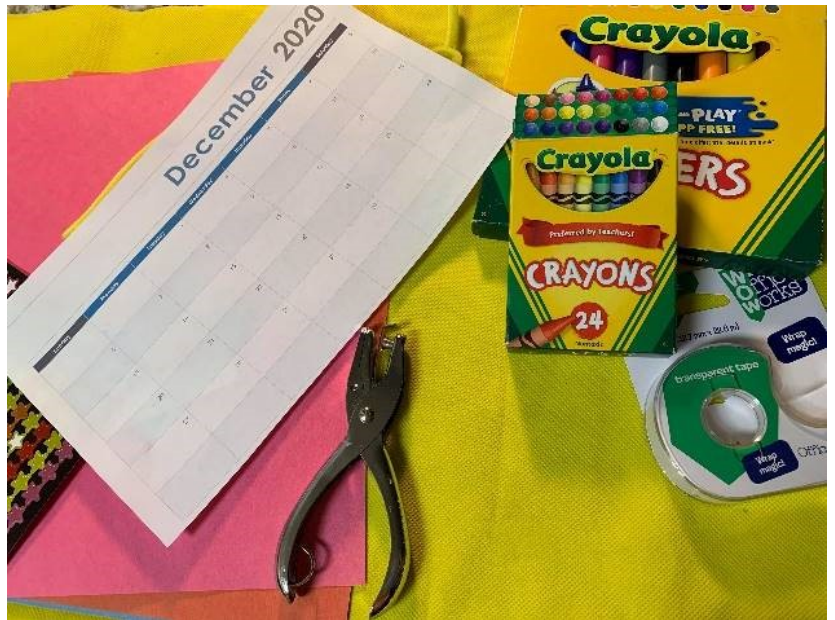
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# Craft Two: “Blessings Calendar”

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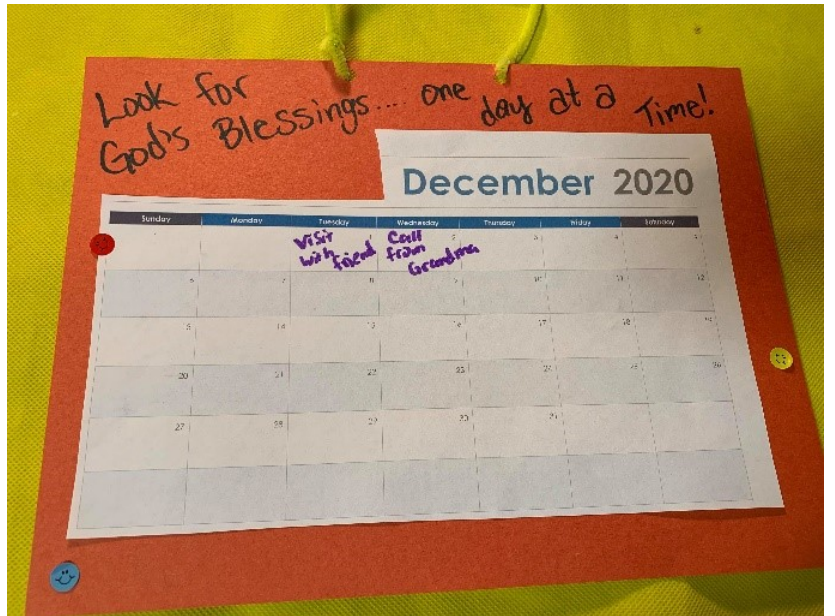
## You will need:

- Decorations (stickers, pipe cleaners, etc.)
- Paper (construction)
- Printed or drawn calendars
- Markers or crayons
- Glue and/or tape
- Hole punch (optional)
- Scissors



## Procedure:

1. Decorate your calendar (pre-printed or drawn) with stickers, colors, and captions.
2. As days go by, add a blessing or item of thanks for each calendar square.
3. Glue calendar onto construction paper.
4. Decorate with extra colors or verse captions. Add a pipe cleaner or ribbon to hang, if desired.



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# Craft Three: “Enduring Word Star Bookmark”

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## You will need:

- Hole punch
- Paper (construction) (optional)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Decorative supplies (stickers, glitter, etc.)
- Crayons or markers
- String or ribbon (if desired to hang)



## Procedure:

1. Trace a star shape onto paper or cardstock.
2. Cut out so that the tracing lines are hidden.
3. Decorate the star with extra stickers, captions and verses.
4. Add a pipe cleaner or ribbon if desired.  
Optional: laminate for sturdiness.
5. Use as a decoration or a Bible bookmark!







This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May

2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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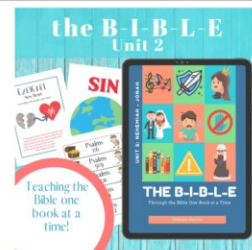
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