

First Sunday of Advent Year A – 1st December 2019

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. (This is optional, as we have already done this at the start of Holy Mass, but for young children it helps to demonstrate and practice how to do this correctly).

Light the first candle on the Advent wreath (and light the candles on the table next to the Lectionary. An adult lights the candles).

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.

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 A)

Matthew 24:42-44

“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

What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? (To stay awake – not literally! To be ready).

Why did Jesus say this? Jesus wants everyone to be prepared for Heaven, by living good lives, just by doing all 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 be prepared for the Lord coming?

(Be kind, good to each other, be helpful to others, pray every day, work hard at school)

The Gospel is referring to the Lord’s coming at the end of time. Our preparations in Advent, coming closer to Jesus in prayer and being kind and helpful to those around us, are what we need to do to be ready for the Lord’s coming. If we always try our best to do this we shall be “ready” and “awake” when Jesus comes in glory at the end of time.

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.

Lord, in Your mercy.

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

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, Help us to come closer to You this Advent as we prepare to celebrate Your birthday on Christmas Day.

Amen.

Now ask for volunteers for the Offertory Procession. After the procession, children return quietly to sit with their families in church.