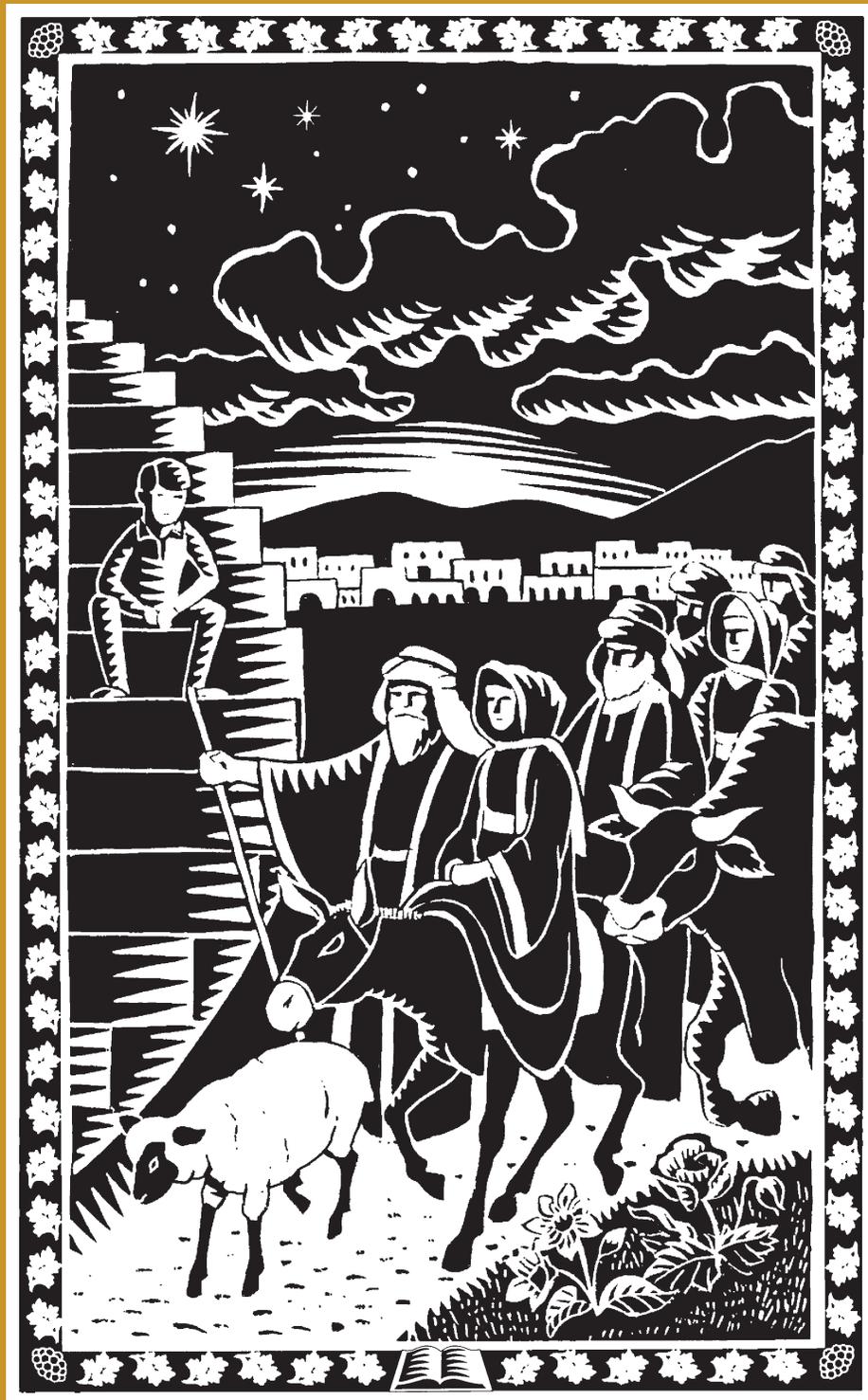


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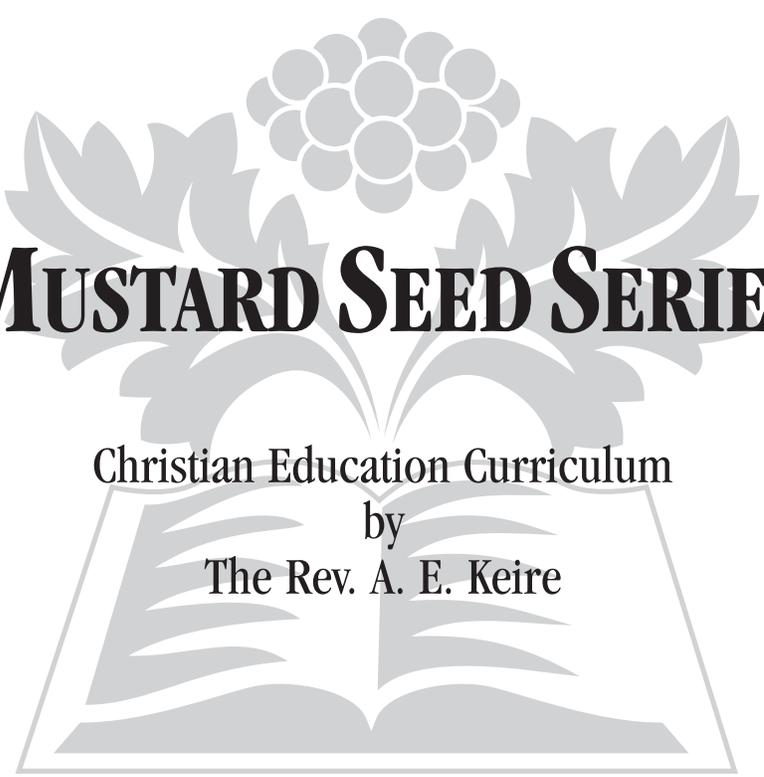
CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION



Teacher Training Manual



Teacher's Training Manual



