

Sensing ^{the} Seasons

**Learning Centers
for the Church Year**

PHYLLIS VOS WEZEMAN & ANNA L. LIECHTY



The Pastoral Center

Dedication

To Tina Kaser Morales ...

... who baked so many apple-cinnamon ornaments
to scent the church for the very first "Sense the Season." A.L.L.

To Jacob William Elsbury ...

... may every season of your life be a celebration. P.V.W.

Thanks

To Judith Harris Chase ...

... who inspired this project.

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Foreword

It was the last day of my third trip to Russia. On trip one, I led a six-week international youth exchange program in Russia and the Ukraine. Trips two and three were to conduct classes on "Methods of Teaching" at the St. Petersburg State University of Pedagogical Art. At the final meeting of trip three—also known as the evaluation session—the administrators invited me to be faculty for their upcoming international conference: "The Bible as a Historic, Cultural Document." Besides the university, the event would be co-sponsored by the Mayor's Office on Education and the Russian Orthodox Church. My hosts asked me to come back and present four days of classes on methods of teaching Bible stories.

Once home, I began pondering, praying, and panicking. It was July and the event was in November. As I sat at my computer one morning, I uttered an urgent plea for God's help. "Dear God, if you really want me to do this, please give me a plan—now—so I can work the plan—soon!" With that, I picked up a pen and began to doodle letters and words on a piece of paper. For some reason, I kept writing four letters over and over again—L-O-V-E. That's it, I gasped, as I offered "thanks" to the source of my inspiration. The entire message of the Bible could be summarized in one word—L-O-V-E. And, what better way to teach the story of God's love than to use a plan that was already in place—the structure of the church calendar.

Since I wanted to start at the beginning of the stories in the Bible—with the account of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis—I associated the season of Advent, our time of preparing for God's gift of the Savior, with the first letter of the word "LOVE"—the "L." Class One would consider the "Lessons" of Old Testament "Lives" and share God's plan to send the Messiah. Day Two would cover the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany and emphasize that God's "Only" son became "Our" Savior. With Lent and Easter combined on Day Three, the "V" for "Victor" would stress that Jesus, the Savior, conquered sin and death so that we might have the "Victory" of eternal life. Class Four, the season of Pentecost, would summarize the message that God's "L-O-V-E" is for "Everyone"—"Everywhere." It seemed so simple, but it said it all—a four letter summary of the entire Bible.

At the last session, an elderly man who had been in the course for the four days remarked: "We heard many speakers this week who presented information that filled our heads, but what you shared also touched our hearts. We'll always remember that the message of the Bible is simply about God's 'L-O-V-E.'"

As you use the activities in this book, and share them with the participants at learning centers, my prayer is that lessons will be learned and lives will be touched by the simple, and significant, message of God's L-O-V-E.

—Phyllis Vos Wezeman

Introduction

Sensing the Seasons: Learning Centers for the Church Year is a book of activities that connects the five senses with the significant stories of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Used in liturgical, educational, and home settings, materials in this resource will help children, youth, and adults explore and experience their faith, not only during these important times, but throughout life.

This book, *Sensing the Seasons*, contains eight sections. Each portion reviews a period of the liturgical cycle through five learning centers. Each learning center offers an activity to examine the important day or season through the five senses—sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. All eight themed units begin with a brief summary of the day or season.

The Church Year

When using the theme of the church year, research information on your specific faith community's celebrations of seasons and feasts. For example:

- ▶ Ask your pastor or parish priest if they prefer the term church/liturgical calendar, cycle, or year.
- ▶ Consult the altar guild, sacristan, or the liturgy/worship committee about colors:
 - ▶ using green, gold, or white for Epiphany
 - ▶ using black, red, or purple on Good Friday
- ▶ Find out from the choir director or the church secretary if the bulletin refers to a season of Epiphany, Ordinary Time, or Sunday after Epiphany
- ▶ Inquire of the religious education teacher or the youth leader if the curriculum uses feast day, holy day, or time period.
- ▶ Poll the elementary school learner or the middle school student to find out if the correct word is day, festival, or season.
- ▶ Question the parent or the long-time member if Ordinary Time, Growing Time, or Kingdomtide is used after Pentecost Sunday.

Most likely, there will be differences of opinions—even within the same congregation, the same diocese or synod, and the same denomination or faith tradition. Even online articles and printed books, denominational documents, Facebook pages, monthly newsletters, social media posts, and weekly bulletins offer contradictory information about vocabulary, start/end dates, colors, and more related to the Christian calendar. Yet, even though there are differences there are many things on which everyone agrees.

