

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Second Sunday of Advent, Year A
7 December, 2025
Matthew 3:1-12 (or Matthew 3:1-9, 11)

Catechist Background

Last week's Gospel reading focused on the fact that our response to God's love is more about becoming the right kind of person than doing the right kind of things. However, as we hear in today's Gospel, when we become the right kind of people that ordinarily means that the way we live our lives changes as well. We need to live our faith!

John the Baptist should be understood in the tradition of the Old Testament Jewish prophets, not as a radical 'new' Christian character. Like them he spoke out against injustice and he called the Jewish people to come back to God (repent). Ritual washing was a concept in Jewish life at that time, and so baptism was therefore not a wholly new concept. Like the Jewish prophets, John too was associated with specifically peculiar clothing and food, and lived apart from many more 'respectable' people.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need a 'compass' (real or made from cardboard) and something to represent God (which the compass will point toward). You could use the white candle from the centre of your Advent wreath to represent God for the activity.

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 us always to be joyfully ready to welcome Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Matthew 3:1-12 (or Matthew 3:1-9, 11)

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why was John the Baptist asking people to change their lives?
- Have you ever started doing something and later discovered that you were no longer doing what you intended?
- Do you think people sometime try to follow Jesus but realise later that they're not doing this?
- Can you give an example?

Response

Select a child to go on a journey toward God.

- Give the child the 'God-compass' and make sure it points in the right direction.
 - (You may need to explain how a compass works).

With a bit of creativity, guide the child on a hypothetical journey.

- For instance, allow him/her to take two steps toward God in a straight line (saying things along the lines of 'You begin your journey toward God and are very focussed'),
- but then be distracted ('You get very jealous of your sister and start planning how to ruin a drawing she is proud of...You start playing with some people who encourage you to lie...')

- After a few steps in the wrong direction, prompt them to look at their God-compass ('You are feeling a bit miserable and you remember you haven't been living the way that God tells us is the best way.')
- After re-orienting him/herself toward God, continue the scenarios.
- When the group of children understands the principles, allow the others to join in making suggestions as to how the first child goes off course or gets back on course.
- Eventually s/he will reach union with God!
- Allow other children to be the journey-er as time allows.

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 created us and is always calling us to him?
- Do you believe in Jesus who came to show us the way to God?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who guides us when we want to come back to God?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying, 'There are many situations in the world and in our lives which have got lost and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for leaders in the Church, that they try always to do God's will. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for businessmen and businesswomen, that they insist on fairness and justice in their companies. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people all over the world who are in unfair situations. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our families and friends gathered here today, that they may be joyful in following the Lord. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we trust that following you will make us the happiest people in the happiest world. Help us to know how you want us to live. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