MUSTARD SEED SERIES

Christian Education Curriculum

by

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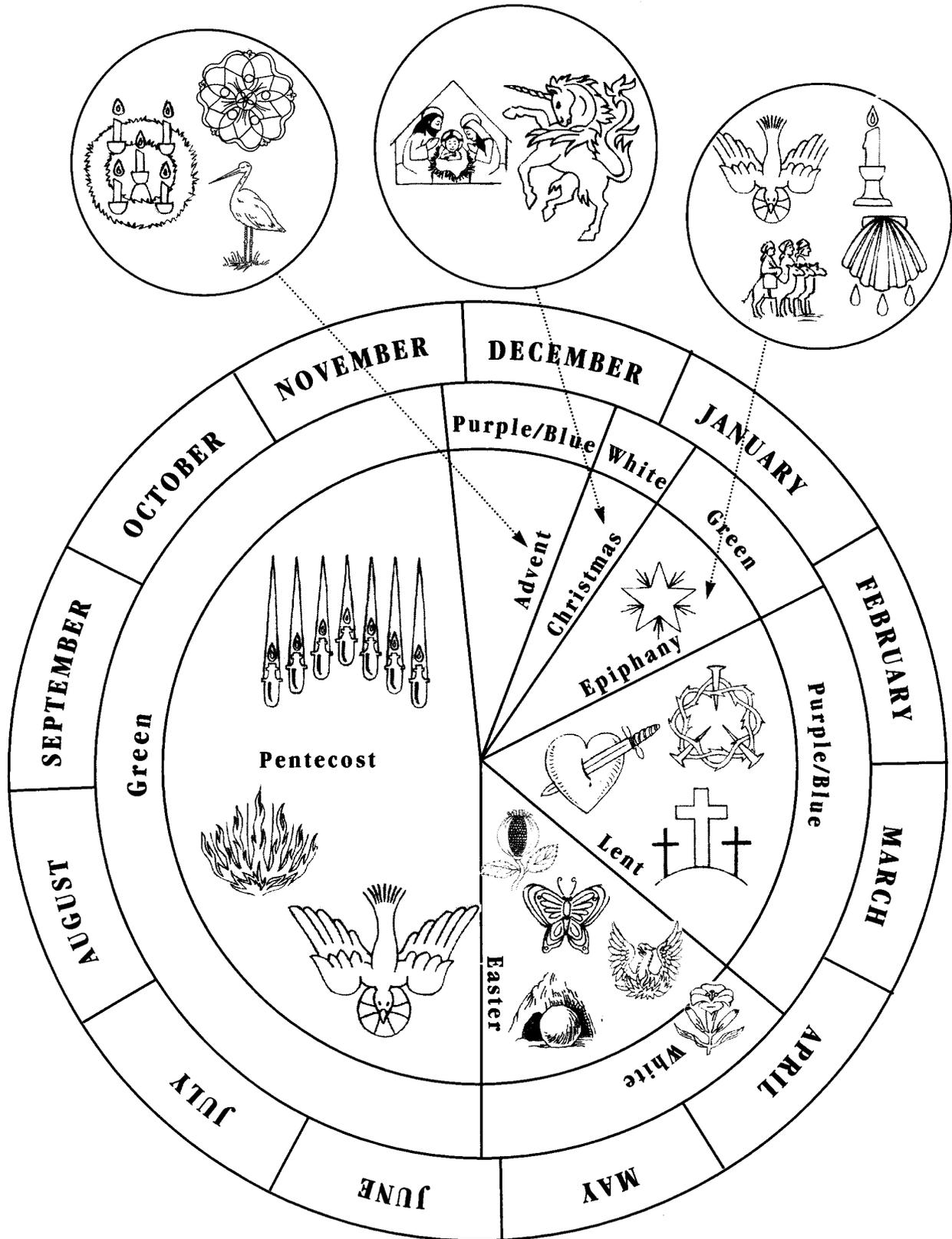
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TEACHER'S TRAINING MANUAL

