

Year B

Third Sunday of Advent

Prepare a way to God

INTRODUCTION

News of John the Baptist had spread throughout the land, and crowds of people were flocking to listen to him. The leaders of the Jews decided to send some of their priests and elders to find out who this man really was.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read the following prayer:

Jesus is the light of the world.
Help us to live as children of the light,
sharing Jesus with the whole world,
by keeping our belief in him
and all that he taught us
alive in our hearts.

SORRY

John the Baptist taught the people that the first step on the way to God was to say "I'm sorry" if they had done wrong. Help us to remember this as we listen to the words of this prayer:

Lord, help us to choose what is good
and to follow you by living as you taught us.
Forgive us if we have done wrong
and turned away from your love.
Help us to change our hearts
and make them new,
knowing that through your love
we can start fresh and try again.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2.

GOSPEL (JOHN 1:19-28)

The Jews sent some priests to John the Baptist to ask him, "Who are you?" "I am not the promised one," he answered.

"Are you Elijah or a prophet?" they asked.

"No, I am neither of these," he replied.

"Well who are you then and why are you baptizing these people?"

John answered using the words of the prophet

Isaiah, "I am a voice crying out in the desert, prepare a way for the Lord!"

"I baptize you with water, but there is one you do not yet know, who stands among you, one who is coming after me. I am not fit even to undo his sandals," he said.

DISCUSSION

Who did the priests think that John might be? At first they thought that this extraordinary man might be the Messiah, the savior promised by God. Then they wondered whether John was Elijah or another prophet.

John helped the crowds prepare a way for the Lord by explaining that true happiness comes from pleasing God and leading lives filled with goodness. By being sorry for the mistakes they had made and the wrongs they had done, and by changing their lives, they could make a fresh start on the way to God.

When people asked for God's forgiveness and made up their minds to live as God wanted them to, John would baptize them in the river. As they came up out of the water, it was as though a new life was just beginning for them.

Most people today are baptized as babies rather than as adults, but water is still used at baptism. All life needs water, and the water used at baptism reminds us that as we are now welcomed into the family of God and share in new and everlasting life.

ACTIVITY

If the group is small, copy one picture each and ask the children to color it. If you have a large group, enlarge and cut out the individual elements of the picture, and reassemble these on a large sheet of paper after they have been colored. Spend some time with the children discussing the picture and the event it depicts.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, give us the courage
to change our hearts
and make us grow strong
in love and faith.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Follow
that star

