



2nd Sunday of Advent (Year B)



Mark 1: 1 – 8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the Prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’”,

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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Reflection:

When John the Baptist tells us to prepare, he wants us to get ready to welcome God into our homes. Take a moment to reflect on how you treat one another. The words that are spoken and unspoken, the things that are done or remain undone and the way you think about and treat one another are all signs of how ready you are to welcome God this Christmas. Today’s Gospel speaks about the importance of going to confession, of asking for forgiveness in those areas where we have done wrong. It is also a time to spend a moment in prayer each day and make sure we direct our lives to God each day.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

Mark begins his Gospel by saying that Jesus’ coming is Good News to the world. Would you agree with him? Why or why not?



“Jesus Ornaments” for this week:

For each day, design a Christmas ornament and read the brief reflection provided.

Day 1: Jesus, Son of David. (i.e. a tree (representing Jesus’ family tree)).

A thousand years before Jesus’ birth, God had promised King David that one of David’s family members would serve as King over God’s people forever. Jesus can trace his family tree back to King David. (Note: you may want to take a moment and draw your child’s family tree with them.)

Parent: “Lord Jesus, you are the promised Son of David.”

All Respond: **“Come Jesus, Son of David, and fill our hearts with your love.”**

Day 2: Jesus, Son of the Carpenter (i.e. a saw and hammer).

Jesus’ dad was a carpenter and lived in Nazareth. While growing up, Jesus would have spent many hours helping his dad make things out of wood.

Parent: “Lord Jesus, you learned to work like any one of us.”

All respond: **“Come Jesus, Son of the Carpenter, and fill our hearts with your love.”**

Day 3: Jesus, Son of Mary (i.e. blue “M” with a crown on top).

“The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin... The virgin’s name was Mary.” The Angel spoke to Mary about the birth of God’s own Son. Mary agreed to be the mother of God’s Son and to do all that God wanted her to do.

Parent: “Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary.”

All respond: **“Come Jesus, Son of Mary, and fill our hearts with your love.”**

Day 4: Jesus, Son of God (i.e. a halo or a triangle (sign of the trinity)).

When the Angel appeared to the shepherds at night, he told them the good news of Jesus’ birth, the Son of God.

Parent: “Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary.”

All respond: **“Come Jesus, Son of God, and fill our hearts with your love.”**

Day 5: Jesus, the Sower (i.e. an outstretched hand with some seeds coming from it).

Jesus tells the story of a man who went to sow seed. He is telling the story about himself, and how he has come to sow God’s gift of New Life and love to the whole world. He sows the seed in our hearts too.

Parent: “Lord Jesus, you are the sower of the seed that brings us New Life.”

All respond: **“Come Jesus, Sower of the Good News, and fill our hearts with your love.”**

Day 6: Jesus, the Teacher (i.e. an open book).

People came from far and wide to listen to what Jesus had to say. Jesus told them stories and taught them many things about God's love, God's Kingdom, forgiveness and love of others.

Parent: "Lord Jesus, you are the teacher and we are the students."

All respond: "**Come Jesus, Teacher and Guide, and fill our hearts with your love.**"

Day 7: Jesus, the Bread of Life (i.e. Loaf of Bread).

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to me shall never go hungry." He said this after he fed 5000 people with five loaves and two fish. He also gave us his Body and Blood to share when he celebrated his last supper with his friends.

Parent: "Lord Jesus, you feed with the Bread of Life, you give us your very self."

All respond: "**Come Jesus, Bread of Life, and fill our hearts with your love.**"



St. Nicholas: (Bedtime Story)

Have you ever wondered about old St. Nick and how he has become part of the Christmas story? The story begins many years ago, in a city by the sea called "Myra". Nicholas was a Bishop back then, the leader of the church of Myra.

Nicholas was a very friendly person, who loved his people dearly. Nicholas was very generous with his time and with his money, too. In one case, he heard of a poor man who had three daughters and no way to take care of them. Here is how the story goes:

Nicholas was walking in the market one day, when he overheard the news. "Poor Peter, can't afford to feed his daughters, he's decided to sell them off, one by one." "He's starting with the oldest," said another man. "She's worth more because of her age. She should be married by now, but poor Peter can't afford to pay her boyfriend for the marriage." "No money, no luck," said another man. "We've seen it time and time again. Unless someone helps poor Peter, all three daughters will soon be slaves."

Nicholas was sad to hear the news, but knew exactly what to do. That night, as poor Peter and his family were off to bed, Nicholas snuck by the open window and lowered a small bag of gold coins. "These are for you and for your daughters," the note read. "Don't sell them at the market, but marry them off instead. There should be enough to pay the dowry, the normal price for marriage, with a little left over to feed the other two for now."

This same scene repeated itself a few years later, when it was the second's daughter's time to wed. Poor Peter, stuck with no money again and ready to sell his second daughter in the market, was again surprised by a second bag of coins and a note much like the first.

By the time the third daughter was old enough to get married, poor Peter was starting to get curious. Who was this mysterious person and would his house be visited once more?

So, on the night before he was to bring his youngest to be sold at market, poor Peter decided to wait downstairs. Though he grew tired, and almost fell asleep, he managed to stay awake; long enough, to hear footsteps down the street. “Finally, I am going to find out the secret, finally I’ll get to know, who has been so generous to us, who has been so good.” And as poor Peter crept closer to his open window, much to his surprise, he saw the young Bishop Nicholas drop the bag of coins inside.

“Thank you, thank you,” said poor Peter, as he caught Nicholas by surprise. “a million thanks, and a million more.” Poor Peter could not thank Nicholas enough.

“Now that you know,” said Nicholas, not wanting it to be known. “Please promise me now and ever more, not to tell anyone.”

Poor Peter promised it a hundred times. He would have promised it a hundred more, but these things have a way of coming out no matter good or bad.

The story has been told a million times and many times again of how Bishop Saint Nicholas was known to give, not once, not twice, but many more to children all around. He loved them so, for love of Christ, he loved them even more again.

Like to watch a video of St. Nicholas? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ANoh2DNI4s>



Fun Fact:

Did you know that in my home country of Holland, the Feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6th) is celebrated by exchanging presents? Children place their shoes by the fireplace and St. Nicholas fills them with goodies. St. Nicholas is known by the children as SinterKlaas (a short version of Saint Nicholas).



Another Fun Fact:

You might also be interested in knowing that “Santa Claus” originally came from the Dutch tradition. It all happened in the city of New York (formerly known as “New Amsterdam”, a Dutch colony). The English children were so taken by the Dutch tradition of sharing gifts on Dec. 6th, that they asked their parents why they were not receiving presents as well. Unable to answer their children’s question, presents began appearing for the English children as well. Not able to pronounce “SinterKlaas” properly, the English children called him “Santa Claus”. The tradition of exchanging presents was later moved to the day of Christmas to celebrate Jesus’ birth.



Prayer to St. Nicholas: (Bedtime)

St. Nicholas, friend of children, you were always ready to help others in your day. Please pray for me, and by your example, teach me to be an instrument of God’s love today. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen