

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Forgiving God,
help us prepare
for your coming
by being sorry for
what we have done wrong.
Fill us with your power
so that we may know you
and love you more and more,
and let all the world
live in peace.
We ask you to do this
through our friend
and brother,
Jesus Christ,
who lives forever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Our God is coming! Prepare the way! Change your lives!

The people of Israel were in exile in Babylon. In their understanding, this was the punishment for their sin. Our reading focuses on their liberation from their exile. It speaks of the "herald of good news" who will be the voice proclaiming, "Your God is coming, in power and justice, to save you. Prepare the way!" Isaiah uses symbolic language—every valley and mountain shall be level. This image tells us that, with the coming of our God, justice will reign, and all will be equal. Our Gospel passage introduces John the Baptist whose role is to announce the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. To prepare the way for the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist calls us to repent and change our lives. He calls us to conversion—now!

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-10*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Our God says:

"Give comfort to my people.
Speak tenderly to the people of Jerusalem
and tell them that their punishment is over."

A voice proclaims:

"Prepare the way for the coming of our God!
In the desert,
make a straight path for our God!
Every valley will be filled in.
Every mountain and hill will be made small.
The rough and rugged land
will be made smooth.
Then the glory of God
will be seen by all the people,
for our God has spoken!"

Our God says,

"Go up on a high mountain,
O herald of good news,
and say to the people,

'Here is your God!

Our God is coming in power
to rule with strength
and to bring reward and justice to all.' "

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 85*

RESPONSE:



Come and stay with us O Lord. Ho-ly is your name. —

VERSES: to Response



1. For all your people you bring peace. Now—sal-va-tion comes for us.
2. You come with jus-tice; be with us. As you have prom-ised: Save — us.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

(clap)

Change your lives, he's com-ing. The one who will bap-
tize with the Ho - ly Spir - it. Change your lives, he's
com-ing. The Lord is com-ing soon!
Al-le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia! "The Lord is com-ing soon."

GOSPEL: *Mark 1:1-8*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

This is the beginning
of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
Isaiah, the prophet, wrote,

"I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way for you.
He will proclaim,

'Prepare the way for the coming of God!
Make a straight path for our God!'"

And so, John the Baptizer came,
telling everyone to change their lives and be baptized
so their sins would be forgiven.

Many people around Jerusalem
went to the desert to see John.
They confessed their sins
and were baptized in the Jordan River.

John wore clothes made from the hair of camels,
and he wore a leather belt around his waist.
He ate locusts and wild honey.

When he preached, he always said,

"Someone else is coming after me.
He is more powerful than I am.
I am not even worthy to undo his sandals.
I am baptizing you in water,
but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did you hear?

Help the children come to know John the Baptist and his role in salvation history. What was his message? What is the "good news" that he announced? What did he say about Jesus?

Help the children see that we are called now, during Advent, to change our lives in order to prepare to celebrate the Lord's coming. How can we change our lives? It is important that the children focus on their own lives rather than on changes needed in the world at large. Children are not responsible for the problems of the world and have very little to do with the solutions to them. They should see that what they can do in their families, schools, neighborhoods, and so forth, is important. Help the children see that, because they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, they too are heralds of good news for others. God has promised a time when people will know justice and all will be treated equally. ("Every valley will be filled in. Every mountain and hill will be made small. The rough and rugged land will be made smooth.") How can we help that come to be? How can we help bring about justice around us? Help the children see that God calls us to treat all persons politely. Children will readily see the possibilities of this in their own lives.

Finally, assure the children of God's great love for us. Even when we have sinned, God sends words of comfort. God always comes to us with mercy and good news.

Second Sunday of Advent

Making a fresh start

INTRODUCTION

God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of his son. The message he preached then is just as important today, as we prepare ourselves for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light our candles today, the words of the prophet Isaiah remind us that Jesus is the light of the world:

Those who walked in darkness have seen a wonderful light. The light which shines on them chases the shadows of darkness away from their land. (Isaiah 9:1)

SORRY

John the Baptist told the people to ask for God's forgiveness and to change their ways. God is always ready to forgive us and to help us make a fresh start. Sing Sorry Song 4.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Sing the Advent Song.

