

Children's liturgy – First Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple

Welcome: Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is a special time when we get ready for the coming of Jesus. It is very exciting when we know that someone is coming to visit us. We make sure that we are ready when they come. Today we are going to think about what it means to be welcoming, and how we get ready to welcome Jesus.

Song suggestions: O come, o come Emmanuel (111, Laudate) Wait for the Lord (88, Laudate)

Opening prayer: Loving God, you sent your Son Jesus into the world to show us how to live. Help us to be ready when he comes. Help us to make all visitors feel welcome and cared for. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm: Ps 121:1-2, 4b-5, 6-7, 8-9 r. 1

Gospel acclamation: *Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus said to his disciples: "The coming of the Son of Man will be like what happened in the time of Noah. In the days before the flood people ate and drank, men and women married, up to the very day Noah went into the boat; yet they did not realize what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes. At that time two men will be working in a field: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind. Two women will be at a mill grinding meal: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind. Watch out, then, because you do not know what day your Lord will come. If the owner of a house knew the time when the thief would come, you can be sure that he would stay awake and not let the thief break into his house. So then, you also must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him."

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission)*

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

The gospel story is telling us that we must be ready when Jesus comes again, but that we cannot be exactly sure when that will be, so we must try to be ready all the time. (Although we don't have to stay awake all night, we can go to sleep!)

Jesus tells us we may be very surprised when he comes. Lots of surprises are very good. Birthday or special treats make us feel happy.

Sometimes people surprise us by coming to visit us at home when we are not expecting them. Or we might go to visit members of our family or our friends.

How does it feel to go somewhere for the first time? What would you like others to do to make you feel welcome if you were going somewhere new?

And how can we make other people feel welcome? How can we welcome them in our homes? In our school? In our church?

Jesus asks to be ready when he comes again. How do you think we can get ready to welcome Jesus in our lives?

Is it just about buying presents and putting up Christmas trees?

Are there other things we need to do? (eg sharing with others, being kind, helping other people).

What will you do this week to make sure you are ready when Jesus comes?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God asks us to be ready so that we can welcome Jesus when he comes. Together we ask for God's help...

We pray for all people around the world who are alone or frightened or have had to leave their homes because of fighting: that they may be welcomed by others and may see their families again. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for people who are travelling to visit others or who have a long or difficult journey ahead: that they may arrive safely and may receive a warm welcome. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, families and friends: that we may always be welcoming to others and that we may share what we have with those who are in need. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Generous God, we give thanks for all those people who have visited us, or whom we have visited. Help us always to welcome the people we meet in life, no matter who they are or where they come from. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to look at the accompanying activity sheet and the picture of people welcoming a visitor. What is different in the picture from their house or family? What is the same? Ask the children to colour in the picture and to do the accompanying activity to think about what they can do to make people feel welcome.

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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Invite a visitor to the children's liturgy session, it could be a parent, member of the choir, or another member of the parish community. Warn the children at the beginning of the session that a visitor is coming and ask them to think of ways they can make the visitor feel welcome. Perhaps they could sing them a song or prepare a special place for them to sit. Get the children to explain to the visitor what they have been talking about in this liturgy. Remind them to say thank you and good bye at the end of the visit. *(Also remind them that this is a safe environment and that their visitor has been invited – and not to approach strangers when unaccompanied by an adult).*

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to invite a visitor to their house, to prepare for that visitor and make them feel welcome. It could be a relative, neighbour or friend. While they are doing this they can also think about how they would get ready for the coming of Jesus. *(Remind them that they must have their parent or guardian's permission and that they must not approach strangers when unaccompanied by an adult).*

*Gospel passage taken from:

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