



Second Sunday of Advent (B)

John the Baptist Proclaims the Coming of the Messiah

Aim of this Catechesis:

To reflect with the children on the special role of John the Baptist in preparing the people for the coming of Jesus as Messiah

Note to the Catechist:

The Gospel text at the heart of this lesson is:

Mark 1:1-8

The overarching theme for Advent in the Year of Mark is the desire of God: *“Be Prepared for the Messiah—the Lord is coming and will come again at the end of time”*. However, the Gospels of Advent in Year B are taken from Mark, John and Luke. This theme will be developed during the four Sundays of Advent as follows:



<i>“I am coming to Save my People”</i>	
1st Sunday	Be Prepared for the Second Coming of the Lord
2nd Sunday	God sends John the Baptist to help us to prepare for the coming of the Lord
3rd Sunday	Who is coming? John the Baptist clears up some confusion—he is not the Christ.
4th Sunday	A solemn announcement—Jesus, the Messiah is conceived in the womb of his Mother Mary

In today’s lesson we will go back to the beginning of the Gospel of Mark to listen to John the Baptist calling on the people to get ready because the Messiah is coming.

The Key elements in this event are:

1. Mark describes what he is about to describe is the “beginning” of the Good News about Jesus...”
2. John's role as messenger of God.
3. The effect of his preaching on the people.

We will reflect on these three elements in our catechesis.

Equipment Needed:

A Bible or Sunday Missal

Candle & Matches

Flash Cards (See each Step in the Lesson)

Worksheet: *"Prepare a Way for the Lord!"*

N.B. Make sure that each child has his/her own workbook.

LESSON PLAN

Begin the Lesson with a prayer.

Explain to the children:

- Today is the Second Sunday of Advent
- Mark announces the beginning of the Good News about Jesus.
- The people begin to respond to his call to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah.
- This coming of the Messiah is the First Coming of Jesus as man among us.

Step 1: **Our Gospel Text Mark 1:1-8** **Its special meaning for us as Christians**

Tell the children:

- In today's Gospel, John the Baptist begins his task of preparing the people for the coming of the Messiah for the first time among them.
- His preaching has a special effect on them.
- Let us listen to the events as Mark tells it at the beginning of his Gospel.
- Light the candle beside the Bible.
- Encourage the children to be respectful as they listen to the Gospel.
- They can follow it in their workbooks.

"The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am sending my messenger before you;

He will prepare your way.

A voice that cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,

Make his paths straight,

And so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptized by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

(Mark 1:1-8)

- If necessary read the Gospel text again.
- You can also ask some of the children to read the text out loud for the others.

Now ask the children:

- What are the first words of this Gospel text?
- What do you think John meant by : “Prepare a way for the Lord”?
- What did the people do who came to John the Baptist?

Now tell the children:

- The first words of the Gospel of Mark are important.
- He is telling us that this is the beginning of God’s Plan to save us in Jesus Christ his son.
- This is Good News!

The Response of the People:

They did two things:

They were baptised by John in the river Jordan

1. This was a symbol of them washing themselves—making themselves clean for the coming of the Messiah.
2. They confessed their sins—this symbolised their INNER cleansing in order to be ready when the Messiah comes.

BAPTISM IN THE RIVER JORDAN

CONFESSED SINS

John Prophesies another Baptism:

While John the Baptist is baptising the people who come to him, he foretells that the Messiah will baptise the people with the Holy Spirit.

This reminds us of what happens in our Confirmation..



Step 2: What can we do? Practice & Prayer

Practice:

Tell the children:

- Right now we are preparing ourselves for the **Feast of Christmas** when we remember the **First coming of Christ**.
- Shops are all calling on us to prepare to celebrate the “festive season”.
- We are encouraged to buy presents for others...
- Nothing is being said of preparing ourselves for **CHRIST**.
- The Church calls on us all to make ourselves ready to celebrate the First coming of Christ at Christmas.
- The Gospel story suggests a way for us to do this.

Worksheet:

Invite the children to turn to the Worksheet **“Prepare a Way for the Lord!”** in their workbooks.

Invite them to complete the task on the worksheet.

Allow them time for this.

Link to Sunday Mass:

Tell the children:

The Gospel Acclamation in today’s Mass is:

“Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare a way for the Lord.

Make his paths straight

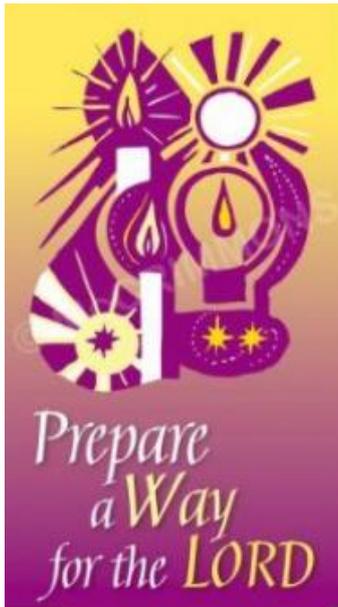
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!”

This based on Isaiah, Chapter 40, verse 3

It is calling on us to make things straight with God who is coming to save us.

Join in the Gospel Acclamation at Mass on Sunday.

NOTE: If your parish is holding a Reconciliation Service in preparation for Christmas, encourage the children to take part in it and go to confession.



Memory Bytes:

Invite the children to read the following in their workbooks:

When we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (by going to Confession) we receive the following blessings from God:

We are reconciled with God—we have made things straight with God.

We are strengthened to succeed in our efforts to overcome sin.

It brings us inner peace.

(From the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Now encourage them to learn this off by heart.

Prayer:

One of the hymns we sing during Advent is: ***“On Jordan’s bank...”***.

Let us recite or sing the first two verses together:

*On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come then and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings.*

*Then cleaned be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
Yes, let us each our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.*



WORKSHEET Advent Week Two Year B

“Prepare a Way for the Lord!”



We can prepare a way for the Lord this Christmas in many ways.
Consider the following questions:

What would you like for Christmas?

What would Jesus want from you for Christmas?

What will you give to the poor for Christmas?

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Link to Sunday Mass:

The Gospel Acclamation in today’s Mass is:
*“Alleluia, alleluia!
Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia!”*



ON JORDAN’S BANK

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come then and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleaned be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
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