

# The Bishop's CHRISTMAS OFFERING

of the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church

## RESOURCES



### Congregational Prayer



Dear God,

We thank you for your provision and the opportunity to share in the lives of children and youth, locally and in other areas of the world. May these gifts be a great blessing, impacting many in positive and loving ways, providing hope for the future.

With these gifts we worship you.

In the powerful name of Jesus, Amen.



### Children's Sermon Starter #1



Have you ever gone camping before? What are things you like about camping? What I like about camping is getting away from some of the normal busyness of life and taking time to be with God in nature. I like to hike, to look for different kinds of birds, to feel the sun on my back and see the beauty of water, trees, mountains or whatever is around me. It's good to take time to be outside with God and others.

Did you know that we have United Methodist camps here in Indiana that help kids get into nature and to spend time with God? Have any of you been to one of our United Methodist camps? Not only do you get to experience God and God's created world, but you also get to worship and grow closer to God, make new friends and learn things you have never experienced before like doing the zip line or giant swing, or kayaking. Sounds like fun doesn't it!

This Advent season we have an opportunity to take up an offering called "The Bishop's Christmas Offering". This offering helps children in many ways; one part is to help children who have never been to camp to be able to go for the first time. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to send a child to church camp? Maybe it could be you!

Perhaps you'd like to give some of your money to help children in Indiana and the world. You might want to talk with your parents or grandparents about giving to this special offering. When all of us work together, we can make a difference to help children.

Prayer: God, we know that there are many children who don't know you, and we want them to know you. We pray for hurting, lonely children in our world. We pray for children in Indiana who might want to go to camp, but haven't had the opportunity. During this Advent season open our eyes to the needs around us. Open our eyes to the wonders of your world. Bless us to be a blessing to others. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

## Children's Sermon Starter #2



A long time ago, the emperor Caesar ordered the people in his land to be counted. It was called a census. All the people had to go back to their hometowns to be counted. You probably have heard this story. Mary and Joseph, had to travel about 90 miles to go back to a little town called Bethlehem in order to be counted. While there, Mary had a baby. There were no hotel rooms, no hospitals, just a barn and a little hay. This baby, who was Jesus, was the Savior of the world, but he was in this smelly barn surrounded by animals and worn out shepherds. Even though things weren't perfect, this family had each other, and the little baby Jesus was loved so very much and was cared for by his parents.

It is wonderful to have a family that loves us and takes care of us, but sometimes things happen and families need help with the loving and caring of each other. United Methodists in Indiana have three children and youth homes that offer children love and care when help is needed. During this Advent season churches are collecting "The Bishop's Christmas Offering" to help with projects like these homes that help kids.

Perhaps you'd like to give some of your money to help children in Indiana and the world. You might want to talk with your parents or grandparents about giving to this special offering. When all of us work together, we can make a difference to help children.

Prayer: Thank you God for families. We thank you for Jesus, who came to show us how to love and care for others. We pray for children who are having troubles with their families and ask that you surround them with your care and love. Help them find the right people to provide and care for them. Bless these children here today Lord. May they feel your love and go out of this place to serve you by loving others. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



*Children's Sermon Starters may be used in part, in whole, or as inspiration for your own children's time.*

Children's Sermon Starters provided by Marlene Fenstermacher,  
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