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Seasons of the Church Year



V. Church Seasons

Advent is the first church season in the church calendar. We celebrate Advent during the four Sundays and weekdays before Christmas. During Advent we watch, wait, pray and prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus.

The Advent Wreath is a symbol from northern Europe. It is an unadorned wreath made of evergreens, with four pink or purple candles in the outer rim and a white candle in the center of the wreath. The outer rim of candles represents the four Sundays before the birth of Jesus. The inner candle is the Christ candle, which is lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. It reminds us of Jesus' gifts of Peace, Hope, Love, and Joy.

The Rose represents the promise that God will send a Messiah.

The Stork represents watchfulness and is associated with Gabriel's invitation to Mary to become the mother of the Messiah.

The Colors for Advent are purple and/or blue. Purple symbolizes penitence, sorrow, or royalty. It also signifies love and truth. The color blue is Mary's color. Blue signifies purity, heaven, love, faithfulness, and truth.

Christmas follows Advent. Christmas is the shortest season in the church year, lasting only 12 days. It is a time for celebrating Jesus' birth and God's presence among us.

The Manger reminds us of the birth of Jesus.

The Unicorn represents purity, and is related to Mary and the birth of Jesus.

The Color for the Christmas season is white, which is a symbol for purity and joy.

Epiphany begins on January 6 with the visit of the Wise Men. The church season of Epiphany reminds us that Jesus came for all people and is a light in a dark world. It is a time for us to grow in our understanding and knowledge of Jesus.

The Five-Pointed Star represents the star the Wise Men followed to find Jesus. It also represents the fact that Jesus came not only to the Jewish people, but to everyone.

The Shell represents the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist.

The Dove represents innocence and purity as well as the presence of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism.

The Lighted Candle tells us that Jesus is the light of the world.

The Colors for Epiphany are white and green. White is used through the first Sunday follow-

ing January 6. Thereafter green, which represents hope and new life, is used.

Lent is a time for us to make a “U turn” in our lives if one is needed. Many of us need to seek inner spiritual cleansing which comes through our acknowledging disgust at our sins, our seeking forgiveness for them, and our living a new life in and through Jesus. Lent is a time to renew our commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and to think about Jesus’ great sacrifice.

Lent is 40 weekdays long. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Good Friday. During Lent some Christians fast or eat very little food.

The Crown of Thorns represents the cruel crown that the soldiers pushed down on Jesus’ head.

The Three Nails represent the nails that held Jesus to the cross.

The Heart Pierced by a Sword represents Mary’s heart.

The Cross is what Jesus was crucified on.

The Colors for Lent are purple and/or blue. Red is used for Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday). White is used on Maundy Thursday. Black is for Good Friday.

Easter is the day we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. The Easter season lasts 50 days. Easter reminds Christians that they share in Jesus’ victory over death. White is the color used for the Easter season. There are many symbols for Easter.

The Empty Cross tells us that Jesus is victorious over death.

The Phoenix became a symbol first for early Christians’ belief in Jesus’ resurrection and then for all Christians’ resurrections. The phoenix was a large mythical bird that lived in the Arabian Desert. Legend has it that the phoenix was large like the eagle, and that it built its nests with twigs and spices and lived in it for 500 years. In the 500th year, the sun would set the nest afire. The phoenix would flap its wings to fan the fire, which eventually burned the phoenix to death. Shortly thereafter, the phoenix would rise from the dead, build a new nest and live another 500 years.

The Butterfly depicts new life. It goes through three different life stages. First, it is a caterpillar. Then it withdraws from the world into a chrysalis (cocoon) which it builds. From the cocoon it breaks out into a beautiful, mature butterfly. Jesus’ life follows the butterfly’s life stages. First, Jesus becomes a human and lives a simple existence. Then he dies and rests in the tomb. On the third day, Jesus rises gloriously from the dead with a new body.

The Open Tomb and Easter Lily represent Jesus’ resurrection.

The Pomegranate with its many seeds in its fruit is symbolic of growth in the Word of God and the increase of God’s grace.

White is the color for the Easter season and symbolizes purity and joy.