

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR C

## PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God, you love us so much,  
you send Jesus, your Son,  
into our world.

Help us be ready  
to make him welcome  
so that he will live  
with us always.

We ask you this through him,  
who lives with you  
and the Holy Spirit  
forever and ever.

## FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Our first reading is a reassurance of the promise that God will send salvation. This salvation is not an abstraction but will come in and through a real person to be born in the family of David. The signs of salvation are justice and peace.

The Gospel exhorts us to “stay awake” and be ready for the return of the Lord. We do not know the time, but we do know that it will be a time of justice and peace as the first reading tells us. Therefore, our “being ready” involves a constant striving for what is right and just in the world.

*Our God is coming! Stay awake!  
Be ready!*

## FIRST READING: *Jeremiah 33:14-16*

*A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.*

Our God says:

“The time is coming  
when I will keep the promise I made  
to the people of Israel and Judah.

“When that time comes,  
a special person  
will be born in David’s family,  
a person who will do what is right  
and will treat the people with justice.

“Then the people in the land of Judah  
will be saved  
and the city of Jerusalem  
will be peaceful.

People will call Jerusalem  
the city of God, ‘The City of Justice.’ ”

*The Word of the Lord.*

## RESPONSE: *Psalm 80*

1st time: Leader; 2nd time: All

God of jus-tice and peace, let your face shine on us. face shine on us.

Leader: All:

Shine on us and we shall be saved. Shine on us and we shall be saved.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Stay a - wake, be read - y. You do not know the  
hour when the Lord is com - ing. Stay a - wake, be  
read - y. The Lord is com - ing soon!  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! "The Lord is com - ing soon."

\*After Gospel, repeat Acclamation from here.

## GOSPEL: *Matthew 24:42-44*

*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Stay awake! Always be ready!  
You do not know on what day  
your Lord is coming.

"You know for sure  
that if the owners of a house  
knew at what time of night  
a thief was coming,  
they would stay awake  
and wouldn't let the thief break in.

"And in the same way,  
you must always be ready  
because you do not know the time  
when the Lord is coming."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

The season of Advent is filled with vivid, exciting characters who announce the coming of the Savior: the prophets, John the Baptist, Mary and Elizabeth. It might be interesting for the children to see themselves in these roles and imagine how they might announce the coming of Jesus. During this season we will invite the children to do this each week. Children love to imagine and to be part of the story. It is important that they think of actual scenes and then place themselves in those scenes. On the first Sunday, it is Jesus himself who speaks. You might try something like this.

*Before reading the Gospel, explain to the children that one day the disciples asked Jesus when he would come back again in glory. Jesus told the disciples that no one could know that, but that they must always be ready and watching. Read the Gospel.*

What example did Jesus use to tell the disciples to always be ready? People today sometimes ask the same question. When will Jesus come back in glory? Jesus still says: You must always be ready. Suppose you are Jesus and people say to you: "But what do we do to be ready? What do you want us to be doing when you come back?" How would you answer them? (Encourage the children to speak in the first person—as Jesus.)

After all the children who wish have spoken, help them see that *being ready means trying to live good Christian lives*. We don't need to be doing something extraordinary. Being ready means doing the things we do (at their age) well: loving people, helping others at home and at school, being honest, studying well, being fair in games, etc.

