



## Presentation: The Four Sundays of Advent

### Leader Guide

Gather all participants together for the presentation and prayer service. Introduce the four Sundays of Advent, using the following script.

*[Note: The presentation and all event materials can be used in any Church year (A, B, or C). If you would like to refer to specific verses or themes for this Church year, consult the Family Handouts "Gospels of Advent."]*

During Advent, we are waiting. But what are we waiting for? We are waiting for Christ to come. How do you feel when you are waiting? Who has a birthday coming soon? *[Wait for responses.]* How do you feel while you are waiting for your birthday? *[Wait for responses.]* We get excited when we think about the wonderful things that are going to happen.

In our Bible readings during Advent, we see people who are also waiting. In particular, we see Jesus' mother, Mary, waiting for the birth of God's wonderful gift to us. We see John the Baptist, who was sent to get people ready for the day when Jesus would begin teaching them.

In the Gospel for the **First Sunday of Advent**, we hear that Jesus will come again at the end of the world. We can rejoice and not be afraid of the end times because Jesus showed us how to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God. Throughout history, there have been and continue to be many people whom God has chosen to help us follow Jesus. John the Baptist was one of them. He lived at the time of Jesus. He told people to think about the way they are living and to change their way of life for the better so that they could be prepared for Jesus' coming.

John lived in the desert and had dedicated his life to God. He ate simple things that were found in nature and wore clothes made from animal skins. We will learn more about him, his life, and his ministry in our John the Baptist Activity Center. Don't miss it!

On the **Second Sunday of Advent**, we read that John the Baptist called people to turn back to God and to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Who can tell me what sins are? *[Wait for a correct response.]* You're right. Sins aren't mistakes or accidents. Sins are choices we make that hurt our friendships with God and with other people.

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## *Leader Guide (continued)*

John told people to repent. To repent means to stop going one way, turn around and go the other way. For instance, if you are being mean to a friend, repenting means that you stop being mean and start being nice to that person. You change the way you live. Once people said that they would live in a better way, John would baptize them as a sign that they were willing to repent.

On the **Third Sunday of Advent**, we learn more about John the Baptist's relationship with Jesus. We learn about how John prepared the way for Jesus. John's job was to point others to Jesus and to get them ready for Jesus by telling them the right way to live. He taught people to treat one another fairly. He also told them to look forward to Jesus, because he was coming soon. Because of John the Baptist, many people heard the good news about Jesus' coming. We can tell others about Jesus too. The best way to do that is to live good Christian lives and be an example to others.

Jesus' mother, Mary, is the greatest example of teaching others through one's goodness. In the Gospel for the **Fourth Sunday of Advent**, the Gospel writer [*Year A: Matthew; Years B and C: Luke*] tells us about Mary and the events that happened right before Jesus' birth. Even before Jesus was born, Mary was helping others and telling others about her faith. Remember the story of Mary's trip to visit her relative Elizabeth? [*Both Mary and Elizabeth were pregnant; Elizabeth was an older woman; Elizabeth greeted Mary joyfully, saying "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*] Like Elizabeth, we are so happy that Mary said yes to God to be the mother of Jesus. Throughout Advent, we recall, celebrate, and strive to imitate Mary's willingness to say yes to God and to bring Jesus to others. Through Mary's example, we too can live the way God wants us to live.

In our prayer service, let's pray that this Advent season our families will rededicate themselves to living the way Jesus modeled for us—in faith, hope, and charity.

