

Second Sunday of Advent

Making a fresh start

INTRODUCTION

God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of his son. The message he preached then, is just as important today, as we prepare ourselves for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light our candles today the words of the prophet Isaiah remind us that Jesus is the 'light of the world': (*cf* Isaiah 9:2)

'Those who walked in darkness have seen a wonderful light. The light which shines on them chases the shadows of darkness away from their land.'

SORRY

John the Baptist told the people to ask for God's forgiveness and to change their ways. God is always ready to forgive us and to help us make a fresh start. Sing Sorry Song 4:

When we say that we are sorry

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Sing the Advent Song.

GOSPEL (*cf* Mark 1:1-8)

The prophet Isaiah foretold that God would send a messenger, to prepare the people for the Lord's coming. This messenger was John the Baptist, who appeared in the desert telling the people to be sorry for their sins and to make a fresh start in their lives. Many people heard his message and came to be baptised as a sign of their change of heart. John told them, 'Someone is coming who is more powerful than me, and I am not good enough to undo the straps of his sandals. I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

DISCUSSION

What was the name of the prophet who had foretold the coming of John the Baptist?

What is a prophet? – A prophet is someone who speaks in the name of God and has been allowed by God to know and share a part of his plan for mankind.

John was God's messenger; what message was he sent to deliver? – He was sent to tell the people to change their ways and to turn back to God. He told them to make a fresh start by asking

forgiveness for their sins and trying to lead lives filled with goodness and love.

John was sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus? Do we still need to prepare for Jesus' coming today? – Jesus could return at any time (*recall last week's discussion.*) We can prepare ourselves just as people did in the time of John the Baptist, by putting right what is wrong in our lives and living as Jesus taught us. Advent is a good time to look carefully at ourselves and to make a fresh start if we need to. When can we meet Jesus and ask for his forgiveness? – Through the sacrament of reconciliation we can tell Jesus that we are sorry and receive his forgiveness. Through the priest God allows us to hear that our sins are forgiven, so we can start afresh knowing that God loves us very much.

Can you think of anything you could 'put right' in your life?

ACTIVITY

If the group is small hand out photocopies of the picture and ask the children to colour it. If you have a large group, enlarge on a photocopier and cut out the individual elements of the picture, then reassemble these on a large sheet of paper after they have been coloured. Spend some time with the children discussing the picture and the event it depicts.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
help each of us
to make a fresh start this advent;
to put right
what is wrong
and to truly live
as Jesus showed us.