

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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