

## Second Sunday of Advent, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Baruch 5:1-9

Psalms 126:1-6

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

Luke 3:1-6

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

### The Word in Liturgy

The first reading offers a joyful prediction of Israel's triumphant return to Jerusalem. This passage offers a symbolic vision of the experience of salvation. From wherever they are scattered, but particularly from the place of exile (Babylon, in the east), the people of Israel return to their mother, the holy city, Jerusalem, like royalty, carried on thrones. Israel, who once was clad in the sackcloth and ashes of "mourning and misery," is now like a woman dressed in fine clothes: "the splendor of glory from God," and "a cloak of justice."

Who is to see this vision? In the passage itself, the spectators are two. Jerusalem is urged to see and welcome it, and "all the earth" will see it as well.

In today's gospel, Luke quotes Isaiah 40:3-5 (the same passage that Baruch has paraphrased) when describing the role of John the Baptist in preparing the way for Christ's coming. Anchored firmly in history, yet employing the rich symbolism of prophetic language, Luke's description of John the Baptist heightens our anticipation of this Lord whom John announces. Significantly, Luke adds a final sentence from Isaiah 52:10b: "All the earth will see the salvation of God." The coming of Jesus is an event of salvation that will be seen by all people. What we prepare for in Advent is of universal significance.

### Catholic Doctrine

***"Through the prophets you taught [us] to hope for salvation."***

This Sunday the promise of salvation, and therefore our hope, is given direction by the figure



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of John the Baptist. In the preface for Masses of John the Baptist, the Church addresses God, praying, "You chose John the Baptist from all the prophets to show the world its redeemer, the lamb of sacrifice." (*Roman Missal*, Preface 61). John the Baptist directs us to the object of our longing. He points the way to our hope.

God's promise of salvation, foretold by the prophets, forms our future in faith. In the preface for Advent I we pray to God, "when [Jesus] humbled himself to come among us. . . . he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago and opened for us the way. . . . Now we watch for the day, hoping the salvation promised us will be ours" (*Roman Missal*, Preface I for Advent). The message of salvation, impressed upon us by the prophets, makes us who we are this Advent, a people who watch for the day, hoping God's promise will be ours.

