

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Second Sunday of Advent
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12

The school year began months ago; New Year's Day is over a month away. Yet here we are, beginning our new Church year with the First Sunday of Advent. Advent invites us to risk pushing on through the world's weariness to expectant hope. Something's coming we proclaim! Immanuel: God With Us in the form of an infant. We celebrate what happened 2000 years ago while we look to the promise that Jesus will come again. We are also called, as we live in this parenthesis time, to look for messages God continues to send: what has happened, and will happen again, is also happening now: right here.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The Prophet Isaiah could see the day when "the earth will be full of the knowledge of God." John the Baptist saw clutter blocking the way to God. John pointed to the truth that through Baptism, we are called to seek knowledge of God, get rid of the clutter, and smooth the path on which we walk.

Theme: I Will, With God's Help

Before: If the idea of making cards for people (refer to the prior lesson for the First Sunday of Advent) holds the children's attention, or if there are children with you this Sunday who were not there last week, consider making time to generate more cards. Have ready the sandwich-sized plastic bags with zip-type closures, construction paper cut to fit the bags, and art supplies you have on hand to complete the cards.

An activity to look at how we use water at baptism is suggested for this week. The point of the activity is to see up close what is done at baptism, so it does not matter whether each child has been baptized. You will need a bowl, a pitcher of water, and a small towel. Have ready sheets of paper and crayons so the children can draw.

Beginning: Ask the children if they got to give anyone their cards. Who did they give their cards to? Can they tell you anything about it? (They may not remember, even if they did give away cards.) If you have an Advent wreath, help a child light two of the candles today. If you are coloring a wreath, invite the children to color the second candle, the flame, and any greenery you drew on the paper.

Praying: Thank you, God, that you send people to show us that you love us. Amen.

The Story: When Jesus was just starting to do his work, his cousin, John, was helping people get ready for Jesus' message. John kept saying: "God loves you and wants you to do the right thing. Tell God you are sorry when you do dumb stuff. Tell God! Then, come and let me baptize you." At baptism, people tell God they are going to try not to do bad things and they are going to try to

do good things. They say: "I will, with God's help." (If you have two candles burning, this would be a good time to blow them out.)

Activity: Ask the children if they have seen a baptism. If they remember one, get them to tell you what they remember about it. If they cannot remember, tell them we are going to show them something that is done at a baptism. Pour some water into the bowl you brought. Tell the children that if they were being baptized, they would lean over the bowl of water and the priest would take a little water and put it on the child's head saying: I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Ask the children to say with you: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Then, invite the children, one by one to dip a finger in the water, make the sign of the cross on their head, while all of you, together say: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Keep going until each child who wants to has dipped fingers in the water, making the sign of the cross.

Option: Give the children paper and crayons and ask them to draw a baptism picture. They can draw themselves making the sign of the cross, the bowl of water, or whatever they want.

Option: If it seems appropriate, invite the children to make some more cards to give away. Offer the supplies you have, so the children can make cards.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to bring their pictures with them as you make a circle. Invite the children to tell you about the pictures they have drawn.

Closing Prayer: We say thank you to you God, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Printed 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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