



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word Second Sunday of Advent

Overview



On the Second Sunday of Advent, we learn about John the Baptist, the last prophet of Israel. John prepares the people for the Lord's arrival and spreads hope. Living in the desert, he turned away from his culture and shared a message of freedom and holiness. His excitement inspired the community, including tax collectors and soldiers, to change their lives.

John offered baptism as a sign of repentance. He encouraged people to treat others well, not just pray and fast. He called them to leave distractions behind and meet the One who can fulfill them.

Today, John urges us to reflect on our lives, make changes, and live as saved people. We should treat others justly, live in peace, and show our joy clearly. We must pray and give thanks, asking God for what we need, while holding on to strong faith. The spirituality of the desert is still important in the Church today.

Leaders Reflections Question:

- † How, in our own circumstances, can we live justly and with integrity?
- † Who are the people you have met who have inspired or challenged you to be a better person?

Suggested Focus

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

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, sandals, a walking stick and the Advent Wreath



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Background

Baruch 5:1-9 Isaiah is considered the prophet of Advent, but his writings are not read during Advent Sundays in Year C. Instead, this week, we read from Baruch, which shares similar themes. It offers hope to those suffering after Jerusalem's destruction, signalling the end of past sadness. God promises to gather the scattered people back home, using powerful imagery of altering mountains and valleys to illustrate the impending redemption and closeness of salvation.

Psalms 126: This psalm reflects the experience of those ransomed, moving from captivity to joy. As one of the Psalms of Ascent, it is believed to have been sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem for festivals and while ascending the temple steps. It serves as a reminder of God's loving deliverance from captivity and emphasizes the importance of remembering the past as a key aspect of faith, affirming that God's salvation is ultimate.

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11 St. Paul cherishes his friendship with the Philippians, feeling joy in praying for them due to their loyalty to his teachings. He believes God's grace is active in their lives and will lead to blessings on "the day of Christ Jesus," a time when God will judge evil. Their reliability in spreading the Gospel reflects God's unfolding plan in their community, as their love grows and they embrace the Christian life.

Luke 3:1-6 In this Gospel passage, Luke references Baruch and Isaiah to introduce John the Baptist as the final prophet. His story mirrors Old Testament prophets, detailing the time and rulers to emphasize his divine message. John's role is to prepare hearts for Jesus Christ by calling for repentance, leading to God's gift of forgiveness. He announces the end times and the coming of God, as foretold by earlier prophets. The hopeful message concludes that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God," signifying that salvation is available to everyone, not just the Hebrew people.

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, today we reflect on John the Baptist's message: Get Ready. The Lord is coming soon. Embrace this time 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, help us choose your path regardless of what others say or think. 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 Baruch.

Jerusalem, exchange your robes of sorrow and suffering
for those glorious garments God has given you forever.
Dress in the saving power of the eternal God,
and wear his glory like a crown on your head.

God will show everyone on earth how wonderful you are.

And he has forever given you this name:

"Justice Leads to Peace, Obeying God Brings Honour."

Jerusalem, climb to the peaks of the highest mountains
and see your people coming from the East and the West,
at the command of God.

They are celebrating
because they have been remembered by the Holy One.

God has commanded every tall and ancient mountain
to be levelled to the ground and every valley filled in.
Then Israel will safely walk in the glory of God.

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. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

It seemed like a dream

when the Lord

brought us back to the city of Zion.

We celebrated with laughter and joyful songs. **R.**

In foreign nations, it was said,

"The Lord has worked miracles for his people."

And so we celebrated

because the Lord had indeed worked miracles for us. **R.**

Second Reading

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

Brothers and sisters:

whenever I mention you in my prayers,
it makes me happy.

This is because you have taken part with me
in spreading the good news
from the first day, you heard about it.

God is the one who began this good work in you,
and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete
on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

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 Luke.

For fifteen years, Emperor Tiberius ruled that part of the world,
and Annas and Caiaphas were Jewish high priests.
At that time, God spoke to Zechariah's son John,
who was living in the desert.

So John went along the Jordan Valley, telling the people,
"Turn back to God and be baptized!
Then your sins will be forgiven."

Isaiah the prophet wrote about John when he said,
"In the desert, someone is shouting,
'Get the road ready for the Lord!
Make a straight path for him!
Fill up every valley and level every mountain and hill.
Straighten the crooked paths and smooth out the rough roads.
Then everyone will see the saving power of God.'"

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: Preparing our hearts 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:

Good morning, everyone! Today is the Second Sunday of Advent, and we're getting closer to Christmas!

What did you hear?

Advent is a time to prepare not just our homes with decorations and gifts but also our hearts to welcome Jesus. Today, we'll hear about someone very special who helped people prepare for Jesus a long time ago.

Do you know his name? (Pause for responses.) Yes! John the Baptist.

In the Gospel, we hear how John the Baptist was like a messenger. He travelled around telling people, "Get ready! Jesus is coming!" But he didn't tell them to clean their rooms or bake cookies. Instead, he said, "Prepare your hearts. Make a straight path for God to come to you."

Do you know what a "straight path" is? (Pause for responses.)

Imagine you're walking on a trail in the woods. If the trail is twisty or bumpy, it's hard to walk on, right? John was saying, "Let's fix the paths in our hearts." That means getting rid of anything that keeps us far from God, like being unkind, not listening, or forgetting to pray.

Let's consider some ways we can prepare our hearts for Jesus, as John the Baptist taught.

John told people to repent. Repentance means saying sorry for our sins and asking God to help us do better.

Can you think of something you might need to say sorry for? (Pause for answers, if appropriate.)

What are some ways you can be kind this week? (Let the children share ideas.)

Do you talk to God?

That's what prayer is! During Advent, we can spend a little extra time praying and thanking God for sending Jesus to us.

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: Let us now pray to God, who loves us and listens to all our prayers. After each prayer, we will say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

1. For the Church: That we may be like John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus by showing love and kindness to everyone. We pray to the Lord. Response: Come, Lord Jesus!
2. For the world: That all people may know the peace and joy of Jesus, especially those who are sad or lonely. We pray to the Lord. Response: Come, Lord Jesus!
3. For our families and friends: That we may help each other prepare for Christmas by being patient, forgiving, and loving. We pray to the Lord. Response: Come, Lord Jesus!
4. For those who are sick or in need: That they may feel God's love and care through the kindness of others. We pray to the Lord. Response: Come, Lord Jesus!
5. For ourselves: That we may make our hearts ready for Jesus by praying, being kind, and helping others this Advent season. We pray to the Lord. Response: Come, Lord Jesus!.

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Loving God, thank You for hearing our prayers. Help us to prepare our hearts for Jesus this Advent and to share His love with everyone we meet. We ask this through Christ, our Lord..

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.

Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children
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