



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Opening Prayer

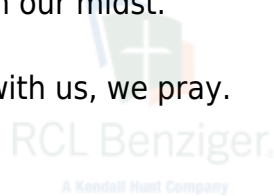
Let us pray.

God of Light, lead us out of darkness and into the light.

Help us to recognize your presence in our midst.

In the name of Jesus, who is always with us, we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

The theme for this Third Sunday of Advent is discernment. To begin, divide a large sheet of poster paper into two columns. Label the first column light and the second column darkness. Invite the young people to brainstorm the things that influence young people to make good choices and list those positive influences under the label light. Then brainstorm the things that influence young people to make bad choices and list the negative influences under the label darkness. Discuss:

- Why do young people sometimes make harmful choices?
- How can young people help one another to make good choices?
- Who helps you to make good choices?



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Allow time for discussion. The light of Christ can guide us when we are faced with difficult choices. On this Third Sunday of Advent we rejoice in Jesus' presence in our daily lives.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to the Prophet Isaiah rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

Read Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What good news does the Prophet Isaiah announce?
- Why does Isaiah rejoice?
- What will the Lord do before all the nations?

In the gospel today listen to the Prophet John the Baptist testify to the light.

Read John 1:6-8, 19-28

Allow for silence.

- Who is John the Baptist?
- Why does God send the Prophet John?
- What does John the Baptist do?



Scripture Background

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

On this Third Sunday of Advent the readings focus our attention on the Lord who is already present among us. Today we rejoice and celebrate the presence of God in our midst.

In the Old Testament reading today Isaiah announces a year of favor from the Lord and brings a message of healing and hope to the people of Israel. In the midst of the hardship and destruction that the people found upon their return from Exile, the Prophet announces good news. In the dark days that followed Israel's return from exile, the Prophet Isaiah rejoices over the light, which he sees dawning just over the horizon. Today's passage from the Old Testament brings hope to all those who await the Light of the world.

In today's gospel the Jewish leaders question John about whether or not he is the messiah. John the Baptist makes it clear that he has been sent by God to prepare the way for the one



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who is to come. The people hear from John that he isn't the light. John points to the one in their midst, whom they do not recognize.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- On this Third Sunday of Advent what do the readings focus on?
- How does John the Baptist point to the truth?
- When do you recognize the presence of Jesus in your midst?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Discernment

The word "discernment" comes from the Latin term *discernere*, which means, "to separate," and "to distinguish." Believers understand discernment to be a process of reflecting on daily events in order to respond to the way that God is leading us.

We discern when we pray and examine our lives in order to hear the voice of the Spirit of God. We believe that God loves and cares about us. God does not cast us adrift. God sent Jesus into the world to give us direction and lead us to a closer relationship with God. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to help us, console us, and guide us. The promised guidance of the Holy Spirit is the basis for the Christian understanding of discernment. Discernment requires trust in God, a posture of listening to the voice of the Spirit, and the ability to examine one's life with humility. Discernment is making choices prayerfully.

- What is discernment?
- How does God lead us?
- How can we listen for the voice of the Spirit of God?

Sacrament Connection

When we are baptized, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of Baptism we are reborn as adopted children of God. Throughout our lives the Holy Spirit helps to lead us to the truth.

The Gospel in Life

How can you pay prayerful attention to where God's Spirit is leading you this week?