



Third Sunday of Advent (B)

Who is Coming? John the Baptist Clears up a Confusion

Aim of this Catechesis:

To reflect again 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:

John 1:6-8 & 19-28

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 the Mark, John and Luke. This theme will be developed during the four Sundays of Advent as follows:

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 to the beginning of the Gospel of John to listen to what the Apostle John has to say about John the Baptist and to hear what John the Baptist has to say about himself.

The Key elements in this event are:

1. St John describes John the Baptist as “a man sent by God”.
2. The people begin to think that John the Baptist himself is the Messiah.
3. John the Baptist clears their confusion about himself.

We will reflect on these three elements in our catechesis.



Equipment Needed:

A Bible or Sunday Missal

Candle & Matches

A Christmas Crib or picture of the Nativity

Flash Cards (See each Step in the Lesson)

Worksheet: *"Put Christ back Into Christmas"*

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 Third Sunday of Advent
- We are still dealing with John the Baptist.
- The people are beginning to think that he is the Messiah.
- In this lesson we will learn who John the Baptist really is.

Step 1: Who is the Mystery Person?

Divide the Class into smaller groups of 6.

Give each group the following task:

- Each group decides on a personality.
- The rest of the class will be asked to identify the personality.
- The group decides on THREE clues they will give the rest of the class.
- They may give ONLY these Three clues.

Allow the groups time to complete their task and see if the other groups can identify the personalities they selected.

It does not matter if the personalities are identified or not.

Step 2: Our Gospel Text John 1:6-8 & 19-28 Its special meaning for us as Christians

Tell the children:

Sometimes we are confused when we try to identify a person.

This happened to John the Baptist.

The people began to think he was the Messiah.

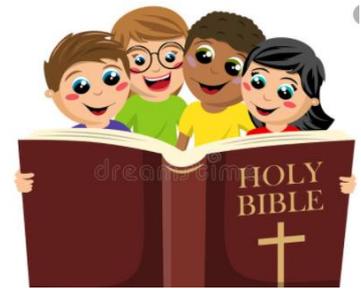
The people are confused about John the Baptist.

Some of them think he is the Messiah

In today's Gospel, the Apostle John tells us who John the Baptist really is
John the Baptist also tells the people who he really is.

Let us listen to the **Apostle John** and **John the Baptist** clearing up the confusion.

- Light the candle beside the Bible.
- Encourage the children to be respectful as they listen to the Gospel.
- Read the Gospel text to them.
- They can follow it in their workbooks.



The following is the Gospel Text:

“A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,

As a witness to speak for the light,

So that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light.

This is how John the Baptist appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ‘Well then,’ they asked ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet? He answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?’ So John said, ‘I am. As Isaiah prophesied:

A voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.’

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, ‘Why are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?’ John replied, ‘I baptize with water, but there stands among you—unknown to you—the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.’

This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.’

(John 1:6-8 & 19-28)

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 was John the Baptist sent to be?
- Who did the Jews think John the Baptist was?
- What answer did John the Baptist give them?
- What do you think John the Baptist meant when he told the Jews: “but there stands among you—unknown to you—the one who is coming after me”?

A WITNESS

Now tell the children:

John the Baptist clears up the confusion about his identity:

They thought that he could be the Christ (the Messiah)

If not then he might be Elijah.

Elijah had been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. (See: 2 Kings 2:11)

Some of the Jews believed that one of the signs that the Messiah was coming was the re-appearance of the Prophet Elijah.

CHRIST = MESSIAH

ELIJAH

If he was not the Messiah nor Elijah, then maybe he was the great prophet Isaiah.

John the Baptist was sent as a Witness:

John had a double task as witness. This was:

1. John's task was to point out the Messiah when he came. (John 1:29)
2. But first of all he had to call people to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah.

God would eventually confirm John's mission when Jesus came to the river Jordan to be baptised by John.



Step 3: What can we do? Practice & Prayer

Practice:

Tell the children:

John the Baptist was sent by God as a witness - How will you witness to the coming of Christ this Christmas?

Every year people send Christmas Cards.

Very few of them have images of Christ on them.

People call Christmas "X-mas"

Does your family have a Christmas Crib?

Worksheet:

Invite the children to turn to the Worksheet "***Put Christ back into Christmas***" 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 Opening Prayer in today's Mass is:

***O God, who see how your people
Faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity,
enable us, we pray,
To attain the joys of so great a salvation
And to celebrate them always
With solemn worship and glad rejoicing."***

Listen carefully to this prayer as the Priest recites it.

When you say "AMEN" at the end you will be agreeing that the reason for Christmas is to celebrate the Birth of Jesus.

Memory Bytes:

Invite the children to read the following in their workbooks:

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in a humble stable, into a poor family.

Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event.

(From the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Now encourage them to learn this off by heart.

Prayer:

Set the crib or nativity scene in the centre of the group:

Gather the group around the crib

Recite the following:

Hark! A herald voice is calling:
"Christ is nigh" it seems to say;
"cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!.





WORKSHEET Advent Week Three Year B

“Put Christ Back into Christmas!”

The world around us has largely forgotten why Christians celebrate Christmas. They call Christmas “X-Mas”. Christ is not “X” -the unknown!!

I will Put “CHRIST” back into Christmas by:



1.

2.

3.

Memory Bytes:

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in a humble stable, into a poor family. Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event.

(From the Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Hark! A herald voice is calling:
“Christ is nigh” it seems to say;
“cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!”

Link to Sunday Mass:

The Opening Prayer in today’s Mass is:

*O God, who see how your people
Faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s
Nativity,
enable us, we pray,
To attain the joys of so great a
salvation
And to celebrate them always
With solemn worship and glad
rejoicing.”*

