

Liturgy of the Word with Children
First Sunday of Advent, Year A
30 November 2025
Matthew 24:37-44

Catechist Background

Happy New Year! Yes, the Church's new year begins today and so do read the *General Introduction to Advent* on the Children's Liturgy webpage. Today's Gospel reading is not meant to be viewed as a threat against wrongdoing, but rather as a reminder that separation from God is a consequence of our turning ourselves away from the divine promptings in our lives. Early Christians expected Jesus' to return to earth during their lifetime, and the words we hear today remind us to be constantly ready for God. Unlike the bumper sticker that reads, 'Jesus is coming - look busy!' the emphasis should not be so much on what we *do* but on what type of people we *become*. As it is hard to measure a concept, some children may find it difficult to understand this point (as will many adults).

Setting the Scene

As we begin a new season in the Church's year, we have a new liturgical colour: purple, which you might use in your focal point today, and/or you could use an Advent wreath to count down (or up) to Christmas. Whichever you do, do explain this to the children.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You come to us in your Word to make us strong, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You will come in glory with salvation for your people, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

We Pray (1)

Dear God, help our hearts to grow in your goodness so that we are ready to meet Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Do you know what the Jews living at the time of Jesus were waiting for more than anything? (a leader to help them get rid of the Romans who ruled them, so they could be free)
- Jesus' friends knew that He would help them be free, but not in the ways the Jews expected.
- What kinds of things have you waited for? How does it feel to wait? Is it easy?
- How can we be ready for Jesus?

Response

If your space allows, play a game of 'Red Light, Green Light,' as follows.

- The leader stands at one end of the room and the children stand at the other end;
- A. The leader turns away from the children, (so they can't see them), and says 'Green Light';
 - At this point the children walk toward the leader;
- B. The leader then turns back to face them and says 'Red Light,'
 - at this point everyone must stop moving.
 - if the leader sees anyone moving, that person must go back to the other end and begin again.
- Steps A and B are repeated until one of the children reaches the leader
 - The child who does so has won the game.

Sit the children down again.

- Think about how that game worked. Would the game be different if you knew in advance when the leader was going to turn around?
- Would it have been fun to play? No, it would be boring!
- Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told his friends that He would come back again. His friends thought he would come again whilst they were still alive, but that wasn't true. No one knows exactly when Jesus will come back.
- But, if you knew exactly when Jesus was going to come back to us, would that make a difference to what you said and did? (It would make you want to live just like Jesus would want, wouldn't it, so that Jesus was pleased with you.)
- But we don't know when Jesus will come back, and so some people say they don't want to make all that effort to be good people just yet (but they will when Jesus comes back);
- Imagine what it would be like if everyone in the world decided that they couldn't be bothered to be good?
- Is that what Jesus wants? No, He wants us to try to be good all the time!
- Why? because that way everyone would care for everyone else.
- Jesus is not like the leader in our game. No, Jesus is looking and smiling at us all the time and He never stops caring for us, so we should try to do the same.

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who made such a beautiful world for all creation to enjoy?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who came to bring us back to God?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us become the people we should be?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying 'God hears our prayers for the world and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for priests, that they may live their faith in their ministry. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our country, and especially that our leaders will make good decisions in response to unexpected world events. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people who have had something unpleasant happen in their lives, like a burglary, an illness or a bad accident. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our parish community, that we may show our love for God by our kindnesses to each other in all circumstances. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to grow into the people you wish us to be, so that our good deeds are matched by our loving hearts. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