First, and foremost, people concur that the church calendar is a pattern that helps Christians remember—and live—the entire story of salvation each year. In the Old Testament, Exodus 13:1-10, God instructs Moses to lead Israel to schedule regular and repeated observances that will keep God's mighty acts always in mind for generations to come. By doing this, the faith of all ages—throughout time—will be centered in God's savings acts in history. Deuteronomy 6:1-9 says it well:

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, so that you and your children and your children's children, may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you. Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In the New Testament, 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul counsels Timothy, the pastor at Ephesus, that the heart of the church's faith is directly related

to remembering God's saving acts in the birth, ministry, and reign of Jesus Christ. Passages in Philippians and Titus remind Christians today of the reason:

Philippians 2:8-11

He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Titus 2:13-14

While we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

In the early church, during the fourth and fifth centuries, leaders suggested that Christians intentionally find a way to keep time that would be a fitting celebration of the Gospel message.

The Christian year always begins with the season of Advent in anticipation of the coming of Christ, celebrates Jesus' birth at Christmas, and his ministry during Epiphany. Throughout Lent, the church remembers Jesus' teachings and prepares for his suffering, observes his death during Holy Week, celebrates Christ's victorious resurrection on Easter, and marks the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. After Pentecost, the church observes a period of Ordinary Time—a way of counting the Sundays and weeks of discipleship and mission until the new year begins again in Advent.

Sensing the Seasons provides interactive designs to help people of all ages explore and experience seven significant periods of the liturgical cycle—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Language used throughout this book incorporates many terms to help participants become aware of the vocabulary as well as its meaning.

It is important—actually imperative—that those coordinating the learning centers provided in this book take time to determine the pattern of the church year used in their own tradition. After that, the specific information must be incorporated into the activities and lessons used to celebrate the story of salvation in liturgical and educational settings in congregations, homes, and schools.

Since the church year also provides a way of understanding the Christian life—baptism into Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6), communion with Christ through the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20), and the empowerment to mission through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), the liturgical cycle presents a means of public and personal growth for believers. In addition, it offers a way for Jesus' followers to join their hearts with Christians throughout history and throughout the world.

In the end, while there may be variations in how the Christian year is interpreted and celebrated from one congregation or denomination to the next, the ultimate goal might be summed up in the words of one of the most familiar texts in the Bible, John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

The Five Senses

In *Sensing the Seasons*, the suggested activities employ all of the senses in order to help participants remember the story, comprehend its meaning, and express the joy of the Gospel message. Suggested approaches through these pages will help participants—children, youth, and adults—experience the message of the days and seasons by relating the abstract ideas behind them to the very real experiences of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch.

Sensing Advent

The season of Advent surrounds us with sensory possibilities from visual displays of wreaths, to the comforting sounds of carols, the fragrant smell of pine, the sweet taste of cookies, and the smooth surface of ornaments. Using *Sensing the Seasons'* suggestions can expand these opportunities to involve the senses during Advent and can heighten each participants' awareness of the anticipated arrival of Christ on Christmas day.

Sensing Christmas

The twelve days of Christmas already bombard the senses with much to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. But rather than feeling overwhelmed, participants who have been prepared throughout Advent can be ready to connect Christmas impressions with the sustaining message of faith—ready to share that message in a new year.

Sensing Epiphany

Preparing in Advent and celebrating during Christmas leads logically to sharing the message received through our senses

throughout Epiphany. The sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes of the journey of faith can make the idea of a Messiah more real. Possibilities for exploration found in *Sensing the Seasons* may be enough to inspire participants to be followers of a star and to be open to God's surprises every step of the way.

Sensing Lent

Lent may seem more abstract and difficult to communicate than other parts of the Christian message. Concepts of sin, repentance, and temptation can be difficult to grasp intellectually, especially for younger disciples. Even though death is a concrete concept, we usually avoid the topic and substitute euphemisms. To be successful in reaching out with the challenging journey of Lent, the church must find ways to make the topics of sacrifice and choices understandable, beginning by acknowledging that authentic learning comes by involving participants actively in experiences that touch the senses.

Sensing Easter

The joy of Easter and new life may seem simple to share at first, but to engage discussion and explore questions about eternal life and the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice can make Easter lessons challenging to present. To move children and youth beyond the Easter bunny and jelly beans to the empty tomb and the risen Savior requires thoughtful and meaningful activities that engage both mind and body. *Sensing the Seasons'* activity centers help engage participants in learning experiences that open hearts and help participants discover a way of life built on the hope found in the risen Christ.

Sensing Pentecost

The Pentecost story can be shared meaningfully using a sensory approach. The wind and fire of the coming of the Spirit give us real ways to understand God's power and warming presence. Use the events and ideas outlined in *Sensing the Seasons* to help everyone see the tongues of flame, smell the fresh wind of the Spirit, hear the good news proclaimed in many languages, sample the tastes found in the busy marketplace, and feel the warmth of the fellowship of faith.

Sensing Ordinary Time

After the powerful, sensory message of Pentecost, the long weeks that follow can seem anticlimactic. This time of learning discipleship, of growing in faith, and of spreading the good news of the Gospel can get lost in the shuffle of summer and fall activities. With the help of *Sensing the Seasons*, this ordinary time can become extra-ordinary, as participants look more deeply, listen more carefully, and become more open to each scent, flavor, and feeling that awakens our hearts to more faithful living.

