

Third Sunday of Advent Year B – 17th December 2023

Introduction

Today is the third Sunday of Advent -also known as Gaudete Sunday. 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 today- the third Sunday of Advent known as Gaudete Sunday). We also have a white candle in the centre to light on Christmas Day.

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 candles 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). Also serves as a reminder that although they have left the main body of the Church they are still participants in the Mass.

Light two of the purple candles then the pink one (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 Frère 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 praise the Lord,
Alleluia, alleluia praise the Lord.
As we listen to the story,
Let us praise Him for His glory.
Alleluia, alleluia, praise the Lord. (1). (to the tune of when you're
Happy and you know it)

Gospel

Select the correct Gospel from the Children's Lectionary. This week it's on page 7 of "Sunday. Book of Readings. The Lectionary Adapted for Children." (Year B)

John 1:6-8,28,19-27

“A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John”.

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

Ask the children who John was in the today’s Gospel?

(John the Baptist. Remind them who John is – the last of the Prophets. He baptized with water, but Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit).

Where was John? (at Bethany beside the river Jordan where he was baptising the people).

Who did John say he is? (“ the voice in the desert proclaiming make a straight path for God.”)

The Pharisees and the Levite’s thought John May be the Messiah- but John was clear- he said “ I am not the Messiah”

John explained that he Baptised with water, but that Jesus would Baptise with the Holy Spirit.

Discuss with the children why the candle lit this week is Pink and not purple. One way to discuss the meaning is to get them to think about what other things are purple in the Church and when. Point out that during both Lent and Advent there is a focus on purple and both times are times of preparation which is linked with penance.

This week is called Gaudete Sunday. This stands for joy- therefore the candle that is lit is pink to show the change from penance and preparation to joy that Jesus is almost here.

Christmas is a very special time of joy 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.

Lord, in Your mercy.

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

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, We pray for your children who are poor, sick or lonely, especially at this time of year. We also pray for those who look after them. May they know that in helping or tending to the poor or sick, that they are living the true spirit of Christmas. Amen. Now ask for volunteers for the Offertory Procession. After the procession, children return quietly to sit with their families in church.

References:

1 The Complete Children's Liturgy Book. Katie Thomson, published by Kevin Mayhew.

