The Joy of Advent: Week 3, Middle and Upper 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. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
C. When they have finished, review the correct answers to the focus questions.
D. 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:

---

**HANDOUT A**
Teaching the Liturgical Year: Third Week of Advent

A Reading from the Gospel of John 1:6–8, 19–28: John the Baptist's Testimony to Himself

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John: When the Jews from Jerusalem and priests and Levites sent to him: “Who are you?” He did not deny it, and did not say: “I am the Christ.” He admitted: “I am not.” So they asked him: “Who are you, then?” He said: “I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him: “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or John the Baptist?” 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.” This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Focus Questions
1. Why was John sent by God? ____________________________
2. Whom did John tell the people that he was not? ____________________________
3. Whom did John tell the people that he was? ____________________________
4. What did the Pharisees ask John? ____________________________
5. What did John tell the Pharisees he was doing? ____________________________
6. Who do you think John was speaking of, who would come after him? ____________________________
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 Handout B: Expectations worksheet. Have them complete the worksheet. Then call on students to share their responses when they have finished.

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.
Answer Key

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 that he was not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet.
3. He told them that he was the “voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”
4. Why do you baptize?
5. He baptized 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.
6. Jesus.