

Art Activities for Ages 3 to 99+

Advent

Advent Wreath

From a local craft store, you can get large wreath bases woven from grapevine or straw. Use either fresh or fake pine branches to weave into the base. Also fresh & dried flowers & leaves. Attach taper candles to the base using wire or craft glue.

The O Antiphons

Using 7 large pieces of finished cloth which can be hung as banners or panels, decorate with the symbols of each of the O Antiphons. Fabric paints or markers are the best media. You'll probably have to explain that the O Antiphons are sung as part of Evensong during the week before Christmas. A nice use would be for the children's Nativity Pageant or for the procession at the Children's Christmas Mass. The traditional symbols are a dove (for O Sapientia), a burning bush (for O Adonai), a flower (for O Radix Jesse), a key (for O Clavis David), the sun (for O Oriens), a crown (for O Rex Gentius) and the Blessed Virgin Mary (for O Emmanuel). Useful resources are: the chant score and text (in both Latin and English) at mac.theramp.net/domcentral/life/default.htm#advent and illustrations at www.op.org/opwest/oantiph1.html

Christmas

Window Stars

HearthSong has a book called Window Stars, and rolls of the transparency paper used to make them. One roll will be plenty for making many, many stars. It's best to pick a single pattern and cut the paper into the right sized squares to start with. A pattern with 8 points using squares is the easiest for kids to work with. The size of the squares can be scaled without affecting the result. Bigger squares are easier for younger kids to work with, but the older kids like the delicacy of the small stars. Glue sticks are required.

Epiphany

Epiphany Candles

HearthSong has candle decorating wax, which comes in packages of 24 thin sheets of various colors. They also have wax punches in star, flower and heart shapes. And they have spherical candles, which burn very beautifully when decorated this way. You can also decorate the thick pillar candles. Have some safety razor blades available to cut the wax into other shapes. The decorating wax is very pliable and, if you hold it cupped in your hand for a minute, will be soft enough to adhere to the candle. The wax can also be shaped by hand as well as cut into shapes. One package of wax is more than enough to decorate a dozen candles.

Stained Glass Windows

HearthSong has a book called Rose Windows and a tissue paper and form kit that makes 12, half large and half small. It's best to pick a simple pattern in advance and prepare the window bases for the kids so that they only have to fold, mark and cut the tissue paper. You may also need to help the young ones position the tissue paper on the base. Glue sticks are required.

Beatitude Sachets

Cut squares of fabric (I used both a plain colored silk and a patterned cotton, edges sealed with stitch witchery). Fill the center (on the reverse side) with a cluster of flowers and herbs that represent the blessings: bay for victory, marjoram for mercy, mint for purity, rosemary for remembrance, sage for humility, thyme for courage, and lavender and tansy, if you can find them. Gather the four corners

of the cloth together and twist. Close with flowers and ribbon. Cut foot-long lengths of ribbon (I let the kids choose colors and cut, actually). Crafts stores usually have small bouquets of flowers (either paper, silk or ribbon) that you can separate into singles. Twisting the stems of two or three of these together makes a good closure for the sachet. The ribbons alone usually aren't sturdy enough to keep it held together for long.

Transfiguration Collage

Invite the entire congregation to add something to the collage representing themselves, how God's light shines in their lives and the gifts they want to offer to God's people. Provide a heavy posterboard, colored markers, and all kinds of things to glue on: stickers, beads, charms, ribbons, fabric, tissue paper for cutting out, images cut out from magazines, brochures or catalogs. I also had a stack of magazines and the parish photo directory available for people to cut up. Several families worked together as a group to leave their marks, others did it individually. It helps to have something already on the posterboard to give people ideas. Provide glue sticks for the paper and craft glue for the heavier items.

Lent

Easter Eggs

Blow lots of eggs. HearthSong has a cute little pump that helps you do it pretty painlessly. Provide markers (I brought Berol Prismacolor Watercolor markers), stickers, beads, craft glue, ribbon and colored crocheting string. Glue the string to one end of the egg and tie a loop in the other, so that the egg can be hung in the window. Tie a bow in the ribbon and glue it over top of the string onto the egg to make it prettier and more secure.

Paschal Candles

Using a pillar candle and the decorating wax from HearthSong, decorate with the traditional symbols: cross, Alpha & Omega, the year, etc. You can use whole cloves for nails and press incense grains into the wax.

Easter

Flowering Crowns of Thorns

Get small grapevine wreaths and ribbon from a crafts store, as well as small paper roses (red for the Blood of Christ, preferably, as well as rose, if you want to include the liturgical colors of Lent). You can also get small birds or insects to glue onto the wreathes, if you'd like. Get baby's breath (the Breath of God) and purple statice from a florist's outlet. Both of these flowers will dry nicely. Weave the flowers into the wreathes and wrap the stems of the paper roses around to hold them in place. Wind the ribbon around to anchor it and tie a bow at the bottom. You can also make a loop with the ribbon for hanging the wreath. If you use birds or insects, anchor them on a leaf and glue with craft glue.

