

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C - Second Sunday of Advent
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

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: The people who came out to hear John the Baptist would have recognized the Isaiah passage he was proclaiming. Did these people notice that something was not quite right in their lives? Apparently so, why else would they have come out to hear this bizarre-looking preacher? And so we, in the 21st Century, look for what we need to do to "prepare the way of the Lord." What is cluttering up the path? Will there be room in our inn for the Christ child to come and be born in us?

Theme: Prepare the Way of the Lord

Before Class: If you have chosen to use an Advent Wreath, bring it to class. You will need Bibles and copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Beginning: If you have included an Advent Wreath in your space, have someone light two candles. Read, from page 75 of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the second sentence for Advent.

Opening Prayer: Thank you God, for guiding us to this place and helping us to notice how to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. Amen.

Option: Invite your group to enter into a moment or two of silence to honor the fact that our lives are brimming over with activities and space. Silence to collect ourselves in this hectic life is hard to find. After explaining to the group what you are inviting them into, you could simply say: "Be still, and know that God is here," and then maintain silence for a minute or two.

The Scripture: Luke 3:1-6 Invite two people to read, one to read Luke 3:1-4a, the second to read the Isaiah passage Luke quotes: Luke 3: 4b - 6.

Reflection Questions:

- Who IS this John the Baptist? (The last of the prophets to come before Jesus, the cousin of Jesus, a man driven to teach people how to turn away from wrong ways)
- What do we understand John to be proclaiming when he speaks of a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins?" (Repentance: Notice where we have gone astray, admit our error, choose to make a course correction, say we are sorry, and then go on the new course.)
- What ramifications do we see in verse 6? (Isaiah says "all" flesh. Do we think John understood this message to be for a larger population than just the Jews? Do we think it could be for a larger population than just Christians?)

Option: Invite the group to check-in with each other offering strategies they have discovered to carve out chunks of time to "Be" with God. Invite people to share insights that have come to them during the week.

Getting Closure: Read the Collect for today, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 211.

Closing Prayer: God, we ask you, to bless our preparations for Advent as we await the coming of Christ. Continue to help us find time and space to be with you. Amen.

Luke 3:1-6

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” ’

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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