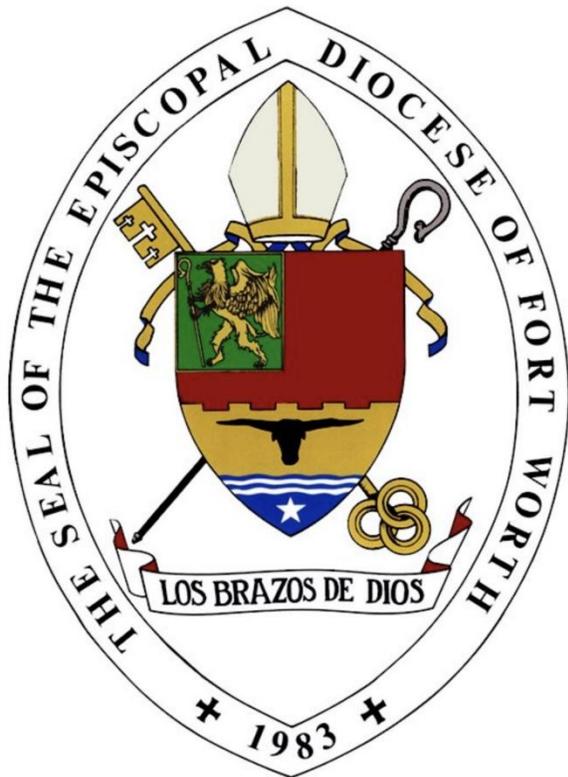


EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

A lectionary-based Sunday school curriculum for Pre-K through High School



**SECOND
SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**

**Sunday from
December 3 to
December 10**

A free resource created by the Christian Education Commission
of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

Sunday School Curriculum for the Second Sunday of Advent - Year A

Lectionary Texts:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalms 72:1-15 (16-19)

Romans 15:1-13

Matthew 3:1-12

Isaiah 11:1-10

¹Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down.

A new little tree will grow from its stump.

From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on that Branch.

He will help him to be wise and understanding.

He will help him make wise plans and carry them out.

He will help him know the LORD and have respect for him.

³The Branch will take delight

in respecting the LORD.

He will not judge things only by the way they look.

He won't make decisions based simply on what people say.

⁴He will always do what is right

when he judges those who are in need.

He'll be completely fair

when he makes decisions about poor people.

When he commands that people be punished,

it will happen.

When he orders that evil people be put to death,

it will take place.

⁵He will put godliness on as if it were his belt.

He'll wear faithfulness around his waist.

⁶Wolves will live with lambs.

Leopards will lie down with goats.

Calves and lions will eat together.

And little children will lead them around.

⁷Cows will eat with bears.

Their little ones will lie down together.

And lions will eat straw like oxen.

⁸A baby will play near a hole where cobras live.

A young child will put his hand into a nest
where poisonous snakes live.

⁹ None of those animals will harm or destroy anything or anyone
on my holy mountain of Zion.

The oceans are full of water.

In the same way, the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the LORD.

¹⁰ At that time the man who is called the Root from Jesse's family line will be like a
banner that brings nations together. They will come to him. And the place where he
rules will be glorious.

Psalm 72:1-15 (16-19)

¹ God, give the king the ability to judge fairly.

He is your royal son. Help him to do what is right.

² Then he will rule your people in the right way.

He will be fair to those among your people who are hurting.

³ The mountains and the hills will produce rich crops,
because the people will do what is right.

⁴ The king will stand up for those who are hurting.

He will save the children of those who are in need.

He will crush those who beat others down.

⁵ He will rule as long as the sun shines
and the moon gives its light.

He will rule for all time to come.

⁶ He will be like rain falling on the fields.

He will be like showers watering the earth.

⁷ Godly people will do well as long as he rules.

They will have more than they need as long as the moon lasts.

⁸ He will rule from ocean to ocean.

His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

⁹ The desert tribes will bow down to him.

His enemies will lick the dust.

¹⁰ The kings of Tarshish and of places far away
will bring him gifts.

The kings of Sheba and Seba

will give him presents.