GOSPEL (MARK 1:1-8)

The prophet Isaiah foretold that God would send a messenger to prepare the people for the Lord's coming. This messenger was John the Baptist, who appeared in the desert telling the people to be sorry for their sins and to make a fresh start in their lives. Many people heard his message and came to be baptized as a sign of their change of heart. John told them, "Someone is coming who is more powerful than me, and I am not good enough to undo the straps of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

DISCUSSION

What was the name of the prophet who had foretold the coming of John the Baptist? What is a prophet? A prophet is someone who speaks in the

name of God and has been allowed by God to know and share a part of his plan for mankind.

John was God's messenger; he was sent to tell the people to change their ways and to turn back to God. He told them to make a fresh start by asking forgiveness for their sins and trying to lead lives filled with goodness and love.

John was sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. Do we still need to prepare for Jesus' coming today? Jesus could return at any time (recall last week's discussion). We can prepare ourselves just as people did in the time of John the Baptist, by putting right what is wrong in our lives and living as Jesus taught us.

Advent is a good time to look carefully at ourselves and to make a fresh start if we need to. When can we meet Jesus and ask for his forgiveness? Through the sacrament of reconciliation we can tell Jesus that we are sorry and receive his forgiveness. Through the priest, God allows us to hear that our sins are forgiven so we can start anew knowing that God loves us very much.

Can you think of anything that needs to be put right in your life?

ACTIVITY

If the group is small, hand out copies of the picture and ask the children to color it. If you have a large group, enlarge the picture on a photocopier and cut out the individual elements of the picture. 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

Heavenly father, help each of us
to make a fresh start this Advent,
to put right what is wrong,
and to truly live as Jesus showed us.



Mary visits
her cousin
Elizabeth



Second Sunday of Advent

Focus

A leather belt and jar of honey arranged next to a bowl of water with pebbles on the bottom.

Introduction

A prophet is a messenger sent by God to pronounce God's will to the people and act as a go-between. Sometimes they foretold what was yet to come as they tried to prepare God's people for the promised Messiah. In today's Gospel we hear from the prophet Isaiah, who lived in Old Testament times, and about the New Testament prophet called John the Baptist.

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing the Advent Acclamation for Year B.

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Mark (1:1-8)
(See page 378.)

Reflection

The prophet Isaiah had foretold of a messenger whom God would send to prepare the people for the coming of their Saviour. Who was that messenger?

John the Baptist.

What was special about John?

John was chosen by God to prepare his people and get them ready to welcome his beloved Son. He was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born, and marked out as someone very important in God's plan (see Luke 1:5-25, 66-80). John was ready to do whatever God asked from him, however difficult or challenging that was.

What did John do?

He began proclaiming God's word to the people and appealing for their faith and commitment. It was not just the words he said and the things he did that spoke of God, but his whole way of life was an example to them of how to love and please God.

What did John want the people to do?

John urged and encouraged the people to change their hearts and turn back to God's love in readiness for the Saviour that had been promised. As an outward sign of their inner change of heart, John baptised people in the River Jordan to symbolise the washing-away of past mistakes which needed to be forgiven by God.

Did John know the name and identity of the promised One?

He did not know who the Saviour was because God had not yet revealed his identity to John.

When did God reveal Christ's identity to John?

When Jesus came to the River Jordan and asked John to baptise him with water, John saw the Holy Spirit descending upon him and at that moment recognised him as the promised One sent by God (John 1:32-34).

How did the Holy Spirit appear when he descended on Jesus?

As a dove. By this sign, God revealed his beloved Son to John the Baptist.

John prepared the people to welcome Jesus by washing them in the river as a sign of their sorrow for their sins. How can we prepare ourselves to make Jesus welcome this Christmas?

Just as John urged the people to turn back to God, during Advent we are reminded to try to make a special effort to find ways to grow closer to God. There are all sorts of different ways to do this! It might include doing something or giving something up during Advent, just as we do during Lent. Or it might be celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation or spending more time with God in prayer.

