

Advent III - JOY



You Will Need:

Computer / Way to watch YouTube

Craft Supplies (see the 4th page)



Watch this clip from Madagascar:

Escape 2 Africa:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibNSYnjhCnM>

In this clip, Alex the lion, is apologizing to his best friend, Marty, whom he did not recognize in a previous scene.

What did you notice about the zebras in this clip? Why didn't Alex recognize his best friend, Marty?

What does Alex say that finally makes Marty turn around and talk to him?

Why do you think it is important to Marty that he is "one in a million?"

The clip suggests that all zebras look and sound alike. This may be true, but only from a distance. It is hard to tell one zebra from another when looking at a picture of a herd. But, if you look closely, you will notice that no two zebras are alike. Every single zebra has a unique pattern of stripes. Identify some of the differences in the picture above.

This is true of all God's creatures. The stripes of a tiger, the pattern on the wings of a monarch, and our fingerprints are all different. It is amazing that of the 7.75 billion people that live on this planet, no two have the same fingerprint. This goes for everyone who has ever been born. We are all unique. There is and will never be another you! For all that you share in common with other human beings, there is still something about you that is unlike anyone else. Look at your family gathered around, what do you see that is similar and what do you see that is completely different?

It is a wonder and awe inspiring to realize there is such diversity in the world. Every animal, insect, bird, fish, and person is completely unique—unlike any other in the whole world!

Light the third (pink) Advent candle, the candle representing JOY.

Read Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth."

God created humanity in God's own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground."

This Scripture text reminds us that God created all the creatures on the earth—every animal, bird, insect, fish, etc.

- What is your favorite creature?
- What is the funniest looking creature?
- Which one gives you the creeps?
- Which is the most beautiful?
- Which do you want to see in real life?
- Which endangered animal are you most worried about?



After God created the animals, insects, livestock, birds, and fish, God created humanity – or people.

- How was humanity created? The text lists three ways humanity was created.
- How does this make us different from the animals?
- What do you think it means to be created in God's image? Do we look just like God?



Image of God

When we look at ourselves in the mirror or at other human beings, we see something of the image of God. This does not mean we look like God or God looks like us, but that together, we see at least part of what God must be like. When you think of all the people you know, what do you know about God? Is God simple? Does God look one way?

This is just one of the reasons diversity is so important! Diversity helps us understand the complexity of God. Diversity helps us see and understand more about God.

Word Study—"Master & Take Charge"

This text has "given permission" to humans to control, over-use, and pollute the earth. How has the Scripture text done this?

It is important to look at the words in this text very closely so that we understand the meaning of the words and the meaning of the Scripture text. We need to understand how God expects us to treat our planet home.



Consider what it means to "master" or "take charge." What do the word means? What does it mean to "take charge" of something? When you read that humans are to fill the earth, master it, and take charge, how does it seem we should treat the earth? What do we get to do?



Now consider what it means to master a craft or sport. What does it require of you to master karate, ballet, painting, or soccer? What must you do? How much do you need to know in order to “master” something like that?

If you want to become a master painter, you must learn, practice, seek to understand art, and respect it. This goes for anything you seek to do well or to master. How does this change our understanding of the word “master” in the Scripture text? With this understanding of the word master, how are we to treat the earth?

Now, let’s consider what it means to “take charge.” Who are some of the people who are asked to “take charge” in your life, in your community, or in our country? What qualities do we want in someone who is asked to take charge? What do we assume about their intentions? With this understanding of what it means to take charge, how are we to relate to the earth? What qualities should we possess if we are going to take charge of the world? How should we treat the earth?

It is important that we think carefully about the meaning of the words found in Scripture text. It helps us better understand not only the text but how we as humans are to relate to the world, each other, and to God. So good job thinking through the Genesis text. It matters how we understand Scripture, because our actions are often based on what we believe, whether we realize it or not.

Advent Joy & Monarch Butterflies

How do you define Joy?

In the Christian tradition, we understand joy to be more than happiness. This is because we can know joy even when hard things are happening and even when we are sad. We experience the joy of memories, joy in knowing we are loved, the joy of loving others, joy in the beauty of the world around us, joy in the diversity of God’s creatures, joy in your own uniqueness, and the joy of being created and loved by God. The wonder and awe we feel when we see the beauty of the world is part of our experience of joy.

Storytelling

This past summer, I was meeting with a man about solar panels for the roof of my house. We were talking about a lot of confusing details when all of a sudden, I looked up and right outside my dining room window, there was a monarch. I stopped talking, jumped up, and ran to the window. I must have startled him because he quickly followed me. I told him that the monarch outside was the first one I had seen all year. I was thrilled! I knew the monarch population was down and was worried because it was getting late in the season. I should have seen many monarchs already. He knew almost nothing about them so I told him about these amazing creatures, showed him the milkweed right outside the window, and before long we had forgotten all about solar panels. We watch the monarch flutter around the milkweed. We laughed and watched it fly in and out of view. We were like children on Christmas – so excited and joyful. Needless to say that visit was much longer than either of us intended!

Take turns telling a story about a time you felt wonder & joy in seeing something in nature.



A monarch in my butterfly garden this summer.

Fun Monarch Facts



Watch this video on YouTube about the migration site at Pismo beach. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RamAWo0lcyA>

Listen for:

- Why monarchs huddle together on tree branches.
- The ways the people visiting and the ranger experience joy.
- How you can tell if a monarch is a male or a female.