¹¹ All kings will bow down to him.

All nations will serve him.

¹² People who are in need will cry out, and he will save them.

He will save those who are hurting.

They don't have anyone else who can help them.

¹³ He will take pity on those who are weak and in need.
He will save them from death.
¹⁴ He will save them from people who beat others down.
He will save them from people who do mean things to them.
Their lives are very special to him.

¹⁵ May he live a long time!
May gold from Sheba be given to him.
May people always pray for him.
May they ask the LORD to bless him all day long.
¹⁶ Let there be plenty of grain everywhere in the land.
May it sway in the wind on the tops of the hills.
Let crops grow well, like those in Lebanon.
Let them grow like the grass of the field.
¹⁷ May the king's name be remembered forever.
May his fame last as long as the sun shines.

All nations will be blessed because of him.
They will call him blessed.

¹⁸ Give praise to the LORD God, the God of Israel.
Only he can do wonderful things.
¹⁹ Give praise to his glorious name forever.
May his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

Romans 15:1-13

We who have strong faith should help the weak with their problems. We should not please only ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors. Let us do what is good for them in order to build them up. ³ Even Christ did not please himself. It is written, "The bad things people have said about you have been aimed at me also." (Psalm 69:9) ⁴ Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope.

⁵ Our God is a God who strengthens you and cheers you up. May he help you agree with each other as you follow Christ Jesus. ⁶ Then you can give glory to God with one heart and voice. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to God.

⁸ I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews. He teaches us that God is true. He shows us that God will keep the promises he made to the founders of our nation.

⁹ Jesus became a servant of the Jews so that people who are not Jews could give glory to God for his mercy. It is written,

“I will praise you among those who aren’t Jews.
I will sing praises to you.” (2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49)

¹⁰ Again it says,

“You non-Jews, be full of joy.
Be joyful together with God’s people.” (Deuteronomy 32:43)

¹¹ And again it says,

“All you non-Jews, praise the Lord.
All you nations, sing praises to him.” (Psalm 117:1)

¹² And Isaiah says,

“The Root of Jesse will grow up quickly.
He will rule over the nations.
Those who aren’t Jews will put their hope in him.” (Isaiah 11:10)

¹³ May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.

Matthew 3:1-12

¹In those days John the Baptist came and preached in the Desert of Judea. ²He said, “Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of heaven is near.”

³John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. He had said,

“A messenger is calling out in the desert,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make straight paths for him.’” (Isaiah 40:3)

⁴John’s clothes were made out of camel’s hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea. They also came from the whole area around the Jordan River. ⁶When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the Jordan.

⁷John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing. He said to them, “You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God’s anger? ⁸Produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins. ⁹Don’t think you can say to yourselves, ‘Abraham is our father.’ I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones. ¹⁰The ax is already lying at the roots of the trees. All the trees that don’t produce good fruit will be cut down. They will be thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, one will come who is more powerful than I am. And I’m not fit to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² His pitchfork is in his hand to clear the straw from his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the storeroom. But he will burn up the husks with fire that can’t be put out.”

Overview of the Texts:

This week’s lessons continue the Advent theme of expecting the coming of the Messiah, particularly the themes of hope and preparation. There is the hope in the birth of the messiah, the Christ, that the Hebrew people had as well as the hope that we are to have as we wait for Jesus’ second coming as mighty Lord.

In our lesson from the prophet Isaiah we are given a picture of the wonderful peace and justice that will come with the reign of Jesus, the Messiah. In this wonderful reign of peace the poor will be taken care of and not oppressed, and even the animals will live together in peace. In our Epistle lesson Paul reminds us that all of the promises of the Old Testament, such as the words of Isaiah in our lesson, were written so that we might have hope. Here Paul encourages the Romans to live in peace with each other today and to have hope in Gods’ promises.