Learning Centers

What?

A Learning Center may be defined as the focal point of activity for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or skill. It must contain information on a topic and instructions for a task in addition to the equipment and supplies necessary to complete the assignment.

Learning Centers:

- ▶ create an opportunity for the learning to occur
- ▶ develop discovery learning techniques
- ▶ emphasize hands-on experiences
- ▶ focus attention on specific tasks and topics
- ▶ foster cooperative learning
- ▶ promote critical thinking skills
- ▶ provide self-directed, individualized instruction
- ▶ release ideas and imagination.

Learning Centers may supplement an existing curriculum, become an additional or alternative program, or be used as a module during a specific church season or throughout a summer session.

Where?

Learning Centers fit into many settings—educational and liturgical—in churches, homes, and schools.

In liturgical settings, they are ideal for Children's Liturgy of the Word or Children's Church. In addition, they could be set up as worship centers in part of a sanctuary or near an entrance to a gathering space.

In educational contexts, incorporate learning centers into traditional programs of faith formation like general religious education,

sacramental preparation, Sunday School, and youth groups. Learning Centers work well for year-round ministries such as before and after school programs, kids' clubs, and mid-week sessions. They are perfect for seasonal offerings at camps, retreats, and vacation Bible school. They may be used during adult education courses, community programs, family nights, intergenerational gatherings, and seasonal events.

Learning Centers are ideal for providing liturgical experiences and educational lessons in homes and schools, too.

Who?

Learning Centers are for all ages—children, youth, and adults. People can participate as graded classes, specific programs, family units, and intergenerational groups. Boys and girls in upper elementary grades, tweens in middle school, and young adults in high school, as well as children and parents, and middle-aged to older adults should be able to function as independent learners, partners, or small groups. Pre-schoolers will need teacher or parental guidance in order to hear the directions and use the materials.

While learning centers should be designed for students to work alone or in small groups, there are many ways to manage the number of people at a given station at the same time. Self-direction is ideal, but sometimes a little structure facilitates transitions between and among the varied opportunities. Some examples are:

- ▶ allow students to self-select based on availability.
- ▶ set up a specific number of chairs and state that if they are filled others must wait their

turn.

- ▶ assign participants to a timed rotation.
- ▶ hand out "tickets" to learning centers so numbers and choices can be limited in a way that avoids competition over preferred activities.
- ▶ use a gong, cymbal, bell, or other auditory signal to announce the time for changing centers or ending an activity. Give students three to five minutes to finish and tidy up from activities before asking them to move to a new location.

Be sure instructions include a way for students to add their names to their projects and know where to put their work until it's ready to display or take home.

When?

Learning Centers may be used for specific classes, an entire semester, or throughout a special day or season of the church calendar. They may fit into a regular session or be offered for an event or festival. There is no limit to the day of the week, the time of the day, or the month of the year.

In home settings activity areas might be arranged from time-to-time or be available on a continuous basis.

How?

Learning Centers may be created in many ways. They can be set up on table tops, desks, and counters or created on bulletin, chalk, or white boards, floors, or walls. In essence, an activity station can be constructed on any surface that will hold the essential elements to achieve the desired goals. Learning Centers may be extremely efficient, containing the bare essentials required for achieving the desired results or extraordinarily elaborate with

bountiful enhancements to supplement the anticipated outcomes.

Learning Centers for each of the five senses—sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch—in the eight segments of *Sensing the Seasons*—the church year, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time—are provided in an easy-to-use four-part format.

Activity

Names the activity or project for the specific station.

Materials

Offers an alphabetical list, in check off format, of equipment and supplies needed for the center. Most of the materials will be items on-hand such as glue, markers, pencils or pens, scissors, and tape. It is important to note, however, that in several cases unique supplies will have to be gathered or unusual materials may need to be purchased.

Advance Preparation

Lists activities that must be done before the participants arrive for the session. If resource sheets need to be copied or printed for the center it is noted here.

Directions on gathering on-hand supplies, adjusting and duplicating instructions to place in the center, and setting up the actual activity area are not noted in advance preparation.

Method

Provides complete, step-by-step, instructions for accomplishing the task. Of course, if there are variations to the activity or adaptations to the interpretation of the church year the directions must be adjusted before they are copied and posted.

Each of the eight chapters of *Sensing the Seasons* begins with an overview of the specific period of the church calendar.

If possible, gather the group that will participate in the Learning Center projects before they start at the specific stations. Use a format such as:

Gather

- ▶ Begin by playing a game or singing a song as participants arrive.
- ▶ Convene the group by offering a prayer, telling a Bible story, and singing a song.
- ▶ Provide an overview of the centers and offer specific directions for each site.

