

PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD

VISUAL AIDS

- > Advent wreath, or four candles.
- > Pictures of roads: town roads, country roads, mountain roads.
- > A large envelope containing the message 'PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD'.
- > Clearway road sign

WELCOME AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

*Light two Advent candles.
Say/sing together:*

**Alleluia, alleluia!
We open our hearts
to welcome Jesus with love.
Alleluia!**

The beginning of the Good News given to us by Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Glory to you, Lord.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that God says
'I promise to send my messenger to prepare a way for you.
He will call out in the wilderness,
"Prepare a way for the Lord, and make straight his paths."'

DISCUSSION

What promise did God give us through Isaiah?
- that God would send us a messenger.
Who is this messenger?
- John the Baptist
What is the message he brings us from God?
- to prepare the way for the Lord.

How did the people in the Gospel prepare? What sign did they make?
- they went to the River Jordan to be baptised.
What did this sign mean?
- they wanted to start living a new life.
What did John tell them?
- someone greater was coming, who would baptise with the Holy Spirit.

SHARING

Show the envelope, and encourage the children to guess what it contains.
Lead them towards saying that it contains a message.
What might the message be?
Open the envelope and show the message.
Show the pictures, and encourage the children to talk about them: note the contrasts; talk about journeys;

delays caused by bad roads; frustrations of traffic jams; etc.
Jesus wants to come into our lives. Do we make the way difficult for him, or easy?
When do we make the road difficult? By mountains of selfishness; valleys of lies; rough ways of bad temper; etc.
How can we make the way in easy? By smoothing the way with kindness, with truth, with peace, etc.

And so it was.
John the Baptist came with this message,
Repent. Turn away from sin.
Prepare a way for the Lord.
Make your hearts ready to receive him. Make the path for him into your life easy.'
Many people who heard John decided to change their lives.
They went to the River Jordan, where John baptised them. John told

them,
'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming who will baptise you with the Spirit. He is much greater than me, so great that I'm not fit to kneel and undo his sandal straps. The baptism that he brings will change your lives completely.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTIVITIES

- > Give out the road signs.
- > Have the children write a prayer asking Jesus to help them change their lives.
- > Have the children write or draw on them (or on blank paper) what it is they will do in the coming week as a sign that they are preparing for Jesus' coming.
- > Have the children mime some ways in which people change their lives.