



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

Isaiah 12: 2-3, 4, 5-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:10-18

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which 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

St. John the Baptist, who was introduced as a prophet in last week's gospel ("the word of God came to John . . .") is one of the most compelling figures in the whole New Testament. A fierce ascetic chosen from the womb and later to die a martyr's death, he lived and preached in the desert. His baptism was one of repentance, and he prepared the way for Christ. In today's passage from Luke, we hear him speak in his own words.

Moved by John's prophetic preaching about God's coming judgment, people from all walks of life come forward asking, "What are we to do?" The baptizer responds in plain language, telling them to reform their lives in ordinary ways specific to their life situations. Moral conversion is a necessary preparation for the new era which begins with the coming of the Messiah. The moral virtues and how we acquire them therefore become the doctrinal focus for today.

In the first reading, the prophet Zephaniah speaks of the return of a sinful people to God as an event of mutual joy. The people rejoice when they are reconciled with God, and God rejoices over them.

The third Sunday of Advent is known traditionally as "Gaudete Sunday." Gaudete is a Latin word meaning rejoice—an imperative taken from the readings of this day.

### Catholic Doctrine

***Moral conversion prepares for the coming of Christ.***



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Human beings are created by God with an openness to truth and beauty, a sense of moral goodness, freedom and the inner voice of conscience. We long for the infinite and for happiness. Even those people who have not accepted the good news in Jesus are capable of making distinctions between what is good and what is evil and acting accordingly.

Catholic teaching upholds that moral conversion is possible for all and needed by all. This conversion is accomplished in many ways through daily living. Gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice, the admission of one's faults, fraternal correction, and acceptance of suffering are outward signs of this moral conversion. In other words, moral conversion takes time and practice but is accessible to all.

Catholic theology has long pointed to and explored the cardinal virtues as key elements that assist in moral conversion. The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance are central to the pursuit of the moral life.