Explore

- ▶ Provide time for participants to engage in each center—individually, in pairs, in small groups, or with a guide in the case of young learners.

Celebrate

- ▶ Take time to share experiences and projects.
- ▶ Close with song and prayer.
- ▶ Enjoy refreshments.

Why?

Activities in self-directed learning centers offer the opportunity for participants to grow in at least eight areas. These include:

- ▶ **Intellectual:** Participants strengthen their reading, writing, and problem-solving skills, learn the use of new materials, and enhance their knowledge of biblical stories and scriptural themes.
- ▶ **Physical:** Pupils develop gross and fine motor skills as well as hand-eye coordination.
- ▶ **Social:** Students gain a sense of responsibility and learn cooperation as they interact with others.
- ▶ **Emotional:** People learn to express their feelings through involvement in individual and group activities.
- ▶ **Perceptual:** Learners explore the use of color and shape and foster greater skill in working in various media.
- ▶ **Creative:** Participants expand their imagination and learn diversity in the use of materials while completing projects.
- ▶ **Aesthetic:** Children, youth, and adults experience teaching methods such as art, banners/textiles, creative writing, culinary, games, music, puppetry, and storytelling as art.
- ▶ **Spiritual:** Disciples grow in an understanding of and an appreciation for God's gifts to each person and to the world.

Sensing the Church Year

Psalms 22:27-31

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the LORD, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

Calendars help to provide the structure for all aspects of our lives, and the church is no exception. Just like the secular calendar reminds us of Valentine hearts or Thanksgiving turkeys, the church calendar invites us to explore the story of salvation as we experience the festivals of faith. The church year coordinates the message of seven basic days and seasons—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost,

and Ordinary Time—with slight variations among the denominations. Throughout this cycle, we experience the life and ministry of Jesus and the empowering of his church to carry on the work God began in creation. Those stories become part of the rhythm of our lives—anticipated, celebrated, savored, and shared by all God's people. Rather than treasured fragments of disconnected text, the Bible becomes the woven fabric of a seamless garment, with each season flowing meaningfully to the next, completing the cycle, yet leading us to begin again the wonderful journey of faithful discipleship.

To understand the focus and the flavor of the church year, five learning centers—sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch—provide an overview of the liturgical cycle.

Note that the Resources section at the end of this book contains general handouts on the structure of the church year that can be particularly helpful with this chapter.



Clock Face Calendars

Materials

- ▶ Awl or compass point
- ▶ Cardboard rounds from cake or pizza
- ▶ Copy machine or printer
- ▶ Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ▶ Glue
- ▶ Paper for copy machine or printer
- ▶ Paper fasteners, brass brads (1" - 1½" long)
- ▶ Pencils
- ▶ Poster board, black
- ▶ Resource sheets:
 - ▶ Chart for Church Year
 - ▶ Pattern for Church Year Clock
 - ▶ The Church Year Overview sheets in the Resources section could also be helpful.
- ▶ Scissors

Advance Preparation

- ▶ Duplicate the resource sheets.
- ▶ Pre-cut cardboard rounds or obtain cardboard circles from a cake decorating shop or a pizza supply source.

Method

Calendars are an important means of counting days, weeks, months, and seasons. Calendars are also a useful way to keep track of time in the church year, often called the liturgical cycle. Review church year information and then make a liturgical calendar in the format of a clock face.

Review the chart with information about each significant time in the church year: day or season, date(s), themes, and colors.

After reviewing the church year information, pick a clock face and use crayons, markers, or colored pencils to fill in the sections with the appropriate colors for important days and seasons. Refer to the chart as a guide in the process.

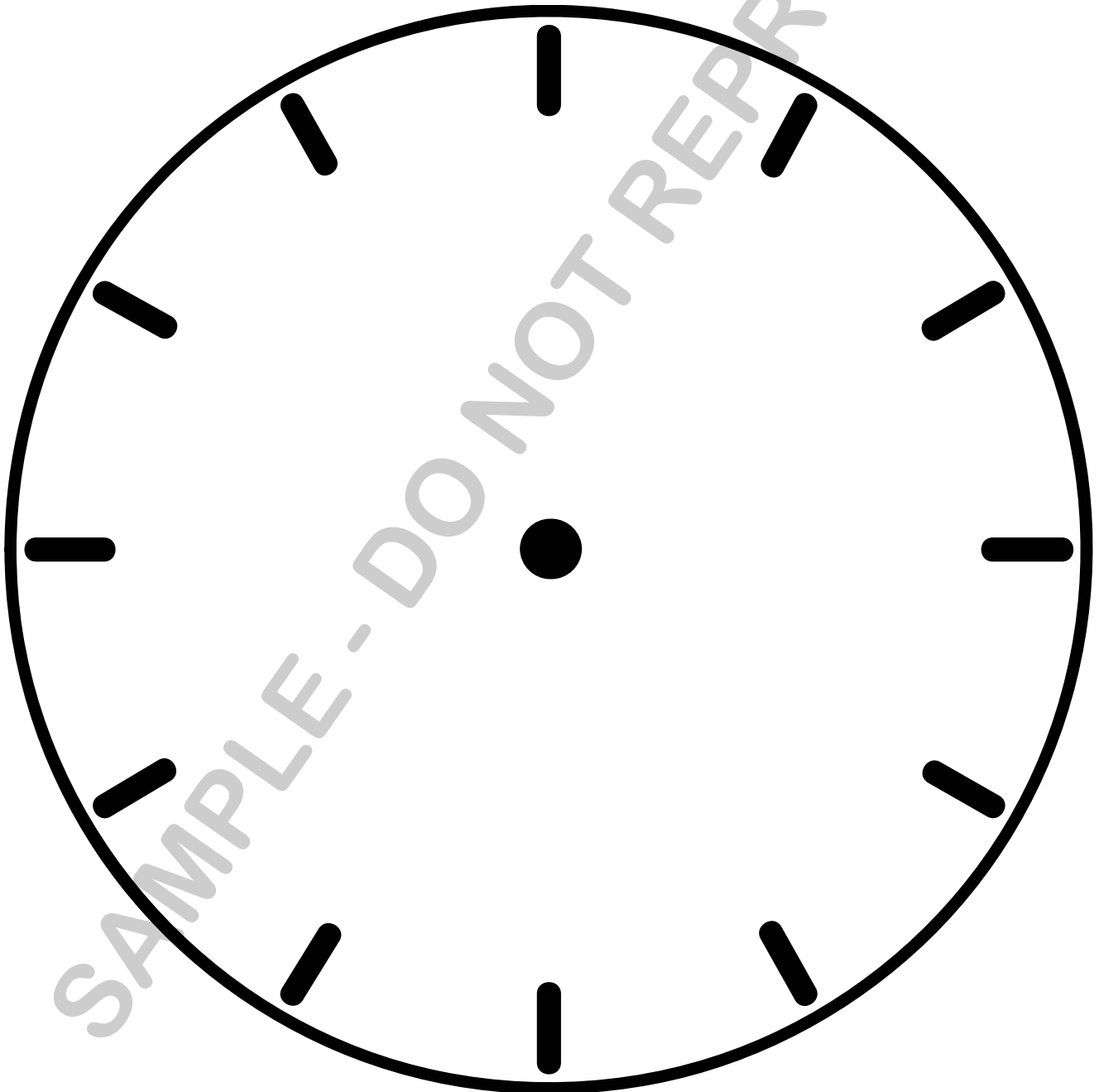
Cut out the clock face and glue it to the center of a cardboard round. Use the pattern provided for the clock dials, or hands, and trace and cut them from black poster board. Punch holes at the flat, not pointed, ends of the hands and through the center of the clock circle. An awl or compass point works well for this purpose. Push a brass paper fastener through the holes on the layers and then spread the brad from underneath to secure it in place.

Set the clock to the appropriate season. Use the calendar throughout the year, moving the hands as days and seasons change.

CHART FOR THE CHURCH YEAR



PATTERN FOR CHURCH YEAR CLOCK





Colorful Weavings

Materials

- ▶ Baskets or boxes
- ▶ Cardboard, 5" x 8" piece for each participant
- ▶ Cotton balls or swabs (optional)
- ▶ Extracts or essential oils such as almond, cinnamon, clove, lemon, mint, peppermint, and vanilla (optional)
- ▶ Knife, utility type
- ▶ Markers, permanent
- ▶ Materials in church year colors—green, purple, red, white, blue—such as cloth strips, paper pieces, plastic bags, heavy yarns, and wide ribbons
- ▶ Resource sheet:
 - ▶ Church Year Overview (see Resources section)
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ String, heavy

Advance Preparation

- ▶ Duplicate the resource sheets.
- ▶ Cut the materials into strips one-half inch wide and 10-12 inches long. Place the colored pieces for each season in a separate basket or box.
- ▶ Prepare a piece of cardboard for each participant. If available, tablet backs work well for the project.

Method

Weaving is an art form which combines a variety of individual pieces into a beautiful blend of design and texture. Create a weaving to visualize the colors and the symbolism of the seasons of the church year. Use natural materials, such as burlap and cotton, to infuse the project with the smells of the special times.

Select a piece of cardboard to use as the base for the weaving. Prepare the background by cutting one inch slits into the top and bottom. These should be placed approximately one inch apart. Warp the cardboard by running a continuous piece of heavy string from one side to the other, through each slit.

Review the resource sheet highlighting each season of the church year as well as the color and symbolism that is normally associated with it.

Pick a piece of material to represent each season. If desired, print the name of the season on each piece (e.g. write Pentecost on the red strip). An additional, or alternate, idea is to write one thing to remember about each season on each piece of material. A word for Advent might be *coming*, or *prophets*, or *waiting*. Weave the pieces into the base.

