Catechist Background

This Third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete (Latin for "Rejoice") Sunday. The priest may wear a rose-coloured vestment; we light the pink (rose) candle on the Advent wreath in addition to the first two purple candles. Halfway through Advent we lift the penitential aspect of the season to enter into the joy of God's promise of a Saviour. Consider ways you might reflect the joy of Advent, of Jesus coming soon, maybe with a banner or posters with the word 'joy' around the space in which you gather, or even a cheerful balloon.

Today we break from the Gospel of Mark to hear from the Gospel of John, who talks about John the Baptist from a slightly different perspective. John the Baptist here is 'a witness to tell the world about the light'. He is 'sent by God' – a man with a mission, just as we have a mission. The passage calls us to recognise the light here in our world, and to testify in whatever way we are able to that light to others.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need paper and writing/drawing materials. As Children's Liturgy of the Word begins, you may wish to remind the children of last week's Gospel, as we hear from John the Baptist again this week.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You come to us in light, Lord have mercy.
All: Lord, have mercy.
Leader: You bring us out of the shadows, Christ have mercy.
All: Christ, have mercy.
Leader: You send us to share your love, Lord have mercy.
All: Lord, have mercy.

We Pray (1)

Loving Lord, as we look forward to Jesus' birthday, help us to remember that you will come into the world again. We want to be acting in a way that shows your love always to others. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- The Gospel reading today tells us that John the Baptist came as a 'witness to speak for the light.' Who is the light? What does light do for us in our everyday lives? How is Jesus like light?
- What does the word 'witness' mean? (Some children may be familiar with a witness in courtroom settings.) How was John the Baptist a witness to Jesus? How did he answer the questions of the priests and Levites?
- How can we be witnesses to Jesus?

Response

Help the children to understand that it is not only by our words, but more importantly by our actions that we give witness to Jesus. Give each child a piece of paper and a pen to trace around their hand (younger children will need assistance). Encourage the children to write/draw ways they can use their hands to show be a witness to Jesus in their actions. Allow the children to come forward and announce what they have put on their hands as they place them around the centrepiece.

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 loves us and sent us his Son?
- And, do you believe in his son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit the Lord and giver of life?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying,
'We witness to our trust in God as we now pray…'

Leader: We pray for the Pope, bishops, priests and deacons, that they may be especially good witnesses to Jesus.   Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.
Leader: We pray for people all over the world getting ready for Christmas. May they be touched by God's love and remember that the real meaning of Christmas is Jesus' birthday. Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.
Leader: We pray for all people who are being bullied or hurt in any way. Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.
Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is in any trouble. Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.
Leader: Lord, we know we may be the answer to someone else's prayer by doing the right thing. Let us help you answer prayers in all we do. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.