

Second Sunday of Advent

Prepare my people

INTRODUCTION

The people of Israel had turned away from God and his love. He had promised to send them a saviour, but first he sent someone to prepare the people to welcome the Son of God.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles, and also light two candles on the Advent wreath. Say together:

May the light of Jesus shine in our hearts.

SORRY

John the Baptist told the people of Israel to turn back to God and ask for his forgiveness. Today we do the same as we sing our sorry song together. Sing Sorry Song 1.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing the Advent Song.

GOSPEL (cf Luke 3:1-6)

When Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judaea, a man appeared in the desert and began to preach the word of God; his name was John. He told the people to turn away from their sins and to ask for God's forgiveness. He baptised the people who were truly sorry and wanted to make a fresh start in their lives, and so he came to be known as 'John the Baptist.'

DISCUSSION

What was the name of the man who appeared in the desert?

What did he tell the people to do? – He wanted them to turn back to God and ask for his forgiveness. Then they could make a fresh start and try to lead better lives.

Why was John called 'the Baptist'? – Water is used in many ways, but most importantly it keeps us *alive* and makes us *clean*. John baptised all the people who were truly sorry as a sign that they wanted to wash away all their sins and so begin a new life, with a fresh start.

What was so special about John the Baptist? – God sent John to prepare the people for the coming of his son, Jesus. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and had the courage to stand before the crowds and the Jewish priests and preach to them. He came to turn them away from sin and to change their hearts so that they were ready to listen to the words of Jesus when he came.

Ask the children to tell you what they know about John the Baptist. Read the following passage to tell them more about his family and how he was specially chosen by God (cf Luke 1:5-17):

Zacchariah and Elizabeth (Mary's cousin) had been married for many years and had no children. They were good people who lived according to God's rules. Zacchariah worked as a priest in the Temple, and it was while he was there that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said, 'Do not be afraid! You and Elizabeth will have a son and you will call him John. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit and be remembered for his greatness. He will lead the people of Israel back to God and prepare them for the Lord.'

Who came to visit Elizabeth when she was expecting her baby, John? – Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to visit her cousin Elizabeth after the angel Gabriel had appeared to her.

ACTIVITY

Continue decorating the Jesse tree or adding scenes to the Advent frieze.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Help us, Lord
to be like John the Baptist,
filled with your spirit and brave enough
to say and do what is right.
Give us the courage to choose the right way,
despite what others might say or think,
because we believe in you
and love you with all our hearts.