Emphasize the sense of smell, as well as sight and touch, by noting the distinct scent of each fabric. Materials like burlap, cotton, linen, polyester, and wool each have a particular odor. Heighten the scent of each segment of the calendar by placing a dab of an extract associated with the smells of the season on the end of the respective pieces (see suggestions on the next page). Use the colorful weaving as a reminder that the story of salvation is woven throughout the cycle of the church year.

	<i>Colors</i>	<i>Scent Suggestions</i>
<i>Advent</i>	Violet or purple represent both the darkness of the world without Christ and the royal purple fit for a king. A bluer purple can be used to distinguish from Lent. The color blue , for hope, has been used during this season, too.	Vanilla flavor is connected with baking breads, cakes, cookies, and thus anticipation. The smell of pine oil can bring to mind Advent wreaths.
<i>Christmas</i>	White brings to mind light, joy, and glory during this season.	Peppermint is the scent of a candy cane, symbolizing a shepherd's crook.
<i>Epiphany</i>	White is also used here, for the light of the star. Gold can also represent the star and the gift brought to the Christ child.	Cloves can be a reminder of the Magi's gifts of strong spices to the Christ Child. Frankincense and myrrh represent the gifts, too.
<i>Lent</i>	Violet and purple remind us of the darkness of our sin, penance, humility, and the royalty of Jesus. On Good Friday the color is sometimes changed to black for mourning until Easter Sunday.	Mint is associated with the payment of tithes and offerings during Jesus' ministry. Lavender , in addition to being purple, is associated with silence, devotion, and calmness.
<i>Easter</i>	White focuses us on joy, glory, and triumph of the Resurrection.	Lemon symbolizes the movement from sour to sweet, like Jesus' death and resurrection.
<i>Pentecost</i>	Red reminds us of the fire of enthusiasm and the force of energy that God's empowerment brings.	Cinnamon is a powerful scent with wide reach.
<i>Ordinary Time</i>	Green is the color for life and growth.	Almond is associated with a process of growth; it is first to blossom but last to bear fruit.



THE CHURCH YEAR

Bottle Scale Songs

Materials

- ▶ Bottles, 8 x 20-ounce containers, clear glass or plastic
- ▶ Copy machine or printer
- ▶ Dowel rods, 12" lengths
- ▶ Food coloring—blue, green, purple, red, yellow
- ▶ Markers, permanent
- ▶ Measuring cup(s)
- ▶ Paper
- ▶ Pens
- ▶ Plastic tubing, 12" lengths
- ▶ Resource sheet: Church Year Songs
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Water

Advance Preparation

- ▶ Duplicate the resource sheets.

- ▶ Remove the labels from the bottles and wash and dry the containers.
- ▶ Decide if the bottles will be prepared in advance or if they will be created as part of the project. Either way, follow these directions to form the musical scale:
 - ▶ Gather 8 clear, clean, 20-ounce glass or plastic bottles. Glass produces better sound.
 - ▶ With permanent marker, print the name of one church season on each of seven containers and "church year" on the eighth. In addition, print a number on each bottle, beginning with 1 for Advent.
 - ▶ Use a measuring cup to fill the eight bottles with the suggested amount of water. Refer to the chart for measurements.
 - ▶ To further highlight the symbolism of the seasons, add the appropriate food coloring to the water in each bottle.

<i>Bottle</i>	<i>Season/Feast</i>	<i>Musical Note</i>	<i>Amount of Water</i>	<i>Color</i>
1	Advent	Do	7 ounces	Blue (to distinguish from Lent)
2	Christmas	Re	9 ounces	White (leave clear)
3	Epiphany	Mi	12 ounces	Gold (Yellow)
4	Lent	Fa	14 ounces	Violet/Purple
5	Easter	Sol	16 ounces	White (leave clear)
6	Pentecost	La	17 ounces	Red
7	Ordinary Time	Ti	18 ounces	Green
8	Church Year	Do	19 ounces	White (leave clear)

Method

Discover the musical qualities of water, and learn about the church year by playing a bottle scale and creating songs to highlight the seasons. Refer to the resource sheet to review the names of the seasons and the liturgical colors associated with them.

Before singing songs or writing words, practice playing a simple tune like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" on the bottle scale. Playing takes place by blowing into the necks of the bottles or tapping on the sides of the containers.

In order to play the notes, and to keep the tops of the bottles sanitary, pick a new piece of flexible plastic tubing to blow into the necks to create the sound. Because blowing into the bottle causes the air to vibrate, the bottles with the most water in them will make the highest notes. As an alternative, use a dowel rod to tap each bottle to cause the glass to vibrate and produce a sound. In this case, the water dampens the vibrations so the less water in the bottle, the faster the bottle vibrates and the higher the pitch.