Now, look at all the pictures of real monarchs on these pages and count how many males and how many females are pictured. See the last page for the answer.

Advent Week III Project—get out the craft supplies!

Plastic Bottle Butterflies



You need:

- A plastic soda bottle or other thin recycled plastic
- Black sharpie
- Orange sharpie
- White paint pen
- Monarch template (see next page)

Instructions:

1. Cut the soda bottle in half so you can place the template on one side.
2. Trace the template on the plastic with a black sharpie.
3. Remove the template from the back side and use the orange sharpie to color in the wings.
4. Add white dots with the white paint pen.
5. Cut off the plastic around the butterfly.

Clothespin & Watercolor Monarch



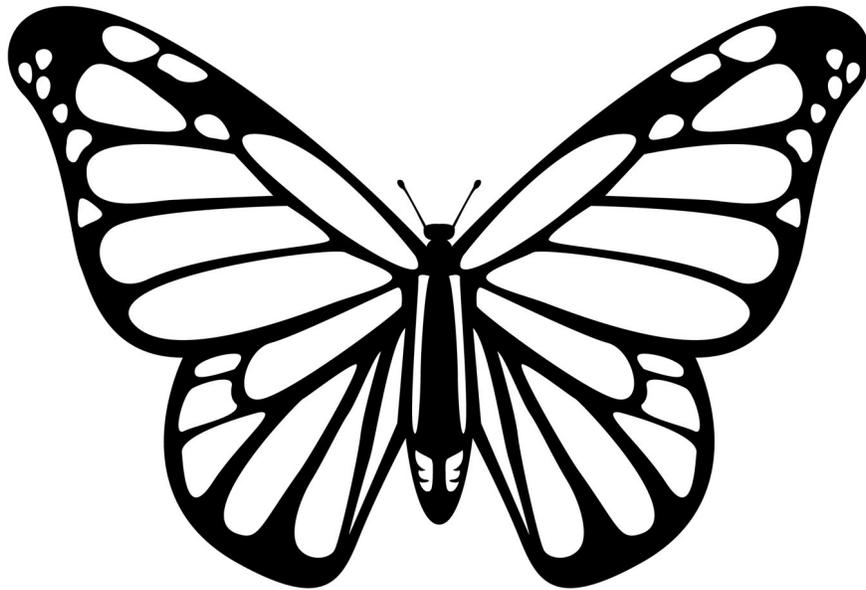
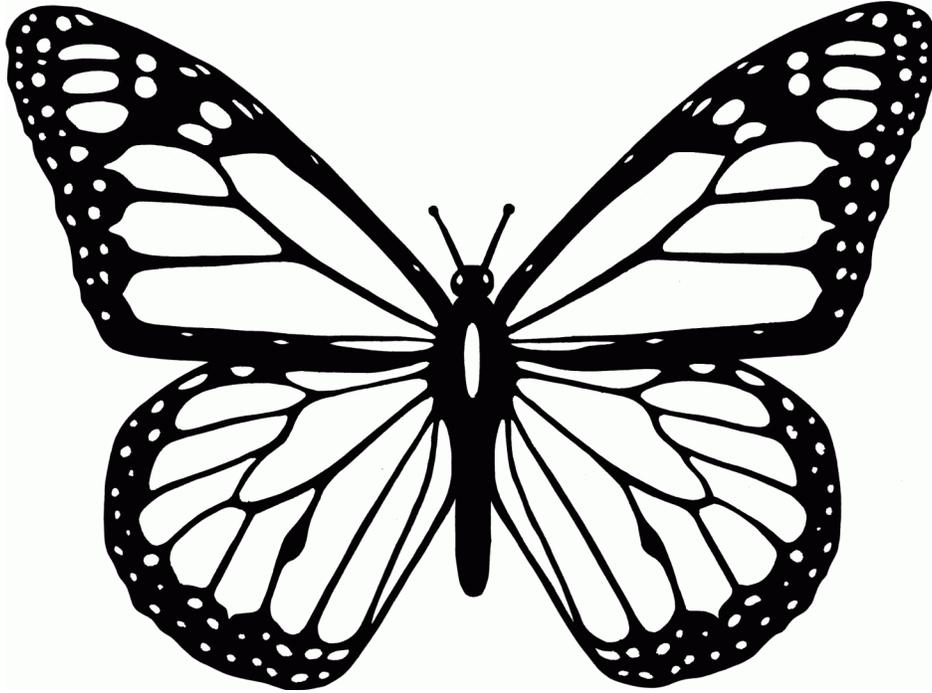
You need:

- Coffee filters
- Orange & black liquid watercolors
- A dropper or way to drip the watercolors
- Wooden clothespins
- Black pipe cleaners
- Black paint
- Spray bottle with water
- Paper towels

Instructions:

1. On a tray or plate, spread out paper towels. Place a coffee filter on the paper towels and drop the watercolors onto the coffee filter.
2. Spray water on the coffee filter and allow the colors to diffuse. Set aside to dry.
3. Paint the clothes pin black. Cut, fold, & glue the black pipe cleaner to look like antennae.
4. Once everything is dry, scrunch up coffee filter and glue in place between clothespin.

Monarch Templates for Craft



www.timvandevall.com

Curriculum written by Rev. Kelly Wiant

Resources:

Plastic bottle monarchs: <https://ourfamilycode.com/plastic-bottle-butterflies-recycled-art/>

Coffee filter monarchs: <https://www.firefliesandmudpies.com/clothespin-watercolor-monarch-butterfly/>