Activity

Give each child a small piece of plain paper and a water-soluble pen. Ask them to spend a few moments thinking about anything that might come between themselves and God's love. When they have had time to think of something, ask them to write the word 'sorry' on their pieces of paper. Invite them to come forward one at a time and place their paper in the water, which will wash away what they have written. Remind them that whatever we have done, God forgives our mistakes and washes away our sins with his love whenever we are sorry, so that with his help we can make a new beginning.

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

For peace throughout our world
and goodwill to all people.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For friendship where there is loneliness, and shelter for those who have no home to call their own.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the sick and all who visit and care for them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

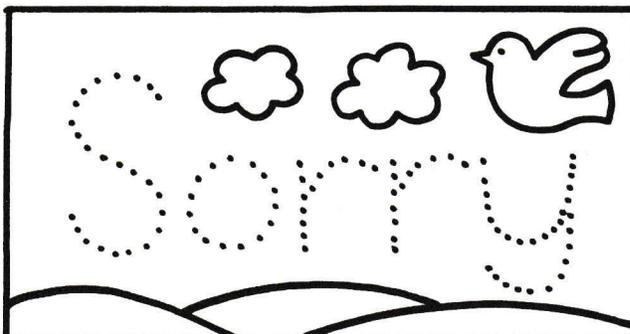
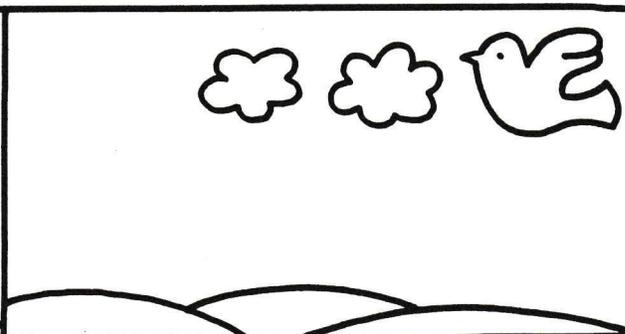
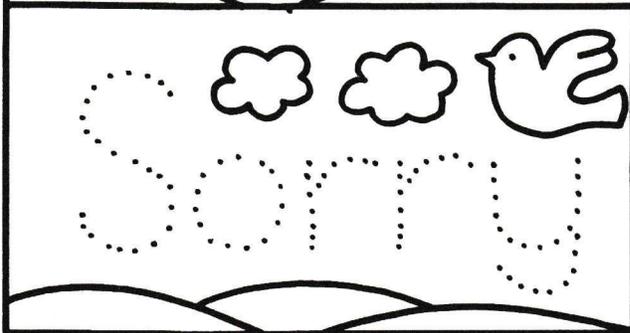
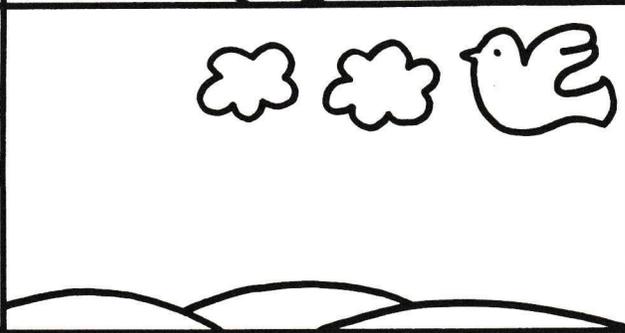