The pattern for the first line of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," whether blowing or tapping, is to blow into or tap bottle number one three times, then bottle number two one time, and finally bottle number three one time. The pattern—that is, the number of blows or taps on a specific bottle number—for the entire song is:

11123

32345

888555333111

54321

The pattern for "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," whether blowing or tapping, is:

1155665

4433221

5544332

5544332

1155665

4433221

Look at the sheet with the sample songs. Try to play the music on the bottle scale and sing the song, too. If more than one person is at the learning center, work together to make the music.

Then take a piece of paper and a pencil and compose church-year related words to sing to the tune "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." If possible, make a second copy of the lyrics—one to leave in the learning center for others to enjoy and one to take home to share with family and friends.

Remember that however the stories of the church year are shared—by playing a bottle scale or singing words to a song—their messages remind us to get ready for the Messiah during Advent, celebrate the birth of the Savior at Christmas, rejoice in God's gift of the Christ Child throughout Epiphany, remember the life and ministry of Jesus in Lent, commemorate the Savior's death and resurrection at Easter, share the Good News of God's love during Pentecost, and grow as disciples throughout Ordinary Time.

Option

Arrange to have the participants share their bottle scale songs at the conclusion of the session.

SAMPLE CHURCH YEAR SONGS

Sing to the tune "Row, Row, Row Your Boat":

In our church we use a plan
to teach us God's great story.
Through seasons, symbols, colors, themes
we live to give God glory.

Sing to the first two phrases of the tune
"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

In the second phrase of the first line of the
song, double time the notes on the words
"Easter" and "Pentecost" and again for "God's
love."

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany,
Lent, Easter, Pentecost tell God's love for me.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE



Snack Sacks

Materials

- ▶ Bags, paper or plastic—2 per participant
- ▶ Baskets or containers for treats
- ▶ Candy and snacks, individually wrapped, symbolic of church year festivals:
 - ▶ Advent—tootsie pops
 - ▶ Christmas—candy canes
 - ▶ Epiphany—chocolate stars or Starburst
 - ▶ Lent—pretzel twists
 - ▶ Easter—jelly beans
 - ▶ Pentecost—cinnamon red hots
 - ▶ Ordinary Time—sunflower seeds
- ▶ Pencils or pens
- ▶ Resource sheets:
 - ▶ Church Year Matching Game
 - ▶ Church Year Connections

Advance Preparation

- ▶ Duplicate the resource sheets.

Method

The church year helps believers celebrate God's message of love to the world: God's promise of a Savior; Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; and the challenge to share that story with others. Our celebrations are holy days, holidays, or "feasts"—times often associated with favorite tastes. Trace the festivals of faith and connect them with tasty treats as a way to remember the unique message of each season. Then make two snack sacks—one to keep and one to give away—as a way to understand and to share the celebrations of the church year.

Start by playing a matching game to review the festivals of the church year. Take a game sheet and a pencil or pen. Read the names of the festivals on the left side of the paper and the list of descriptions on the right portion of the page. Then draw a line from each festival to the phrase that best describes it. For example, "Epiphany" matches with "Following in faith, offering our gifts to God." Continue until all matches have been made. Before proceeding to the next part of the activity, check answers against the answer key at the bottom of the handout.

Pick up a Church Year Connections chart. Review the names of the festivals in column one. Then, in column two, write a word or a brief description of each of them. For example, the word for "Lent" might be "praying" or "reflecting." Refer to the matching game if ideas are needed.

Use the ideas recorded on the chart to choose a candy or a snack as a way to remember the "reason for each season." Review the treats in the containers: candy canes, chocolate stars

or Starbursts, cinnamon red hots, jelly beans, pretzel twists, sunflower seeds, and tootsie pops. Then decide which candy or snack best connects with Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. For example, Advent is a time of waiting. Decide which candy best fits with waiting such as waiting for the surprise that is Christmas. Most likely, the response would be the tootsie pop, a hard candy lollipop on the outside filled with chocolate flavored chewy candy on the inside. It takes a lot of licking and sucking—and waiting—to get to the goodness in the middle! Match the name of a candy to the meaning of each season and write the choices on the chart. Then take two paper or plastic

bags and prepare snack sacks filled with one of each treat—one bag to enjoy and one to give to someone else.

Conclude by writing a brief explanation of why each candy or snack connects with the meaning of the specific celebration. When the second bag of candy is shared with someone else, explain the reasons to them, too.

In addition to the two snack sacks, take the Matching Game and the Church Year Connections Chart home as reminders of the reasons for the seasons.

CHURCH YEAR MATCHING GAME

Draw a line to connect the name of each festival of the church year with the phrase that best describes it. Check answers at the bottom of the page.

