

Esther and Emmett: The Candles of Advent

Emmett: Hi Esther! Do you know that it's less than one month to Christmas?

Esther: Hi Emmett. Yes, I do know that, and I know that the four weeks before Christmas are a special time in the church.

Emmett: It sure is special – this time before Christmas.

Esther: And do you remember what the church calls this special time before Christmas.

Emmett: Um...sure, I know... the church calls it, "the special time before Christmas!"

Esther: Actually, the church calls this special time – 'Advent.'

Emmett: Advent! That sounds like an arithmetic question. If you have one vent, and you add another vent, what would you have?

Esther: I don't know. What would you have?

Emmett: I don't know either! I guess you would have two vents.

Esther: Advent does not have two vents, but it does have four candles.

Emmett: Four candles for this special time before Christmas – that is called Advent! I think I've got it now! Why are there four candles?

Esther: During Advent, people light a candle on each Sunday of Advent.

Emmett: And there are four candles, so I guess there must be four Sundays in Advent.

Esther: Yes there are four Sundays during Advent. And each of the candles has a name.

Emmett: That's neat. Are any of the candles named Emmett...or Esther!

Esther: Oh Emmett! No, the candles have symbolic names.

Emmett: Sim...sim...ball...what kind of names?

Esther: Symbolic! That means each candle has a name that tells us that each candle symbolizes, or represents, or reminds us of God and of faith.

Emmett: That's neat. So what are the names of these candles?

Esther: The candle that we light on the first Sunday of Advent is called the Candle of

Hope.

Emmett: Well, I sure 'hope' people remember to light that candle this Sunday!

Esther: The story of the birth of Jesus reminds us that our hope is in God, that no matter what happens in the world, we trust that God's love will always find a way to reach out to us.

Emmett: The candle of Hope...neat! What's the second candle?

Esther: That's the Candle of Peace!

Emmett: Peace...such a peaceful word!

Esther: That candle reminds us that Jesus showed us that peace is found in sharing God's love and sharing food and care with all people.

Emmett: This is really neat! What's the third candle?

Esther: The third candle is the Candle of Joy!

Emmett: Oh, on that Sunday do we get to sing 'Joy to the World'? I love that hymn!

Esther: Lots of people probably will sing 'Joy to the World' on the third Sunday of Advent. The Candle of Joy symbolizes that the birth of Jesus tells us that our joy is found in knowing that God is with us, that God's creation is a creation of love....which is a hint as to what the fourth candle symbolizes.

Emmett: That was a hint? Could you please give me the hint one more time?

Esther: Sure. God's creation is a creation of....LOVE!

Emmett: Hmmm...God's creation is a creation of love...hmmm...

Esther: A creation of ...LOVE!

Emmett: Yeah, I heard you say that!

Esther: That's the hint...a creation...of... LOVE...Love ...Love.

Emmett: Hmmm. Could you give me another hint.

Esther: The fourth candle is... the candle of LOVE!

Emmett: I think I've got it. The fourth candle symbolizes...Love!! How'd I do?

Esther: Perfect. The fourth candle reminds us of God's love and that we are to love one another just like Jesus loved people.

Emmett: Wow! That's neat. The four candles of Advent.

Esther: And then there's the fifth candle...

Emmett: What! There's another candle now! Is this a bonus candle?

Esther: Yes. You might say it's a Christmas Eve bonus! On Christmas Eve we light another candle – a white candle that sits in the middle of all the other candles.

Emmett: Those would be the candles of hope, peace, joy and love.

Esther: And on Christmas Eve we light the Christ candle.

Emmett: The Christ candle is our bonus candle!

Esther: It's like a bonus of God's love. We experience God's love in so many stories in the Bible, as well as in people who love others and work to make this world more loving. In the birth of Jesus, we also experience God's love acting through Jesus.

Emmett: Wow! Advent sounds like a really special time of the year. I'm looking forward to seeing the candles get lit.

Esther: And seeing the world by the light of those candles of hope, peace, joy and love...

Emmett: ...and by the light of Christ shining in this world. Joy to the world!

Esther: AMEN!

Emmett: Amen!