

## Third Sunday of Advent – year C

---

### Preparation

---

Read [Zepheniah 3: 14-20](#) and [Luke 3: 7-18](#) over. Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yearc/adventc3.htm>

[http://www.sermons4kids.com/spirit\\_of\\_christmas.htm](http://www.sermons4kids.com/spirit_of_christmas.htm)

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/advm2les.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/c/3Advent-c/A-3Advent-c.html>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/johnbaptist.htm>

[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452\\_114475\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_114475_ENG_HTML.htm):

scroll down to find the lesson of the day

### Gathering

---

#### Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Advent Wreath (or candle)
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Blue cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Bell and bar of soap from previous weeks' lessons

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you.

With the children place the blue cloth on the table. Have them help you place the Advent wreath, and the Bible on the cloth. Light the first three candles of the wreath (or the candle).

Pray the following prayer together:

**For endings and beginnings, we thank you God;**

**For learning and love, we thank you Jesus;**

**For strength and courage, we thank you Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Ask the children how they hear news about what is going on in the world. *(Some possible answers might be the TV, radio, email, from their friends, or on the internet.)*

Hold up the Bible from the worship table and ask the children if they know that there are many messages in it. Explain to the children that today they are going to hear an important message from someone in the Bible – John the Baptist.

## Story Time

---

### Materials needed

- A small stone  
Place the stone where you can reach it during the story.

John the Baptist was a prophet from God – one of God’s messengers. John was sharing his message from God with the people living in Israel. He knew that not everyone would be happy with this message. John remembered what the prophet from Zephaniah told the people:

Do not fear Jerusalem. God will be with you. God will renew you with love. God will save the hurt. God will gather those who are outcast. God will bring home everyone who follows the way of love. Do not fear.

John the Baptist decided that he should not be afraid. He knew that God was with him. People started to come and hear what he had to say.

John told them, “You wicked people. Who told you that the day of God is coming? Do not say we are safe because Abraham was our ancestor. I tell you God could raise up children for Abraham from these very stones.”

*Pick up the stone and show it to the children.*

Someone in the crowd asked John, “What should we do then?”

John responded by saying, “If you have two coats and you should with someone who doesn’t have one at all. If you have food you must share with those who do not have any.”

Many people were baptised by John. Some were wondering if he was the one coming from God, the Messiah. John told them, “I baptise you with water. There is one more powerful than me who is coming. I am not worthy to tie up his shoes. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit. “

John continued to share the messages, the good news, that God had given him with the people living in Israel. Many people listened to him. They asked God to forgive their sins and became ready for the coming of the Messiah, the one coming from God.

## Response

---

### Project Idea 1: Outreach Gifts

*As John the Baptist urges it is our responsibility to care for those who do not have as much as we do. If you have access to a homeless shelter this will be a good response for your group to do together.*

#### Materials needed

- large reusable bags
- sharpie markers
- note from the end of the lesson
- Christmas stickers
- some personal item that you have easy access to – check the list in the note – enough for each child to have one to put in their bags

#### Instructions

Make enough copies of the note so that each child has one. Bring one of the personal items so that each child will have one to put in their bags. Give each child a bag and read the note to them. Explain that they are going to make a gift for someone who has little or nothing this year for Christmas. Encourage them to write a Christmas message onto the outside of the bag and then decorate it with the stickers. Give them each a copy of the note and the personal item in their bags. Encourage the children to work with their families to fill up their bags and bring them back next Sunday. A reminder phone call towards the end of the week might be a good way to follow up on this response.

### Project Idea 2: Message Board

*Messages from prophets have been important in these past two weeks of Advent. This message board allows the children to share messages of God's love with others in the church community.*

#### Materials needed

- poster board
- fine line markers
- seasonal stickers
- old Christmas cards
- scissors
- glue sticks
- tinsel
- newsprint

#### Instructions

Ask the children to think about the messages from the prophets that they have heard the past two weeks – *we need to get clean up, get ready for God's coming, listen to God's messengers, do not fear, share with those who do not have enough* – list them up on the newsprint. Have the children choose the message they each want to focus on. Lay out the poster board. Show them the craft supplies and suggest they figure out how to share the message by using the materials that are available. Encourage each child to make their messages as attractive as possible on the message board. When everyone is finished decide with the children where they want to post their message board so that others in the church community can see it and learn from them.

### Project Idea 3: Gift Bags

*This is the third of the Christmas decoration possibilities through this Advent season. The children will be able to use these bags to put a present in for a loved one this Christmas.*

#### Materials needed

- brown paper bags
- Christmas stickers
- markers
- glue sticks
- old Christmas cards
- scissors
- tissue paper
- tinsel
- whatever else you think might be useful

#### Instructions

Give each child a brown paper bag. Show them the craft materials that have been gathered. Suggest that they think of a person that they would like to give a gift to. One of the ways that we can be more responsible to the earth is to use reusable gift bags or to reuse bags for another purpose. Have them decorate their gift bags with the materials that you have set out. If you have it you may want to play some Christmas music in the background and enjoy this fun time together. Remind the children to use their bags to put a gift in for someone that they love and give it to them as Christmas gets closer.

### Closing

---

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Bless our Advent journey, loving God;  
Bless our preparations, loving Jesus;  
Bless our hearts, loving Spirit.  
Amen.**

## Outreach Letter

---

Dear Families,

Our Sunday School is participating in an outreach project. We are collecting personal items for the homeless in our community. Here is a list of things that you could collect and put into the plastic bag and then bring back next Sunday to be distributed to those most in need:

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Floss
- Comb
- Soap
- Facecloth
- Hard candies
- Deodorant
- Warm socks
- Mittens
- Scarf
- Christmas Card

Thank you for being generous and sharing what God has given you with those who have less and are in need. To quote John the Baptist: “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” (Luke 3: 11)

*Blessings to you through the rest of Advent*