

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C - Third Sunday of Advent
Lesson Plan for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18

Background: Advent extends an invitation. The invitation: don't just do something – stand, watch, prepare. *Stand*. Choose to believe that ours is a safe universe – a universe God chose to enter as an infant. *Watch*. Look for a coming that has already come and will come again. *Prepare*. Snatch moments from our busyness. Watching for wisps of awe and wonder to show up. Rediscover that God has chosen to dwell in us and we are invited to dwell in God.

What if – just what if – Jesus is already right here, standing silently with us, walking ahead of us, showing us we don't have to do it all? Could it be that we are called to be still, notice, listen – and then follow?

Advent Theme: Christ will come again: We watch, we prepare, we get ready.

A Notation for this week's Gospel: Convicted by John the Baptist's message, "Get ready!" the people ask, "What then should we do?" As we wait, how will we get ready? Yes, the packages have to get wrapped. Yet John invites us to "bear fruits worthy of repentance." Perhaps we are being called to notice what we have received and choose what we will share with others. How will we choose to respond to the abundance we have received?

Theme: What Then Should We Do?

Before Class: Print off enough copies of the Scripture (found below) for each child, or have enough Bibles for each child to use. You will need construction paper, white paper, or banner paper for the activity. Have newspapers, magazines, stories and pictures printed from the internet, etc. for the children to use. Make sure the magazines and stories are age appropriate and that you flip through them for age-appropriateness before class.

Beginning: Invite the children to share anything good that happened that week.

Opening Prayer: Here we are, God, listening to you and looking for ways to get ready. Be with us as we listen and wonder about your words to us. Amen.

The Story: Luke 3: 7-18 Give the children the copies of the Scripture and ask for volunteers to read.

Reflection Questions:

- What does John mean: "Bear fruits worthy of repentance?" (What did we decide the word "repentance" means?)
- What would be the "fruits" (results)?
- How were these people trying to get out of serious repentance? (They were thinking they had it made – they were chosen people, descendants of Abraham.)

- What do you think got the people's attention? (Perhaps the idea of trees getting chopped down, or stone replacing them.)
- What does John answer to each of the groups who ask, "What should we do?" (In general, verse 11; to tax collectors, verse 13; to soldiers, verse 14b.)
- What did the people expect in the Messiah? (Someone who would come, change everything, kick out the Romans, set up a beautiful new kingdom where everyone would live happily ever after.)
- What did John respond when they asked him if he was the Messiah? (Verse 16-18.)
- Luke states that what John was proclaiming was "good news." What about the message sounds like good news to you? (Possible answers: someone – someone more powerful than John – was coming. There would be a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. Some serious changes were going to be made.)

Option: Invite the children to help you look for Good News. What is the good news that Jesus brings? What is the good news in our world? What might Jesus see as good news in our world?

Hand out the newspapers, magazines, or whatever other material you have for them. Have them look through and cut out words or pictures that seem like good news to them. Invite them to create either one large banner of good news or create individual banners of good news.

If some children do not want to use the media, they can create their own good news banner.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their good news with each other and if it is possible post it in the room, hallway, or an area where others in the church can see the good news.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God for giving us these stories and this good news. Help us to do the work you have given us to do and serve those around us as you have called us to do. Amen.

Luke 3: 7-18

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.⁹ Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’

10 And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’¹¹ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’¹² Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’¹³ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’¹⁷ His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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