Finally, in our Gospel lesson we are given the image of the prophet John the Baptist, who prepares the way for the coming of Jesus. As a prophet John spoke a message of repentance to the people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. The preaching of John the Baptist reminds us that the message of hope that Christ brings is for those who are prepared for his coming by repenting of their sins. If we turn from our sins and humbly prepare a place for Christ, then we too can have peace and hope in His coming. John warns those who refuse to repent in humility that the coming of Christ will be a time of judgment.

PreK-Kinder Lesson Plan:

Opening Prayer: Lord’s Prayer

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: Crayons, coloring page, optional: honey and gummy bugs

Preparation: Print off coloring page

Activity:

Have your students color the picture of John the Baptist. Read the Gospel lesson while the children color. As a fun activity, your students could sample honey (perhaps on graham crackers or plastic spoons) and gummy bugs (or other candy grasshopper substitute).

Discussion:

- Who is the person in our Gospel lesson and the person we just colored? *John the Baptist.*
- Was there anything different or strange about John the Baptist? *He wore camel's hair and only ate bugs and wild honey.*
- What did John the Baptist do? *He preached to the people (discussion of baptism is coming later).*
- Who preaches to the people today in our church? *Our priest.*
- What was he preaching for them to do? *Confess their sins, which means they would tell God all the things they had done that they were not supposed to do.*
- What else did John the Baptist do? *He baptized people.*
- Our gospel lesson says that John was preparing the way for someone. Who was this someone? *Jesus.*
- What can we learn from John the Baptist to help us prepare for Christmas? *That we should always be preparing for Jesus' coming by telling God the things that we've done wrong every day, being sorry, and trying not to do them anymore.*

Closing Prayer: Lord's Prayer

Elementary Lesson Plan: _____

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: A crucifix or other depiction of Jesus (icon, painting, etc.), cleaning supplies (brooms, mops, rags, cloths), pieces of paper cut into circles to make "coins" (should be large enough for the children to have room to make drawings), coloring supplies.

Preparation: Before the children get to the room have the cleaning supplies ready for them and consider moving things around in the room so that the room is messy when they arrive.

Activity:

Tell the children that they have to get the room ready for a special visitor. They all need to help clean up the room. Have the children work with all the different supplies and “clean” the room for 5-10 minutes depending on how much time you have. Time it so that at the end of cleaning time you bring out a statue, icon, crucifix, or some image of Jesus, and put it in the middle of the room. Then have all of the children sit down and begin discussion.

Discussion:

Begin by reading the Gospel Lesson.

- Are any of you having family come and visit you for the Holidays?
- Do you ever have to clean your room, or help clean the rest of the house, when you have family or friends come over?
- Why do you have to do that? *We want to make our homes a comfortable and clean place for people we love.*
- Do you think you would have to clean if you were going to have someone over like a king or queen? *You probably would make sure your house and your room was even cleaner. Today's Gospel lesson is actually all about cleaning up to prepare for a visit.*
- Who is the person coming for a visit in our Gospel lesson? *It's Jesus. John the Baptist is telling everyone that they need to clean up their hearts to get ready for Jesus' coming, just like you would clean up your room.*
- What are ways that we can clean up our hearts to get ready for Jesus since he wants to live within our hearts? *We get rid of the trash in our hearts by telling Jesus when we've done something wrong and asking for forgiveness. We dust and polish our hearts by doing good deeds like helping our neighbor or our parents without being asked.*

Craft:

The children are going to make paper coins. One side of the coin is righteousness and the other is condemnation. The coin shows that they are opposites and you can choose one or the other. Have the children write the words “righteousness” and “condemnation” on opposite sides of the paper coin. The children may decorate the righteous side with actions they think are pleasing to God. They may decorate the condemnation side with actions they think are not pleasing to God.

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day

Junior High Lesson Plan:

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary

Supplies & Preparation: None

Discussion:

Read the Epistles to the Romans. Pay special attention to these lines: ⁵ Our God is a God who strengthens you and cheers you up. May he help you agree with each other as you follow Christ Jesus. ⁶ Then you can give glory to God with one heart and voice. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to God.

