The Joy of Advent: Week 3, Lower Elementary

Learning Goals

› Advent is a time for waiting and for preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ, not only as a baby at Christmas, but also at the end of time in His promised Second Coming.
› John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, the Messiah.
› Jesus defied and far surpassed the people’s expectations for the Messiah and what He would do.

Connection to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

› CCC 522-525
› CCC 711-720
› CCC 1023-1029

Vocabulary

› Heaven
› Gaudete Sunday

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

John answered them, “I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

JOHN 1:26–27

Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.

REVELATION 21:3–4
Lesson Plan

Materials

› Handout A: Teaching the Liturgical Year: Third Week of Advent
› Handout B: Expectations

Prayer

Dear God, we praise you and adore you. Thank you for preparing us, your people, for the coming of your Son. Thank you for sending Jesus to us, to show us your love and to save us from sin. Help us to prepare our hearts to welcome your Son at Christmas. Help us to know the joy that He brings to the world. Amen.

Teacher’s Note: Before teaching this lesson, precut enough strips of purple and pink construction paper for each student to have three purple strips and one pink strip. Each strip should be approximately 2 or 3 inches wide and 11 inches long.

Warm Up

A. Begin by leading your students in the prayer for this lesson.

B. Distribute to your students Handout A: Teaching the Liturgical Year: Third Week of Advent. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

C. Activity extension: If you have set up an Advent wreath and candles in your class, have a “lighting” ceremony of the first, second, and third candles before reading the Gospel for this week.

Activity

A. Explain to your students that, as they have learned, this third week of Advent is known as Gaudete, or Rejoice, Sunday. For this week, we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath (and the priest at Mass will often wear pink vestments) as a sign of our joy for the coming Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ, who will soon be born on Christmas Day. Then explain the following to your students:
In this week’s Gospel, it is clear that the people, had their own ideas, about how to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. During his ministry, John the Baptist prepared the way for the Messiah, for Jesus to come and to save us. And in many ways Jesus was different from what the people expected. Instead of being a rich, powerful earthly king, Jesus was poor and humble and did not rule an earthly kingdom. Instead, He served others, gave His life for us on the Cross, and established the spiritual Kingdom of God here on earth. Jesus was greater than what the people expected the Messiah would be. He exceeded their expectations! The same is true for our expectations of Heaven and the fulfillment of God’s promises to us. We all have ideas about what Heaven might be like, or what we want Heaven to be like, but the reality is far greater! What God has in store for us in the Kingdom of Heaven goes beyond our wildest imagination!

B. Distribute to your students **Handouts B: Expectations**. Have your students complete the first question and call on students to share their responses. Then read aloud Revelation 21:2–4 (below), which is St. John the Evangelist’s description of his vision of Heaven. After reading it, ask your students how John describes Heaven. (He describes it as a holy city, like a bride, where God will dwell with His people, and He will wipe away every tear, and there will be no more death, mourning, wailing, or pain.) Then have your students draw a picture in the space provided of what they think Heaven will be like.

**Revelation 21:2–4**

I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”

**Formative Assessment**

A. Distribute to each student three strips of the purple construction paper and one strip of the pink construction paper that you cut before class. On each of the purple strips, have your students write one thing they can do during the rest of Advent to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Encourage them to think about specific things they can do to imitate Christ and serve others. On the pink strips, have your students write one reason to be joyful or thankful during the Advent and Christmas seasons.
B. After your students have finished writing, have them create a chain out of their strips of paper with three purple strips in a row linked to the pink strip. Have them interlock the pieces of paper and glue or tape them together, leaving one unglued or taped together. Then, gather all of the chains together from the class and link them together to form one large class chain. (Order the links so that there are not pink strips connected to each other.) Display the large class chain in your classroom and encourage your students to commit to doing the things they wrote about during the remaining time in Advent.
Handout A: Teaching the Liturgical Year: Third Week of Advent

1. To testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
2. He told them he was not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet.
3. He said he was the “voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”
4. He said he was baptizing with water, but there was one among them whom they did not recognize, who was coming after him, whose sandal strap he was not worthy to untie.