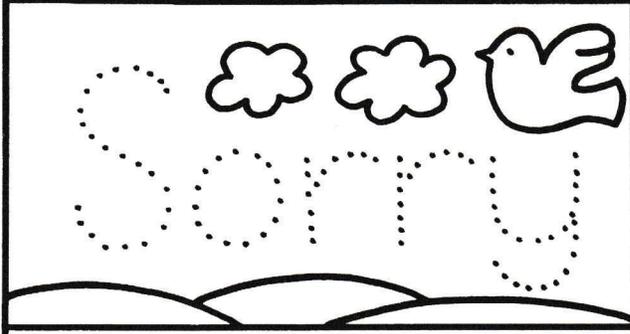
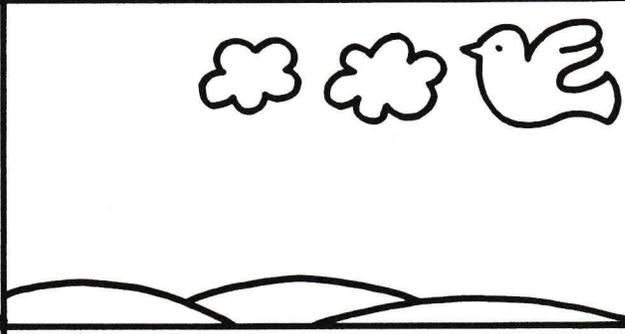
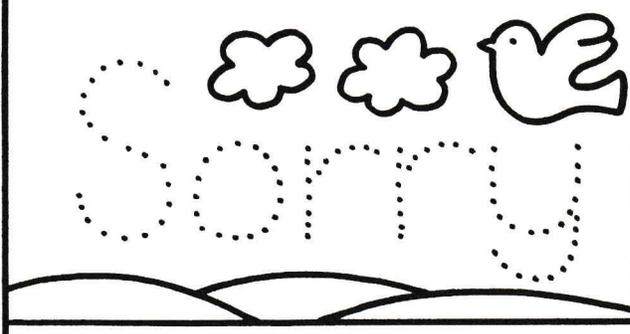
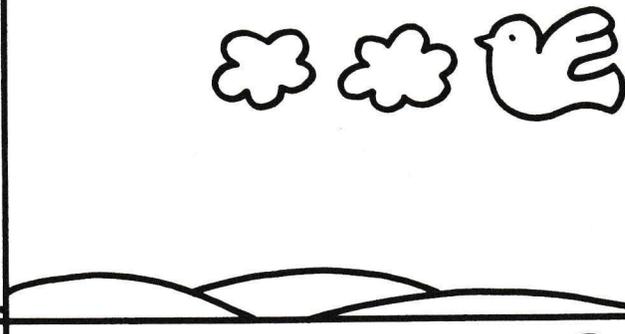
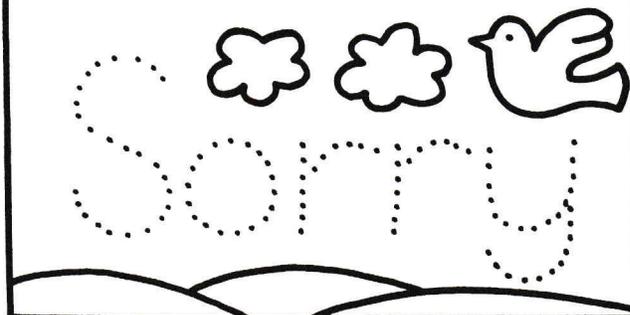
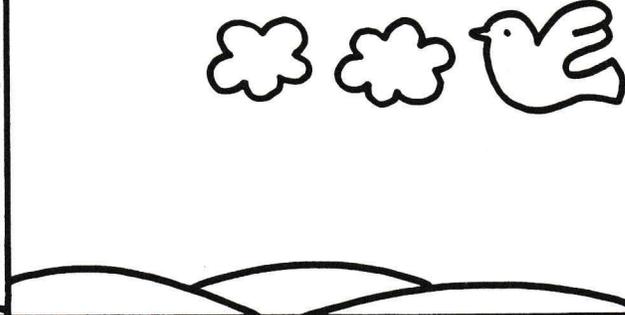
For the poor and the hungry who have so little and need so much.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening,
in the silence of our hearts
let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father,
as we prepare to welcome you
into our hearts and lives this Christmas,
help us to remember that you are already among us
in the people we see and meet every day.
We make our prayers through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

 <p>A row of three decorative elements: two flowers and a dove. Below them, the word 'SORU' is written in large, dotted letters for tracing. The row is set against a background of rolling hills.</p>	 <p>A row of three decorative elements: two flowers and a dove. Below them, the word 'SORU' is written in large, solid outline letters. The row is set against a background of rolling hills.</p>
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