



a Kendall Hunt Company

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Micah 5:1-4a

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word In Liturgy

As Advent draws to a close, the readings call our attention to the mystery of Christ's coming in the flesh. The reading from the prophet Micah compares the people of Israel waiting for divine deliverance to a woman in labor, giving birth to a child. Micah, a vibrant preacher of social justice, takes special delight in announcing that the small and comparatively insignificant place of Bethlehem-Ephratha will be the place of origin of the king who will rule in the line of David and with the strength of God. This promised ruler will be not only king, but also—like David—shepherd of the people. Amid the chaos of frequent invasion, and a heritage of violent and self-willed rulers, Micah's prophecy that "he shall be peace" touches a profound longing in the human heart.

In Luke's gospel today, Mary, pregnant with Jesus, goes in haste to see Elizabeth, who is also with child in unusual circumstances. The scene between the two women, honored in the tradition as "the Visitation," is both a human encounter and a moment of transcendent significance. When she sees Mary, Elizabeth is "filled with the Holy Spirit," and the baby within her "leaps for joy." Under the influence of this Spirit, she speaks a powerful truth, calling Mary "blessed" and her unborn child "my Lord." In its Advent context, this reading inspires awe for the mystery of Christ's coming in the flesh. Who is this woman, to be greeted thus? Who is the child of her womb, that even before his birth he inspires such prophetic utterances?

Catholic Doctrine



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The coming of Christ in the flesh

The four Sundays of Advent have progressed from the focus on the Second Coming of Christ to the coming of Christ proclaimed by John the Baptist to this Sunday's focus of the coming of Christ in human flesh. The long-awaited Messiah is born into the world through Mary. We pray, "the virgin mother bore him in her womb with love beyond all telling." (Advent Preface II)

Jesus the Christ is both human and divine. The humanity of Jesus is key to understanding his divinity. In the person of Jesus, God and humankind come together in perfect unity.

