



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word Third Sunday of Advent

### Overview



The crowds wanted to be ready to welcome the Messiah. John told them what to do. His words are just as important for us today so that we, too, will be ready for Jesus to come. Today's candle in the Advent wreath is pink – a symbol of joy as we look forward to Christmas. We might think of ways to bring some joy to someone else who might be sick or lonely at this time.

In the midst of life's chaos, it's essential to stay connected to God. With so many demands on our attention, how does God's word resonate with you?

Advent serves as a season of longing for transformation and preparation. It invites us to allow God to work through ordinary lives. Transformation often touches those who are grieving and can profoundly impact our interactions with marginalized individuals.

Today's readings beautifully revisit the theme of promise, inspiring us with God's assurance of wondrous transformation in a specific time and place.

## Leaders Reflections Question:

- † Are there relationships, past experiences, social pressures, or current struggles that sometimes get in the way?
- † How might you go about smoothing out some of the things in your life that make it difficult for you to change?
- † What voice is leading you to a change of heart?

## 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, a bowl of water and the Advent Wreath.



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## Background

**Zephaniah 3:14-18** The Book of Zephaniah consists of oracles preached in Jerusalem around 620 BC, declaring that God will save a remnant of the meek and humble in Israel. Similar to Isaiah, Zephaniah encourages the people by assuring them that their guilt has been removed, the Lord is present among them, and they have nothing to fear because of God's love. The reading states that God will "renew you in his love," which can be interpreted as "God will quiet you," likening God's comfort to a parent holding a fearful child.

**Psalm from Isaiah 12** Today, we sing a canticle from the prophet Isaiah, a poignant expression of praise as he transitions from simple prose. This prayer reflects the joyous theme of the day and connects the first and second readings, proclaiming, "My strength and my courage is the Lord." The image of drawing water from the fountain of salvation symbolizes God's abundant care, always available for those who seek it.

**Philippians 4:4-7** The closing of Paul's Letter to the Philippians summarizes his key themes and emphasizes his invitation to rejoice, especially in the face of his imprisonment and the persecution the Philippians were enduring. The phrase "Your kindness should be known to all" captures this message, although "kindness" can also mean forbearance, patience, courtesy, and mutual respect. Paul encourages the community to witness their faith through their conduct rather than just words. He stresses that their overall approach to life matters and urges them to let go of anxiety, embracing a peace that is profoundly enjoyable, even if inexplicable.

**Luke 3:10-18** John the Baptist is highlighted on the Third Sunday of Advent, creating expectations among his listeners. He urged people to be aware of others' needs, using the "extra cloak" to symbolize the recognition of hidden poverty. John addressed soldiers and tax collectors, showing that even despised figures can change, reflecting the Gospel's transformative power. He called for justice from those in power and encouraged generosity among the less fortunate. In essence, John's message was clear: "all you need to change is everything," urging everyone to prepare for the one after him.

## 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 to remember anyone who is sick or lonely at this time of year.  
May joy and peace touch their lives at Christmas.**

**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 Zephaniah.**

Everyone in Jerusalem and Judah,  
celebrate and shout with all your heart.

You won't be punished now.

The Lord has made your enemies retreat.

The Lord is the king of Israel,  
and he is at your side.

You don't have to worry about any more troubles.

*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. Cry out with joy and gladness,  
for among you is the great and holy one of Israel.**

I trust the Lord to save me,  
and I won't be afraid.

My power and my strength come from the Lord God,  
and he has saved me. **R.**

Our Lord, we are thankful,  
and we worship only you.

We will tell the nations how glorious you are  
and what you have done. **R.**

People of Jerusalem, celebrate and sing.

The famous Lord God of Israel is here with you. **R.**

Second Reading

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

Brothers and sisters:  
always be glad because of the Lord!  
I will say it again: Be glad.

Always be gentle with others.  
The Lord will soon be here.  
Don't worry about anything,  
but pray about everything.

With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.  
Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus,  
God will bless you with peace  
that no one can completely understand.  
And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

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.

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?"

John told them,

"If you have two coats,

give one to someone who doesn't have any.

If you have food,

share it with someone else."

When tax collectors came to be baptized, they asked John,

"Teacher, what should we do?"

John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe."

Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us?

What do we have to do?" John told them,

"Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone.

Be satisfied with your pay.

" Everyone became excited and wondered,

"Could John be the Messiah?"

John said, "I am just baptizing with water.

But someone more powerful is going to come,

and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

In many different ways, John preached the good news to the people.

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: Joyful Waiting for Sunday

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:

### Welcome and Introduction

Good morning, everyone! Today is a special Sunday in Advent called Gaudete Sunday. **Can you say Gaudete?** (Pause for responses.)

It's a Latin word that means "Rejoice!" Do you see something different about the candles on the Advent wreath? (Point to the pink candle.)

Today, we light the pink candle, which reminds us to be joyful because Jesus is almost here!

### Explaining the Gospel

#### **What did you hear in the readings?**

In today's Gospel, we hear about John the Baptist. Do you remember who John the Baptist is? (Let children respond.) Yes, he is the one who told everyone to get ready for Jesus!

The people were so excited about Jesus's coming that they asked John, "What should we do to get ready?" And do you know what John told them? He didn't say, "Go clean your house" or "Buy something new." He told them to share what they had. If someone has two coats, they should give one away.

Be fair and kind to others. He said tax collectors shouldn't take more than they should, and soldiers shouldn't bully anyone.

John was teaching them—and us—that the best way to prepare for Jesus is to love and care for others.

To see God, we could recognize that what we have should be shared for God's glory, responding to the love He has shown us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In today's Gospel, various people, including known sinners like tax collectors and soldiers, come to John the Baptist seeking guidance for salvation. They acknowledge their sinful behaviours and understand the need for change. John instructs them to be baptized and to follow his guidance.

Everyone can repent by recognizing their sins, feeling sorry, seeking to make amends, and acting on it. Repentance is essential for salvation, allowing us to live with God in heaven after our earthly life. By sharing what we have, we can apply John's teachings and practice being good disciples.

## **What are some ways you can be good disciples in school and at home this week?**

This week is a joyous week for us because Christmas is near. The Third Sunday of Advent focuses on the joy we feel because the Lord is near.

## **How could we show that we are ready to welcome Jesus?**

### Interactive Discussion

1. Sharing: John told people to share their things.
  - Encourage them to think about ways to be generous this week.
2. Kindness: John said to treat everyone fairly.
  - Ask: What are some ways we can be kind to others, like our friends, teachers, or even our brothers and sisters?
3. Being Joyful: Today is all about joy.
  - Ask: What makes you joyful? How can we help others feel joy this Advent?

### Bringing It All Together

So, what can we do to prepare for Jesus? We can share, be kind, and spread joy! When we do these things, we're making our hearts ready for Jesus to come at Christmas.

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:** As we wait for Jesus with joyful hearts, let us bring our prayers to God, who loves and listens to us. After each prayer, let us say: "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For the Church: That all people in our Church may share Jesus' love and bring joy to the world. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
2. For the world: That leaders in every country will work for peace, fairness, and kindness for all people. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
3. For those who are sad or lonely: That they may feel God's love and find comfort in kind and caring people. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
4. For families and friends: That we will share what we have, help each other, and be joyful as we prepare for Jesus' coming. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
5. For all children: That we may show kindness and be a light of joy to everyone we meet this Advent season. We pray to the Lord. **R.**
6. For our own intentions: Let us now silently ask God for something special in our hearts. (Pause.) We pray to the Lord. **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

**Leader:** Loving God, thank You for hearing our prayers. Help us to share Your love, be kind, and prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming. 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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