
Many Advent calendars offer treats or surprises as each day of the calendar is revealed. Encourage families to create Advent calendars that reveal a hidden surprise of seed packets.

As winter approaches, gather children together to make observations of any new birds or animals that appear in the garden. Did you create bird feeders in Lesson Four? If so, consider designating family groups or individuals to ensure that feeders are maintained during the winter months. Investigate what different types of food you might add to their diet during the coldest part of the year.

Epiphany and the Time after Epiphany:

Epiphany is the time when Christ is made known to the whole world. The Time after Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday.

It is during the time after Epiphany that we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. Encourage children to recall Lesson Three where the concept of the gift of Living Water is introduced. Have children create small banners with the theme of Living Water to be displayed on the date of the Baptism of our Lord, or to be given to families with newly baptized members.

Lent:

Lent is the time where we move from the darkness of the crucifixion to the light of resurrection at Easter. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and continues for six weeks through the Wednesday of Holy Week. Lent is followed by the three days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter.

The journey through the darkness of Lent is similar to the darkness beneath the soil. As the weeks of Lent progress, help children observe the garden for any new signs of growth emerging from beneath the soil. Consider giving children a bulb to plant and care for as they wait for Easter.

This is the time of year when seed catalogs appear in mailboxes. Gather children to research seed choices and planting schedules for the next cycle of growth in the garden. Help children consider the ways in which the selected plants might work together in the garden. As you plan your garden think about areas of the soil that might need a time of rest and renewal from planting. Have children create garden plans and display these in the church.

Easter:

The season of Easter begins on Easter Sunday and extends for 50 days until the Day of Pentecost. During Easter, Christians around the world celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ as well his ascension just prior to Pentecost.

The season of Easter contains many symbols of transformation and new life. This is also a time of anticipation of spring, extended hours of daylight, and warmer weather. As you continue to plan and prepare for the garden, encourage children to first observe and assess the garden area. Consider the quality of the soil, the amount of rain or snowfall that occurred over the winter, as well as any plants that may have emerged once again. How might these observations affect the ways in which you prepare and plant in the spring?

Encourage children to recall the garden a year ago. What has changed in the garden as well as in their own lives? Reinforce their prior learning and experiences as a source of wisdom and insight for the future garden. Have children create pictures or statements that reflect the hopes that they have for the future of the garden.

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