Festivals

<i>Advent</i>	A
<i>Christmas</i>	B
<i>Epiphany</i>	C
<i>Lent</i>	D
<i>Easter</i>	E
<i>Pentecost</i>	F
<i>Ordinary Time</i>	G

Descriptions

1	Experiencing, practicing, and doing the work of the church in God's world
2	Rejoicing, accepting God's gift of a Savior
3	Celebrating and recognizing the risen Christ
4	Following in faith, offering our gifts to God
5	Welcoming, praising, and sharing the coming of the Holy Spirit
6	Waiting, preparing, expecting God's surprise
7	Praying, appreciating the sacrifice of Love

Answer key: A-6, B-2, C-4, D-7, E-3, F-5, G-1.

CHURCH YEAR CONNECTIONS

In the second column, write a word or a brief description of each of the festivals. For example, the word for "Lent" might be "praying" or "reflecting." Use the ideas to choose a candy or a snack as a way to remember the "reason for each season." Which best connects with each season/feast? Write your choices in the third column and a brief explanation of why in the last column.

<i>Festivals</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Snacks</i>	<i>Why?</i>
<i>Advent</i>			
<i>Christmas</i>			
<i>Epiphany</i>			
<i>Lent</i>			
<i>Easter</i>			
<i>Pentecost</i>			
<i>Ordinary Time</i>			



Beaded Pins

Materials

- ▶ Beads, glass or plastic—various shapes in church year colors including green, purple, red, and white with option of blue and gold
- ▶ Copy machine
- ▶ Lectionary or missal (optional)
- ▶ Paper for copy machine or printer
- ▶ Pencils or pens
- ▶ Pins, safety type—medium (size 2) and large (size 3)
- ▶ Resource sheets:
 - ▶ Church Festivals: Seven for Seven
 - ▶ Church Year Overview (see Resources section)

Advance Preparation

- ▶ Duplicate the resource sheets.

Method

The two most significant celebrations of the church year are Christmas and Easter. We prepare for Christmas with a four-week period called Advent and get ready for Easter with 40 days known as Lent. Twelve days of Christmas flow into a celebration called Epiphany and fifty days of Easter climax with Pentecost Sunday. In most cases, the rest of the year is called Ordinary Time, which denotes a way of counting the Sundays and weeks between Epiphany and Lent and from Pentecost to Advent.

While this might seem confusing, it is easy to understand that Christians prepare throughout Advent and Lent, celebrate at Christmas and Easter, share during Epiphany and Pentecost, and grow throughout Ordinary Time to begin the cycle again and again, year after year.

One way to remember the important times in the church year is to make beaded pins with festival colors to wear or to put on items. Before making the pins, take time to reflect on the seven main festivals in seven different ways, perhaps one idea each day of the week.

Pick a Church Festivals: 7 for 7 sheet and a pencil or pen. Refer to church calendar materials in the learning center for help with the answers. Fill in all of the colors and take the sheet home to complete during the specific times in the church year. The seven topics to think about are:

- ▶ Festival/Season
- ▶ Date or time period (e.g. Epiphany: Jan. 6)
- ▶ Bible stories (e.g. Christmas: Angels appear to shepherds)
- ▶ Special days (e.g. Lent: Palm Sunday)

- Color(s)
- Symbols (e.g. Pentecost: wind)
- Why is it important? (e.g. Advent: God promised a Savior)

Complete portions of the sheet and set it aside to take home to use throughout the year.

Create a beaded pin. For a simple project, select a medium-size safety pin and open it. Pick seven beads—one representing each color of the significant times in the church year. In addition, the seven beads can serve as a reminder of seven ways to think about the church calendar. Arrange the beads in a pattern, for example violet/blue for Advent, white for Christmas, white or gold for Epiphany, purple for Lent, white for Easter, red for Pentecost, and green for Ordinary Time. Place the beads on the open pin in order of the pattern. Close the pin. To display or wear the

decoration, carefully attach it to a backpack or book bag, item of clothing, hat, or shoes.

For a more challenging activity, combine one large and seven medium safety pins for the project. Begin by making seven single beaded pins. In this case, each pin represents one important time in the church year. On the first pin, for Advent, thread seven blue or purple beads or combine the two colors in the design. Continue by beading a separate pin for Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Next, open a large pin and loop the bottom of the seven completed pins onto it. The large pin will loop through the holes on the bottom of the medium safety pins. Carefully close the large pin. The seven beaded pins now dangle from the larger pin. Wear the pin or display it on special items.

If there are enough supplies, make additional pins to give as gifts and to trade with others.

CHURCH FESTIVALS: 7 FOR 7 ^(1/2)

	<i>Date/Time Period</i>	<i>Bible stories</i>	<i>Special days</i>	<i>Colors</i>	<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Why is it important?</i>
<i>Advent</i>						
<i>Christmas</i>						
<i>Epiphany</i>						

CHURCH FESTIVALS: 7 FOR 7 ^(2/2)

	<i>Date/Time Period</i>	<i>Bible stories</i>	<i>Special days</i>	<i>Colors</i>	<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Why is it important?</i>
<i>Lent</i>						
<i>Easter</i>						
<i>Pentecost</i>						
<i>Ordinary Time</i>						

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