- Have you ever had an argument with one of your friends?
- Have you ever had an argument with a brother or sister so that you were angry with one another?
- What would happen in your house if your parents came home (or into the room) and found you having a fist fight with your brother or your sister? Do you think they would be happy?
- Why would they be upset with you?
- What does Paul say in our Epistle lesson today about how we should live with other Christians as we wait for Jesus to return? *We are told to "accept one another in order to bring praise to God" and also to live in peace with one another.*
- What are some ways that you can live in peace with your classmates and fellow youth at church? *Not make fun of them. Encourage them when they are having a hard time. Forgive them when they say or do something hurtful to you.*
- Have you ever known someone who was always mean to you and refused to be nice?
- How do you think Jesus would have us handle those situations? *Do as best as we can to live in peace with them. We should do what Jesus, the prince of peace, did and pray for those who attack us. If someone doesn't want to be friends with us, we can pray for them and always be open if they change their mind. We should never respond in meanness to them, even if that's how they treat us, since that's not how Christ showed us how to live when he was attacked and insulted.*
- Why is it especially important that we get along with fellow Christians? *In order for us to be of "one heart and voice" in praising God, we must be of one accord, meaning we cannot have internal strife among us. Discord causes us to be*

distracted by petty things away from God. Infighting causes others to be repelled from the Christian life rather than attracted to its beauty and truth. If we can't hold it together as believers, we are surely missing the point!

- Can the very act of being unified be an act of worship? *Yes, our obedience to God's will that we love one another is an act of love dedicated to Him.*
- Does God help us to be in accord with one another? *Yes. Both by instructing us in our proper behavior and by filling us with his Holy Spirit, He helps us to get along for our own benefit and that of others. Everybody wins!*
- What should be our primary example in trying to be a Christian community? *"Christ has accepted you, so accept one another in order to bring praise to God." Christ first loved us and so we are called to "pay it forward."*

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day

Senior High Lesson Plan

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: Copies of the lectionary texts above or from the bulletin insert (note the lesson plans use the NIV translation and your parish likely uses the RSV translation).

Preparation: Familiarize yourself with the content of the readings to help facilitate the discussion in the lesson.

Discussion:

Have you ever cleaned up your room, or had to help clean up the house when you knew that family or friends were coming over?

What if you knew that Jesus were coming to see you and visit your room? Would you clean it up then?

What do we see in today's Gospel lesson? *John the Baptist's ministry in the wilderness.*

What was John the Baptist calling the people to do? *Repent of their sins and prepare for the coming of the messiah.*

What are some ways that we can prepare for the Celebration of Christmas and make ourselves ready for Christ's presence in our hearts? *Confess our sins to God, and perform deeds of holiness and charity.*

Have you ever heard of the sacrament or reconciliation also known as the sacrament of confession?

What is the sacrament of confession? *That is where we confess our sins to God in the person of the priest. The priest then gives us absolution so that the stain of our sin is wiped away. He may also offer advice to help us avoid sin, and encouragement to help us not get discouraged.*

Have any of you ever done this before? Why or why not?

Why do you think that it is hard to confess your sins in the presence of a priest? *They might be embarrassed or afraid that their priest would judge them. They should be reassured that nothing that they say is going to shock their priest, and that their priest can never reveal anything that he has heard in confession. Also, it is important to realize that when priests have people make their confession, the priest does not think the person is any more sinful than anyone else, but rather they think they are someone who takes their spiritual life seriously.*

How do you think confessing your sins with a priest might be a help to you in your spiritual life? *It might make you be a little more accountable for the things you do. It helps you to put the sins behind you once you know you have received absolution.*

In the Gospel reading, John is calling for people to “Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight paths for him.” What does he mean? *John is prophesying the coming of the Messiah. Even though he was speaking of the incarnate Christ in the world during his own time, he is also talking to us. Because we are in a similar state of waiting for the Second Coming, we are just as needful of preparation as the people of John’s time. To prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, we should make sure we clear the path to our hearts.*

How can we prepare the way for the Lord? *Confession is a great way to make straight the path. We do not want Jesus to have to step around or climb over the piles of sin debris in our hearts. We want a nice, clear way for him when he comes.*

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day