

Children's liturgy – First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: Purple

Props: Two sets of photos for memory game

Welcome: Today is the First Sunday of Advent – a special time when we get ready for the coming of Jesus. Jesus asks us all to keep watch for him so that we will be ready when he comes. Today we are going to think about how we can do that.

Song suggestions: Wait for the Lord (762, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone), O come O come Emmanuel (522, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Opening prayer: God of love, you sent your Son Jesus into the world to show us how to live. Help us to be ready for when he comes again. Amen

First reading (optional): Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:3-8

Psalm: Psalm 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1

Gospel acclamation: Everyone stands and sings the gospel acclamation together. Options include: 'Change your lives and believe in him', Christopher Walker; 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional).

Gospel: Mark 13:33-37

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from that reading?

Explain to the children that the gospel story is telling us that we must be ready when Jesus comes again, but that we cannot be exactly sure when that will be, so we must try to be ready all the time. (Although we don't have to stay awake all night, we can go to sleep!)

Jesus asks us to look out and keep our eyes open for what is happening around us, so that we are ready when he comes.

What do you think Jesus wants us to see when we look around us?

Do we sometimes see people who need our help? People who are lonely? People who are sad? People who do not feel well?

What do you think Jesus would like us to do when we see people who are sad, lonely, poor or sick?

Sometimes we hear the story of people who live a long way away but who also need our help.

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. When we begin Advent it is the beginning of a journey. Some journeys are more welcome than others. Some people are forced into making journeys that are long and dangerous as they are trying to find a place of safety.

There are many children who are refugees. They and their families find themselves without anything at all. They rely on volunteers from CAFOD to watch out for them and provide everything they need. They are often sad and frightened by their situation.

It is sad to think that children are in situations where they feel unsafe or far from home.

Why do you think it is important to know about the lives of people who are living in other parts of the world?

How do you think you could help someone who was in this situation?

What will you do next time you see or hear about someone who needs your help?

How will you make sure you are ready for Jesus when he comes again?

Intercessions: *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God asks us to be ready for when Jesus comes again. Together let us ask for God's help:

We pray for all people who are poor, sick, sad or frightened: that they may be comforted and find hope for a better future. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our families and friends: that we may always keep our eyes open to the world around us and reach out to all those who need our help. Lord, in your mercy....

We pray for our parish community: that we may follow the example of Jesus and be ready to welcome him when he comes. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Living God, help us to listen to your word, to be kind and generous and helpful to others and to be ready to welcome Jesus when he comes. Amen.

Activity suggestions:

Ask the children to look at the illustration. It's very busy, with lots of things going on.

- Can they spot the person who needs someone to be kind to them?
- Can they spot the person who needs someone to share with them?
- Can they spot the person who needs some help?

Ask them to colour in the picture. Ask them to draw on the back how they would help one of these people.

Look through the powerpoint on the refugee crisis. You may wish to select only certain images to give a sense of what is happening. Ask the children to pray for refugee children and their families.

https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/32684/383895/version/2/file/Understanding%20the%20Refugee%20Crisis_primary.ppt

Give the children a piece of paper or card with the outline of a window frame on it. Get them to imagine that they are looking out through the window at the world around them. What do they see? Ask them to draw someone who needs some help in one corner. In another corner ask them to draw how they would help that person. In another corner, ask them to write a short prayer for all the people we see in the world who need our help.

Set up a travelling crib. See the Second Sunday of Advent (Year B) children's liturgy resource for more details.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they've heard and thought about today. Ask them to keep their eyes open this week for people who need their help. Ask them to count how many times they see someone who needs their help and how many times they are helpful.