

Worship Date	November 29, 2009
Worship Theme	Redemption is Near First Sunday of Advent--Love
Scripture Reference	Jeremiah 33:14–16, Luke 21:25–36
Materials	a copy of the story, “Well That’s a Silly Question”

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Did you eat lots of good food? (Elicit responses from the children about their celebration.) Today we have another reason to be thankful. Christmas is only four weeks away, and this is the first Sunday of Advent. Today we are remembering that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to save us, just as He promised. Listen carefully to the story. (Read the story.)

JJ had a great life, and he got to see Jesus at the end of the story. Do you think Jesus was only with him at the end? Was Jesus with JJ when he was sick? How about when he left home and went to college? When he had kids of his own?

I think Jesus was with JJ all of his life, and Jesus loved JJ. Will Jesus be with you in your life? How much does Jesus love you? (Open your arms just a little.) This much? (Open your arms wider.) This much? (Open your arms as wide as you can.) How about THIS much? I think that’s enough to give the best hugs ever. What do you think? (Give everyone a hug and encourage the children to hug each other.)

Dear God, thank you for giving us your Son. Thank you for loving us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Well, That's a Silly Question
By Alan Mardis

Once upon a time, there was a boy named James Jacob Johnson. Everyone called him JJ for short. They thought about calling him JJJ but that seemed a bit much, so they settled on JJ. One day JJ and his mom were in the kitchen making chocolate chip cookies, JJ's very favorite. As they were working, JJ asked his mom to tell him about himself when he was a baby. "Well, when you were born" she said, "you were the prettiest baby I had ever seen. And you were strong and healthy and that made your daddy and me very, very happy. Then, one day you got very sick and the doctors worked and worked to find what was wrong, but couldn't. We prayed and prayed, that God would help you, in fact a lot of people prayed for you. Finally, they found what was wrong and you got healthy and strong again, and that made everyone very happy." Then she said, "But, for a very long time we were all very worried about you." Then JJ said, "Why was everyone worried (and he paused) about me?" "Well, that's a silly question." his mom answered, "We worried because we love you." Then she gave him the very best hug he had ever had.

JJ thought about that day from time to time and it made him happy to know how much his mom and dad loved him. The years passed and the day was nearing for JJ to graduate from high school. For the longest, his dream was to go to the University. But the University was very expensive and even though he knew his mom and dad had worked very hard to give him the things he needed and most of the things he wanted, he was sure they could never afford for him to go. So as the day arrived, JJ was a little bit happy and a little bit sad, but he was mostly happy. After the graduation ceremony, JJ's mom and dad took him to a nice restaurant for a celebration dinner. As they sat and talked after eating, his mom said, "JJ, your dad and I know your dream has always been to go to University." And JJ interrupted, "I know Mom, and it's OK, I know we can't afford it." "No, JJ, your dad and I have saved for this day, since the day you were born," she said, "here." And she handed him a large envelope. It was from the University and it was addressed to JJ. He couldn't believe his eyes. He had been accepted to start school in September. "But this is so expensive." JJ said, as he tried to decide to laugh or cry. "Why would you spend so much money, for me?" "Well, that's a silly question" his dad said. "We spent it because we love you." Then they gave him the very best hug he had ever had.

Soon after starting at the University, JJ met Mary, and from that moment they spent almost all their time together. More years passed, and JJ and Mary finally graduated from the University and started working. Not long after that he asked Mary to marry him and of course she said yes. The years kept passing, and their family kept growing, with the birth of their two children Jimmy and Martha. One Saturday afternoon JJ, Mary and the kids were in the kitchen making chocolate chip cookies, still JJ's very favorite. They were laughing and singing Christmas carols and tossing the occasional cookie-dough ball at each other. After a while JJ and Mary leaned against the counter and watched as the children slaved with the cookie dough and they both smiled. "I'm a very blessed man" JJ said. "Yes you are" answered Mary and laughed. JJ looked at Mary then and asked, "Why have you given me so much over the years?" Mary looked back at him with a strange look on her face, and said "Well, that's a silly question. I've

given so much, as you say, because I love you.” Then she gave him the very best hug he had ever had.

Many more years passed and through those years JJ lived his life doing good things for other people. He never really thought about doing nice things for others, it was just who he was. He always looked for the best in people and was always ready to help. Finally, the day came and JJ died and the instant he did he found himself standing in the air with an angel, looking down on a large group of people standing by a grave. “Wow, look at all the people” JJ said. “He must have been a strong and powerful man, to have so many people come to his funeral.” “Not really” said the angel. “He was just a man who loved people and did good all his life. That’s your funeral JJ.” “My funeral!” he said with surprise. “All these people came to my funeral? Why would they do that?” Then the angel said, “Well, that’s a silly question. They came because they love you.” Then the angel gave him the very best hug he had ever had.

“Come now, we have to be going” the angel said. And they began walking down a beautiful wooded path. As they walked the angel helped JJ remember his life and all the things that had happened, all the things he had done, and all the people he had helped along the way. It was a very nice walk and JJ could have gone on for a long time, but the angel stopped and motioning with his arm said, “There’s someone here who would like to say hello.” JJ looked where the angel was pointing and saw a man standing in a grove of trees. “Go ahead” said the angel. And JJ walked toward the grove and as he got nearer he recognized the man. He had never seen him before. He had never even seen a real picture of him. He had seen many paintings of what people thought he looked like, but he didn’t really look like any of them. Even with all that he knew exactly who he was, it was Jesus and JJ was very happy. But being JJ he just couldn’t help himself, almost the first words out of his mouth were “You’re the son of God! Why would you want to take time to say hello to me?” Jesus laughed and said, “Well, that’s a silly question. I wanted to say hello because I love you.” Then Jesus gave him the very best hug he had ever had.