



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word First Sunday of Advent

Overview



On the First Sunday of Advent, Jesus uses simple language to discuss the end of time and reminds us that our lives and time on earth are not forever. While his words describe some destruction, his overall message is hopeful. The readings focus on peace and fulfillment. The promises made to those who seek peace are full of hope. They tell us more about God than about the people receiving the promises: God is loving and caring, always offering second, third, and countless chances.

The Advent wreath helps us mark the passing weeks. It is made of evergreen branches and holds three purple and one pink candle. We light one candle each week of Advent, and on the third Sunday, we light the pink candle. Jesus came to share love, forgiveness, and peace with the world. When we show these gifts of love through small acts of kindness daily, we will be ready to celebrate Christmas.

Leaders Reflections Question:

† What are the things that matter to you?

Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:

Violet cloth, a Lectionary, a candle and an Advent Wreath with three purple and one pink candle.

Flashlight and raincoat for the reflection if you wish to use it.

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Background

Jeremiah 33:14-16 is a prophecy of hope and restoration. It promises that God will fulfill God's covenant with Israel and Judah by raising a "righteous branch" from the line of David, who will bring justice and righteousness to the land. This passage is often interpreted as a messianic prophecy, foretelling a future leader who will ensure safety and salvation for Judah and Jerusalem, symbolically referred to as "The Lord Our Righteous Savior." Despite the dire circumstances during Jeremiah's time, this message provides a vision of renewal and divine faithfulness.

Psalms 25 Psalm 25, known as the "Advent Psalm," expresses longing, waiting, and hope for God's help. The psalmist asks for guidance and teaches the true ways of God. It reflects a desire for a close relationship with God that comes from His forgiveness. God's mercy surpasses human expectations and fosters a friendship between Him and us.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 Early Christian traditions believed in the imminent return of the Lord after His resurrection. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians expresses this hope and encourages the community to love one another. Those who do will be found blameless at His coming. Paul emphasizes the importance of mutual support and the value of teaching through example in guiding others in the Christian faith.

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 The Scriptures for the First Sunday of Advent highlight God's advent in salvation history. While Jeremiah promises future healing and St. Paul invites us to "abound in love," the Gospel of Luke presents an apocalyptic vision of the Son of Man's return, filled with cosmic upheaval and natural disaster. This reflects the struggle between good and evil, echoing challenges faced by the prophets. Luke urges us to "be vigilant ... and pray," as these dispositions lead to a path of readiness to meet God. The imminent assault of evil affects everyone, reminding us to be watchful and prepared, as we never know when we will encounter the Son of Man. Advent calls us to be open to God's presence among us each day.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: (in these or similar words)

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Dear Children, God promised a Saviour long ago, and he fulfilled his promise in Jesus. Trust in him, knowing that Jesus loves you very much. Go in peace.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

O God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Help us prepare to greet you at Christmas and at the end of time. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

First Reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

The days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will fulfil the promise
I made to Israel and Judah.

I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up from David;
and he shall execute justice and righteousness.

Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it will be called:
"The Lord is our righteousness."

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Make me know your ways, O Lord,
teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation. **R.**

Good and upright is the Lord,
he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches the humble his way. **R.**

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.
The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Beloved:

May the Lord make you increase
and abound in love for one another and for all,
just as we abound in love for you.

And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before our God and Father
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Finally, brothers and sisters,
we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that,
as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God,
as, in fact, you are doing,
you should do so more and more.

For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John.

Jesus spoke to his disciples about his return in glory.

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon,
and the stars, and on the earth, distress among nations
will be confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will faint from fear and foreboding
of what is coming upon the world,
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud.'
with power and great glory.

Now, when these things begin to take place,
stand up and raise your heads,
because your redemption is drawing near.

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down
with dissipation and drunkenness
and the worries of this life,
and that day catches you unexpectedly, like a trap.
For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.
Be alert at all times,
praying that you may have the strength
to escape all these things that will take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man."

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Glory to you, O Lord.

Reflection: Be Ready for Jesus

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

Introduction:

Good morning, children! Today is a very special Sunday. Do you know why?

(Pause for answers.)

It's the first Sunday of Advent! Advent is a time when we prepare for something very exciting. Can anyone tell me what we're getting ready for?

(Let them answer: Christmas, Jesus' birthday.)

That's right! We're getting ready to celebrate Jesus coming into the world. But Advent isn't just about preparing for Christmas—it's also about getting our hearts ready for Jesus to come again.

Scripture Focus:

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells His friends something very important. He says, "Be ready! Always be prepared!" Jesus talks about how we should live our lives every day, not just at Christmas.

Object Lesson:

Let's pretend we're going on a hike. If it gets dark, what do we need?

(Hold up the flashlight.) That's right, a flashlight! What if it rains?

(Show the raincoat.) We need to be ready for anything. Jesus isn't talking about being prepared for a hike or the rain. He's talking about being ready in our hearts.

What do you think we need to be ready for Jesus? (Let them answer: prayer, kindness, love, etc.)

Key Message:

Being ready for Jesus means loving God and loving others. It means saying kind words, helping people, and praying every day. When we do these things, we show Jesus we're ready for Him by shining a big light, like this flashlight.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You came to be with us. Help us to be ready for You, not just at Christmas but every day. Show us how to love You and love others. Amen.

Final Word:



As we light the first candle on the Advent wreath this week, remember: Jesus is coming, and He wants us to be ready with hearts full of love and kindness. Let's make this Advent a time of joy and preparation!

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Dear children, as we begin Advent, we remember that Jesus is coming. Let us ask God to help us prepare our hearts and lives. After each prayer, let us say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For the Church: That all Christians will use this Advent season to grow closer to Jesus by praying, sharing, and loving others. We pray to the Lord. Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

2 For our families and friends: That our homes will be filled with love, patience, and joy as we prepare for Christmas together. We pray to the Lord. Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For those who are sad or lonely: That they will feel God's love and find hope through the kindness of others during this Advent season. We pray to the Lord. Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For ourselves: That we will use this Advent season to prepare our hearts for Jesus by being kind, helping others, and praying each day. We pray to the Lord. Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Loving God, thank You for sending Jesus to be with us. Help us to prepare for His coming with hearts full of love and hope. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

All: Amen.

Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,
Canadian Conferences of Catholic Bishops, 2009, adapted for children.
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