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## Second Sunday of Advent, Year A, Junior High

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Thu, 07/18/2013 - 20:00

### **Junior High Session**

Isaiah 11:1-10

Matthew 3:1-12

## **Opening Prayer**

Let us pray.

Come Lord Jesus, renew our faith in you.

May our lives reflect your peace and love in the world.

In the name of Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen.

### **Opening Life Reflection**

The theme for today is justice and peace as a sign of Jesus' coming into the world. To begin explain that John the Baptist announced Jesus' coming into the world. John baptized with water for the repentance of sins.

Place a large bowl of water in the center of the room. Invite the young people to reflect on what areas of their lives they would like to change in order to turn back to God during the season of Advent. Give the young people an opportunity to come forward and cleanse their hands in the bowl of water as a symbol of repentance. (Play soft background music as they come forward.)

Discuss:

- How did John the Baptist help prepare the way for the coming of Jesus?
- How does the season of Advent help us to change our lives?
- How does turning back to God help us to spread justice and peace in the world?

Allow time for discussion. John the Baptist announced the coming of Jesus into the world. The coming of Jesus brought about the kingdom of God on earth. Justice and peace are signs of God's kingdom.



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## Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to God's promise to bring about a kingdom of justice and peace.

Read Isaiah 11:1-10.

Allow for silence.

## Scripture Discussion Starters

- Who does God promise to send into the world?
- What gifts of the spirit are mentioned?
- How is God's kingdom of justice and peace described?

In the gospel reading listen to John the Baptist announce the coming of Jesus.

Read Matthew 3:1-12.

Allow for silence.

- What is John the Baptist preaching about?
- Where does John come from?
- Why do the people come to John the Baptist?
- How does John baptize the people?
- What does John tell the people?

### Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings.

In today's Old Testament reading the prophet Isaiah gives us a beautiful vision of a future filled with justice and peace. The passage begins with the promise of a king with virtues that Christians later identify as "gifts of the Holy Spirit." Justice and freedom for the poor mark the reign of the king and all of creation lives together in peace and harmony.

Christians interpret the promise of a king in the line of David--found in today's Old Testament passage--to refer to the coming of Jesus Christ. We regard Jesus as the king sent to fulfill God's promise to send a Messiah.

In today's gospel we find a bold and courageous character named John the Baptist. He is determined to prepare the way for the coming of Messiah, Jesus Christ. Out of the wilderness John the Baptist appears wearing clothing of camel's hair. His food is locusts and wild honey. His heart is pure and his preaching changes the hearts of many people.

John announces the coming of a new age when people are called to change their hearts and repent from sin. It is time to prepare for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ. Today's passage focuses on John's preaching which calls for a change of heart and true conversion in order to welcome Jesus



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and turn back to God. John's mission and message center on Jesus, the coming Messiah, and the moral conversion necessary to prepare for his kingdom of justice and peace.

## Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What is your vision of God's kingdom?
- Why are justice and freedom for the poor signs of God's kingdom?
- How does John the Baptist help people turn back to God?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

## Doctrinal Discussion Starters

### Justice and Peace as a Sign of the Messianic Era

God is a God of promises. God promised never to abandon us. Catholics believe that throughout history God has worked to bring about our salvation. Starting with God's covenant with Abraham, and then throughout the time of Moses and the prophets, God's promise to send a savior is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Savior who entered our humanity and our history and brought about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God will come to completion in the final judgment. Justice and peace are the signs of God's kingdom. Through his ministry, Jesus planted the seeds of God's reign. The faithful continue the mission of Jesus and help God's kingdom to blossom on earth.

- Why did Jesus become human?
- What did Jesus bring into the world?
- How can you help God's kingdom blossom on earth?

## The Gospel in Life

How can you turn away from sin and turn toward God this Advent season?

**Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition**  
At Home Family Guide, theme 24



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