

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Second Sunday of Advent, Year A**  
**4<sup>th</sup> December, 2016**  
**Matthew 3:1-12 (or Matthew 3:1-9, 11)**

### **Catechist Background**

Last week's gospel focused on the fact that our response to God's love is more about becoming the right kind of person than doing the right kind of things. However, as we hear in today's gospel, when we become the right kind of people that ordinarily means that the way we live our lives changes as well.

John the Baptist follows in a line of Old Testament prophets in speaking out against injustice and is symbolically linked to them with specifically peculiar clothing and food.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity described below, you will need a 'compass' (real or made from cardboard) and something to represent God (which the compass will point toward).

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You come to us in your Word to make us strong, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You will come in glory with salvation for your people, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **We Pray (1)**

Dear God, help us always to be joyfully ready to welcome Jesus. Amen.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel** Matthew 3:1-12 (or Matthew 3:1-9, 11)

### **Reflecting on the Reading with Children**

- Why was John the Baptist asking people to change their lives?
- Have you ever started doing something and later discovered that you were no longer doing what you intended?
- Do you think people ever do that when they intend to follow Jesus? Can you give an example?

### **Response**

Select one child to go on a journey toward God. You may want to explain how a compass works. Give the child the 'God-compass' and make sure it points in the right direction. With a bit of creativity, guide the child on a hypothetical journey. For instance, allow him/her to take two steps toward God in a straight line (saying things along the lines of 'You begin your journey toward God and are very focussed'), but then be distracted ('You get very jealous of your sister and start planning how to ruin a drawing she is proud

of...You start playing with some people who encourage you to lie...') After a few steps in the wrong direction, prompt them to look at their God-compass ('You are feeling a bit miserable and you remember you haven't been living the way that God tells us is the best way.') After re-orienting him/herself toward God, continue the scenarios. When the group of children understands the principles, allow the others to join in making suggestions as to how the first child goes off course or gets back on course. Eventually s/he will reach union with God! Allow other children to be the journey-er as time allows.

### **We Believe**

Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who has created us for union with God?
- Do you believe in Jesus who came to show us the way to God?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us when we stray from God?

### **We Pray (2)**

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'There are many situations in the world and in our lives which have got off-track and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for leaders in the Church, that they may be single-heartedly focused on doing God's will. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for businessmen and businesswomen, that they insist on fairness and justice in their companies. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people all over the world who are victims of unfair circumstances. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for our families and our friends gathered here today, that they may be joyful in following the Lord. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, we trust that following you will make us the happiest people in the happiest world that can possibly be. Help us to know how you want us to live. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

