



# Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

## Second Sunday of Advent, Year A

Violet

*Turn back to God* Isaiah 11:1-4a, 5-6, 9b, Psalm 72, Romans 15:4-6, Matthew 3:1-9,11

John the Baptist was God's messenger to help the people prepare before the public ministry of Jesus began. What was his message? John lived in the desert, wore strange clothes and ate even stranger food. Why did John live such an unusual lifestyle? Who were drawn to John, and for what did they come to see him? As Christmas draws closer, how are we to prepare? Today we light the second violet candle on our Advent wreath.



### Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Second Sunday of Advent, starting with the Gospel. (You may choose to use or focus on one reading only, but remember that the Gospel may not be omitted.) Then look through the preparatory material that follows and familiarise yourself with the Liturgy Outline.

**Please Note:** During the Liturgy of the Word with Children the Scriptures are to be proclaimed from either the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* or from the *Contemporary English Version of the Bible* as approved by the New Zealand Bishops Conference. Scripture should not be proclaimed from loose sheets of paper during liturgy.

### GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-9, 11

John the Baptist started preaching in the desert of Judea. He said, "Turn back to God! The kingdom of heaven will soon be here."

John was the one the prophet Isaiah was talking about when he said, "In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.'"

John wore clothes made of camel's hair. He had a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

From Jerusalem and all Judea and from the Jordan River Valley crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptised them in the river. Many Pharisees and Sadducees also came to be baptised. But John said to them: "you bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? Do something to show that you have really given up your sins. And don't start telling yourselves that you belong to Abraham's family. I tell you that God can turn these stones into children for Abraham."

“I baptise you with water so that you will give up your sins. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to carry his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 11:1-4a, 5-6, 9b

The Lord says this:

Like a branch that sprouts from a stump, someone from David’s family will someday be king. The Spirit of the Lord will take control of him and give him understanding and wisdom and insight. He will be powerful, and he will know and honour the Lord. His greatest joy will be to worship the Lord.

He won’t judge by appearances or listen to rumours. The poor and the helpless will be treated with fairness and with justice. Honesty and fairness will be his royal robes.

Leopards and young goats, and wolves and lambs will lie down and rest in the same field. Calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by a child. Just as water fills the sea, the land will be filled with people who know and honour the Lord.

## PSALM

Psalm 72

**Response:**                    **Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.**

Please help the king to be honest and fair just like you, our God.

Let his kingdom reach from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River across all the earth. **R**

May the glory of the king shine brightly forever like the sun in the sky.

Let him make nations prosper and learn to praise him. **R**

## SECOND READING *(if included)*

Romans 15:4-6

Brothers and sisters:

The Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope. God is the one who makes us patient and cheerful. I pray that he will help you live at peace with each other, as you follow Christ.

Then all of you together will praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)  
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## *Reflection for Leaders*

A call to change is always disturbing. John’s blunt speaking calls us to honestly examine our lives and our situations. Had you been present to hear John preaching and challenging, what situations, attitudes and motives would he have caused you to examine? What aspects of your life might be in need of change? Yet crowds of people sought him out, opening themselves to his message. What messages do you allow into your life? What are the things that prevent you from hearing some messages? Would you have welcomed John and sought him out? If John

asked you to show evidence of your repentance, what would your response be? Advent is a time in which we are invited to withdraw and make time for prayer and reflection. During this week try to attend a Reconciliation service, and put time aside to prayerfully prepare for Christmas.

## *Background to the Readings for Leaders*

Isaiah describes the coming Messiah, recognisable by Christians as Jesus Christ: from the house of David, full of God's Spirit and able to fulfil the role of Just Judge. Isaiah sees a future world full of peace and the knowledge of God. Into today's gospel strides John the Baptist, calling people to change their lives. John was among many faithful Jews who rejected the compromise of religious life in the cities of Palestine, and withdrew into the desert to pray and preach. Desert places are traditionally where people find God, away from the busyness of daily life and concerns. There he draws a growing following from the people, who come to be baptised by him in the Jordan River. John reserves his harshest words for the Pharisees and Sadducees, in whom he recognises an unwillingness to change and a religiosity and self-righteousness that marginalises others. He challenges them to show evidence of repentance. John is often referred to as the last of the prophets and is the link between the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures. His call to repentance and announcing of a new day echoes the line of previous prophetic voices throughout Israel's history who spoke in God's name. His is the last voice to be heard before the Word – Jesus himself – speaks.

## *Images from the Readings*

- Turn back to God!
- Do something to show you have given up your sins
- Someone more powerful is going to come
- Honesty and fairness will be his royal robes
- Patient and cheerful

## *Reflecting on the Readings with the children*

Before Sunday read over the suggested discussion points given in the Leader's Liturgy Outline.

With the 8-12 year olds: First, listen to the children's own responses to the Reading/s and then, if needed, use some of the discussion starters suggested.

With the 5-7 year olds: You may choose to use the 'Play' provided after the Reading/s to reinforce the Gospel message with the children.

## *Suggested Focus*

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held: Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle and an Advent Wreath with three purple candles and one pink candle. Symbols of John the Baptist such as an icon, hessian cloth wrapped in a leather belt, a stick, honey. A map of the Holy Land and a picture of the wilderness where John lived could be helpful.



# LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

## Second Sunday of Advent, Year A

At a suitable moment after the Opening Rites, but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are presented with the Children's Lectionary and a candle and sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

**INVITATION –** I invite the children to join in the procession for their  
*Pōwhiri* celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

**To the Minister of the Word:** Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

Receive this candle as the light of Christ who is present in his Word.

### PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS – *Te Kapa o te Pukapuka Tapu*

#### WELCOME – *Ko te whakatau*

**Leader:** O God, you sent John the Baptist to help people prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus. Help us to prepare too, so that we may be ready to receive him with joy.

**R** Amen.

#### LITURGICAL ACTION – *Ko te Ritenga Karakia*

Invite the children to join hands around the focus:

Light the first two purple candles and sing "Prepare ye the Way of the Lord" (Godspell version) or similar.



*First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-4a, 5-6, 9b* (if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

**Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua**

*Psalms 72* (if used)

**Response: Justice shall flourish in his time,  
and fullness of peace for ever.**

*Second Reading: Romans 15:4-6* (if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

**Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua**

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Make a straight path for the Lord. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. He is the hope for the world.

### *Gospel: Matthew 3:1-9, 11*

**Minister of the Word:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.  
**Children:** **Glory to you, O Lord / Korōria ki ā koe, e te Ariki**

**At the end of the Gospel:** The Gospel of the Lord  
**Children:** **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ / Kia whakanuia rā koe, e te Ariki, e Hēhu Karaiti.**

## *REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH THE CHILDREN – Whai Whakaaro*

**8-12 year olds:** Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Before Jesus came, God sent a special person to prepare the way for him. Do you know who he was? (John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin).

- John lived in the desert or the wilderness (show the map of the Holy Land and some pictures of the Jordan and the wilderness).
- He wore strange clothing made of camel hair, and ate strange food. Some people felt uncomfortable when he spoke because his message called people to change their lives, and that isn't always easy.
- What do we call people who give us challenging or difficult messages from God? (prophets)
- What was the message that John brought? (turn back to God, prepare for the one who is to come)
- Who was John preparing the people for? (Jesus)
- How did the people show that they were sorry for their sins (they were baptised in the River Jordan)

**5-7 year olds:** The 'play' on page 7 can be used as part of the 'Reflecting on the Readings' time within the liturgy and can be given to the children as 'take home' material to share with their families to reinforce the Gospel message.

## *PROFESSION OF FAITH – Panui o te Whakapono*

We believe in God the Father,  
who made the whole world.  
We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
who was born in Bethlehem  
and lived among us,  
who died on the cross for us,  
and rose from the dead.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit  
who brings life and love to us all.  
We believe that the Church is one family,  
and that one day  
we will share everlasting life  
with God in heaven.  
Amen.

## *PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL – Te Īnoīnga o te Hunga Whakapono*

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

**Leader:** God knows our needs and listens to our prayers, so let us bring them in confidence:

- That the church be a place of justice and mercy, peace and harmony  
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we learn to live by hope and encourage each other  
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That people everywhere learn to live with integrity and fairness  
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For an attitude of openness to listen to prophet people who sometimes challenge us or make us feel uncomfortable  
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

**Leader:** God of challenge, remove from us the things that stop us from welcoming Jesus with joy. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord

**All:** Amen.

The children re-join the assembly before the prayers over the gifts.



# Second Sunday of Advent, Year A

*Reflection* Based on Matthew 3: 1-11

Change your hear and change your ways

Note to leaders:

This reflection requires three readers.

**Reader 1:** John the Baptist  
**Reader 2:** Started preaching  
**Reader 3:** In the desert.  
**Reader 1:** 'Turn back to God!'  
**Reader 2:** 'Turn back to God!'  
**Reader 3:** 'Turn back to God!'  
**Reader 1:** 'Repent!'  
**Reader 2:** 'Become a peace-maker!'  
**Reader 3:** 'Repent!'  
**Reader 1:** The Kingdom  
**Reader 2:** God's Kingdom  
**Reader 3:** Will soon be here!  
**Reader 1:** Many years earlier  
**Reader 2:** A prophet called Isaiah  
**Reader 3:** Had told the people ...  
**Reader 1:** 'Watch in the wilderness'  
**Reader 2:** 'Someone will shout'  
**Reader 3:** 'Prepare!'  
**Reader 1:** 'Prepare!'  
**Reader 2:** 'Prepare the way!'  
**Reader 3:** 'Prepare the way for the Lord.'  
**Reader 1:** It was John  
**Reader 2:** John the Baptist  
**Reader 3:** In the desert.  
**Reader 1:** He wore a strange garment  
**Reader 2:** Made of camel's hair!  
**Reader 3:** And ate strange food:



JOHN THE BAPTIST

**Reader 1:** Locusts!  
**Reader 2:** (Grasshoppers!)  
**Reader 3:** And wild honey.  
**Reader 1:** And people stopped  
**Reader 2:** And listened  
**Reader 3:** And repented!  
**Reader 1:** John baptised them  
**Reader 2:** With water.  
**Reader 3:** But told them  
**Reader 1:** 'Someone is coming'  
**Reader 2:** 'Someone more powerful than me!'  
**Reader 3:** 'And he will baptise you'  
**Reader 1:** 'With the Holy Spirit'  
**Reader 2:** 'And with FIRE!'  
**Reader 3:** And that is GOOD NEWS!

From 'Just Imagine 3, Even more creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, [www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au](http://www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au). Available from the Liturgy Centre.