

1st Sunday of Advent Year C –28th November 2021

Preparation

If possible arrange candles, crucifix and Gospel or Sunday Missal on a table.

Introduction

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. What does Advent mean? It means “coming”. We are preparing for the birth of the baby Jesus on Christmas Day.

(A suggested activity for Advent is to prepare an Advent wreath to be used at Children’s Liturgy – a smaller version than the one used in the church. If you are not able to do this, then make a picture of an Advent wreath, by cutting out leaf shapes from green card and arranging them in a circle and sticking them to a sheet of card. Next draw and cut out four candles, three purple and one vibrant pink candle and stick these (one per week) onto the picture of the wreath. Each week of Advent we will describe the wreath and discuss its’ meaning. If you have a real wreath we will also light a candle each week. (If you have a picture stick a new picture of a candle on each week!)

As part of your weekly introduction during Advent ask the children to look at the wreath and explain or remind them of what it represents.

Firstly, the wreath is circular to symbolize that God’s love for us has no end. It is everlasting.

The leaves of the wreath are GREEN, the colour that represents hope.

There are four candles (three purple – repentance, and one vibrant pink – a symbol of joy for the third Sunday of Advent known as Gaudete Sunday).

The bright light of each candle represents Jesus our “light”- the “light” of the world. We explain that we will light a candle on the wreath each Sunday in Advent. Today, as we light the first candle, we pray to Jesus asking Him to come into our hearts, that we may know and love Him and following His gentle example, become

more like Him, that we may bring His “light” to the people in our lives.

Make the Sign of the Cross – a sign of the love God has for us.

Light one of the purple candles (and light the candles on the table next to the Lectionary. An adult lights the candles). The first candle we light today is ‘Hope’ the hope that comes with the arrival of the Lord Jesus.

Penitential Act

Ask the children to think about how they have behaved in the past week, and if they have been kind to each other, helpful to parents, brothers, or sisters, listened to their teachers etc. For the times when we have not behaved as we should we say sorry to God.

Lead the children in singing the “sorry song”.

We are sorry,
Truly sorry,
Heal us Lord, (sung to tune of Frere Jacques)
In Your love,
Help us to do better,
Help us to be kinder.
Forgive us,
Forgive us.

(During Advent the Gloria is omitted)

All stand to welcome the Gospel singing the **Gospel Acclamation:**

Alleluia, Alleluia,
Stay awake,
Be prepared. (same tune as above)
For the Lord is coming,
Soon the Lord is coming,
Stay awake,
Be prepared!

Gospel

Select the correct Gospel from the Children's Lectionary. This week it's on page 3 of "Sunday. Book of Readings. The Lectionary Adapted for Children." (Year C)

If you are not yet back in church you will find the Gospel using the following link:

<https://cafod.org.uk>Education>Children'sLiturgy>

The Gospel in the Children's Lectionary is **Matthew 24:42-44**

(If you don't yet have the Lectionary you may find your reference has an adaptation from the Gospel of Luke as with Cafod. The overall message is the same- "be ready.")

"A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew".

Explain and demonstrate – make three crosses: one on your forehead, one on your lips and one on your heart (in this way we think God's word, speak God's word and keep God's word in our hearts) **as we say together "Glory to You, O Lord."**

Read the Gospel aloud to the children. At the end say:

"The Gospel of the Lord".

All reply: **"Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ"**.

Ask everyone to be seated.

Lead a Discussion on the Gospel

Discuss with the children what Advent is. It is a time of preparation, we are getting ready to welcome Jesus on Christmas day and we must prepare for this during the season of Advent.

What did Jesus tell His disciples?(Gospel of Matthew- Children's Lectionary). Jesus told them to "Stay awake" – not literally- meaning to be ready!

Why did Jesus say this? Jesus wants everyone to be prepared for Heaven, by living good lives- just by doing the ordinary things in life the best we can and to do this out of love for God.

What story did Jesus tell the disciples to help them understand the need to be ready at all times? (Discuss the story of the thief).

What can we do to prepare?

(Be kind, good to each other, be helpful to others, pray every day, attend Holy Mass, come to the Forty Hours Adoration, work hard at school.....)

What did we hear in today's Gospel?

We heard that the Son of God will return one day. There will be many signs so we know that this is happening. Everyone will know that the end has come but because we know Jesus, we have nothing to be afraid of.

Discuss with the children how things will start to become busy as they prepare to celebrate Christmas. Remind them that the most important thing in the coming weeks is that we make space for Jesus in our lives.

Christmas is a very special time of hope because of the arrival of Jesus. Ask the children about some of the things they can do to show love and joy this Christmas.

Prayers of the Faithful (optional/ time dependent)

You may wish to prepare some of these yourselves or ask the children for their prayers. Here are some suggestions for today:

Dear Jesus, Help us we pray, to prepare well this Advent so that we may always be **ready** to show our love for You in our daily lives, in our thoughts, prayers and actions.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: **"Hear our prayer."**

Dear Jesus, Help us we pray, to be **awake** to the needs of others by being thoughtful, kind and helpful as we HOPE in your arrival.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: **“Hear our prayer.”**

We can also say the following prayer as a spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You Sacramentally. Come at least Spiritually into my soul. I embrace You as if You were already come and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, Help us remember anyone who is sick or lonely at this time of year. May we reach out to all those in need. Amen.