

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C - Second Sunday of Advent
Lesson Plan for Younger Children

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 acquired a length of blue cloth and the Christmas tree lights, bring them with you to class. Also bring some things that can form lumps under the cloth (small cardboard boxes or stones, for example.) You will need paper, crayons, and markers.

Beginning: Ask the children to help you spread the blue cloth on the floor, with the Christmas tree lights on one side of the cloth. Then, ask them to help you make the path "lumpy" by putting things under the path – the little boxes or stones – until the path looks very lumpy. Sit on the floor beside or around your path.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, we want to make a smooth path to you. Help us to get ready to hear what Jesus wants to tell us. Amen.

The Story: John the Baptist is a cousin of Jesus. John knows Jesus has very important things to tell people. John wants to be sure people are ready to listen to Jesus. John calls out to the people, "Prepare the way!" If you have done stuff that is bad, tell God you are sorry. If you are doing bad stuff, stop it! Jesus is coming for all of us.

Activity: To focus on positive things children can do to smooth the path in their own homes, invite the children to think up things they can do to help. (You might begin by saying you will

make your own bed each morning.) With each positive thing a child comes up with, that child can take one of the "lumps" out from under the path, and smooth the cloth in that spot. Keep going until each child has had the chance to suggest something and you have gotten all the "lumps" out from under your path. Then, plug the Christmas lights in and, if possible, turn out other lights in the room.

If you are comfortable singing, teach the children verse one of "O come, O come, Emmanuel Hymn 56 in the 1982 Hymnal, or sing a verse of "Silent Night."

Option: If time permits, you could invite the children to draw pictures of what they are going to do at home and take the pictures home with them.

Prepare the Way: If time permits, invite them create a picture about what their path to God might look like. I wonder what it would look like to prepare the way for God?

Getting Closure: Invite them to come together and share what they have created.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping us see how we can help make our paths smooth so we can better find you. Amen.

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

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: You will need envelopes that can be sealed, paper, pencils and Bibles. If time permits you may also need copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Bring in the "Good News" item you have found in the newspaper, in a magazine, or online.

Beginning: Ask the children if they have any "Good News" to report and also share what you have brought. Then, tell the children that today we are going to be looking at some heavy-duty words we find in Bible stories and see if we can come up with our own definitions of these words.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for John the Baptist who called people to repentance and forgiveness. Amen.

The Story: Luke 3: 1-6 Ask for two volunteers, one to read verses 3-4a and the other to read 4b through 6. You might choose to read verses 1-2, because they are full of hard-to-pronounce names and places.

Reflection Questions:

- Who is John the Baptist? (The cousin of Jesus. John has read Isaiah - the passage he is quoting here -- and is trying to get the people ready for the message Jesus will bring.)

- John the Baptist is "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." What do we think this means? Let's come up with our definition of these words.
- How would we define "sin?" (Some definitions: doing something wrong, thinking really bad thoughts, putting our own selves down, choosing to ignore God, something that separates you from God, something that separates us from each other, etc.)
- You may choose to look at the definition of sin in the Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer* on page 848.
- Who are the three types of people we can "sin against?" (Ourselves, our neighbor, God)
- What do we think the word "repentance" means? (If we said repentance has three steps, what might they be? (1. Noticing 2. Saying I am sorry 3. Changing the behavior)
- What happens to our relationship with God, when we say we are sorry and change our behavior? (God completely forgives us -- forgets all about our blowing it - goes on as if nothing has happened, and we are free to start over.)
- What happens to our relationship with another person when we say we are sorry and change our behavior? (Sometimes we can completely patch up the friendship. Sometimes, the other person is not ready to start over.)
- What happens to our relationship with ourselves when we tell ourselves we are sorry and change our behavior? (We have the potential to completely forgive ourselves or we might unnecessarily hang onto the guilt.)

Activity: Give the children paper, pencils, and envelopes that can be sealed. Tell them that what they write is for their eyes only and they will seal what they write in the envelope. They may choose to find private places within your space – instead of sitting at a table where it is too easy to see what is being written. They can draw something, write something, or leave the paper blank. They can write about someone or something they want to forgive or someone or something they want to begin to work on.

Getting Closure: Pass out copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. If the children are familiar with following along in the Holy Eucharist, ask them to find the confession and then tell you what page it is on. (Rite II, page 360). If they are not that familiar with the Book of Common Prayer, tell them to find page 360 and together you can read the confession and together read the part the priest says.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God for always forgiving us and for showing us how to forgive others and how to forgive ourselves. 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.” ’

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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,

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