Anglican Prayer Beads

Get crosses or crucifixes from a bead store or religious shop. General Bead (on Minna, between 7th & 8th or www.genbead.com) is a good, inexpensive source. You can use wooden beads and hemp, or glass beads and fishing nylon for stringing. The boys will probably prefer the wooden ones and the girls will want the glass beads. You'll need 5 large beads (8mm, 10mm or 12mm) and 28 small beads (6mm or 8mm) for each set. Follow the diagram on the website for stringing the beads. Explain to the parents, as well as to the children, how to pray with them as small children are likely to get confused or forget. You can use Michael Anne Haywood's explanation at members.ols.net/~michael

Floral Barrettes and Corsages (Mother's Day)

Get the following from a florist's outlet: a paddle of florist's wire, a roll of florist's tape, corsage pins, a bouquet of baby's breath, a bouquet of statice and 2 dozen roses. This will easily make 12 hair barrettes or corsages. From a crafts store get a package of metal barrette forms. In advance, cut the baby's breath and statice into sprigs. Have the kids each pick 1 or 2 roses, 3 or 4 sprigs of statice and 3 or 4 of baby's breath. Cut the leaves off the rose stems and lay them together to form the base. Cut the roses so that they have about 3" of stem. Arrange the flowers on top of the rose leaves. Cut about 12" of florist's wire and wrap it around the stems so that the bunch holds together. Using about the same amount of florist's tape, wrap it around the stems to make a smooth bunch. Trim the excess stems and tape to make it look neat. If you're making a corsage add a ribbon bow and attach it with a pin to your mother's lapel. If you're making a barrette, open the barrette and pop out the center spring. Cut another 12" length of florist's wire and anchor it to the hole at one end of the barrette. Lay the bouquet on the barrette form and wrap the wire around it, anchoring it again in the hole at the other end. Cut a length of ribbon, 12 to 18" long, and tie a bow around the stems. Put the center spring back into the barrette. Since all of these flowers dry well, be sure to lay the barrette or corsage on a flat surface at the end of the day.

Pentecost

Origami Doves

Get various types and sizes of origami paper from an art supply store and a pattern for doves. The traditional crane pattern will also work. Make a bunch and set them flying.

Ordinary Time

Gargoyles

I haven't made these yet, but a friend did using paper clay (contains paper fibers) and bisque firing, then painting with metallic acrylic paints. Totally cool, but it would require several sessions and access to a kiln. She had the kids look at photos of Notre Dame first, so they'd get the idea and make nice ugly ones.

Masks

Depending on how you want to do these, a varying number of sessions is required. One technique would be to make masks of the animals from the Creation or Flood stories. This would require using a styrofoam head or face form and shaping the mask out of clay, then bisque firing. After a delay of probably 2 weeks (1 week for greenware to dry enough for firing, then another week to transport to kiln, fire and retrieve), you could either glaze with low-fire or medium-fire glaze or you could paint with acrylic paint. The glaze would require a second firing. Once dry (or fired), more decoration using beads, straw, feathers, etc. and glue would complete the mask. The masks could be used in a dramatic Scripture reading or sent home with their creators. A simpler mask project would be to buy bisque-fired masks of human faces and either glaze or paint them.

Ceramic Tiles

Using bisque-fired tiles and low-fire glazes available in a ceramics supply shop, decorate tiles either individually or as a group illustrating a story or parable from Scripture. For example, each child might decorate a tile with their conception of the Holy Spirit, or of the Trinity. Or a group of children might decorate a series of tiles on a theme, such as the 7 days in the Creation story or the Stations of the Cross. Glaze can be applied with paintbrushes or sponges. You need two coats of glaze, but if there's a lot of fine detail, the overcoat can be a transparent glaze. Be sure to get only non-toxic colors, since these are children and will probably not clean up perfectly. You can also use glaze pencils or crayons, but the effect after firing is not so nice as with the liquid form. Generally ceramics shops will fire tiles for you fairly cheaply, especially if you have enough to fit into one of their firing frames. When finished, the individual tiles could be mounted in small wooden frames. Groups of

tiles illustrating a theme can also be assembled together and mounted on the wall or in a portable frame for display.

Resources:

HearthSong @ www.hearthsong.com or 4th Street in Berkeley/California Street in SF

General Bead @ www.genbead.com or 637 Minna in SF

crafts and fabric stores, such as JoAnn Fabrics, Michaels & Poppy Fabrics

art supply stores, such as Amsterdam Art on University Ave in Berkeley

ceramics supply shops or studios, off University in Berkeley

florists' wholesale outlets or flower markets, A Separate Arrangement in

Emeryville

Hints: Prepare at least one sample in advance of each activity. This will help you gauge the amount of time that the activity will take. You'll also discover what supplies you might need to provide (e.g. glue sticks, scissors, etc.). And you'll get a feeling for the problem areas for small kids. Displaying the sample on the activity table will encourage the children (and sometimes random adults) to participate. The sample can go home with a parent for a sick child, or it can be displayed for the entire parish to see if you keep an activity table or showcase for children's work.