



a Kendall Hunt Company

Second Sunday of Advent, Year B, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Mark 1:1-8

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus,

As we prepare for your coming this Advent,

help us to change our lives for the better.

Make our hearts open and ready to receive you.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is the Confession of Sins. To begin, provide paper and pencils and invite each young person to draw the outline of a large heart on their paper. Have them reflect on three areas of their lives, home, school, and friendships. Invite the young people to think of what changes in their attitudes and actions could help their relationships. Then, have them list inside the heart any changes that they would like to make during the season of Advent. Discuss:

- Why is it important to take a step back and examine our attitudes and actions?
- What does it mean to have a change of heart?
- What helps you to change for the better?

Allow time for discussion. The season of Advent gives us the opportunity to step back and take a look at our lives. We can turn to God for healing and the help we need to change our lives for the better.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to the prophet Isaiah announce that the Lord is coming to save the people.

Read Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

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- What is hopeful about Isaiah's message?
- How will God come to save the people?
- How is God described in the reading?

In the gospel today, listen to John the Baptist announce the coming of Jesus.

Read Mark 1:1-8.

Allow for silence.

- Where did John the Baptist come from?
- What does John announce to the people?
- What happened to the people at the river Jordan?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

In the first reading from the Old Testament Isaiah brings a message of hope to the people. He tells the people that they need to prepare because something great is about to happen. This passage was written at the time of the Exile, when Israel's trust in the Lord was being tested. Isaiah proclaims that the God of Israel will come with might and gentleness to save the people. He announces that the glory of the Lord is revealed and all people will see how God saves Israel from her sins.

In today's gospel John the Baptist announces that something great is about to happen. This passage begins with the words from the Book of Isaiah to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to send a savior. John the Baptist is sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. John preaches repentance and the forgiveness of sins as the way to get ready for the coming of Jesus. To be prepared for the coming of the Lord, one must experience a change of heart, conversion, and true repentance.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Where do you find messages and signs of God's goodness?
- What are some ways that you can repent and seek God's forgiveness?
- How can you respond to the message that something great is about to happen?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life**.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Confession of Sins

Advent is filled with hope for a world that is healed of all division. We wait for God's promise



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of a life without hatred, violence, pain, or loss. We look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. Making room for Jesus includes making changes. Advent calls for personal change and a healing of the hatred and violence that exists in our own hearts. We are not perfect and we need God and God's grace to change our lives. Confessing sin brings us closer to God. Just as John the Baptist points to Jesus Christ, the confession of our sins points to the healing mercy of a forgiving God. The Catholic Church teaches that an essential part of the sacrament of Reconciliation is the confession of sin by the penitent to the priest. In this way, a penitent is opened to the healing of God's grace (CCC 1456).

During the Advent season we get ready for Jesus Christ, whose birth we prepare to celebrate and whose coming again in glory we anticipate.

- How can you make room in your life for the coming of Jesus?
- Why is it important to confess our sins?
- What does the Church teach about the sacrament of Reconciliation?

Sacrament Connection

The Sacrament of Reconciliation celebrates God's forgiveness and mercy. This sacrament includes the confession of our sins to the priest. In this way we are opened to the healing of God's grace (CCC 1456).

The Gospel in Life

Bring home the heart from the opening activity and work on the changes that you would like to make this week.