

# Liturgy Preparation

**SAMPLE**

# 1st Sunday of Advent • Year A

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

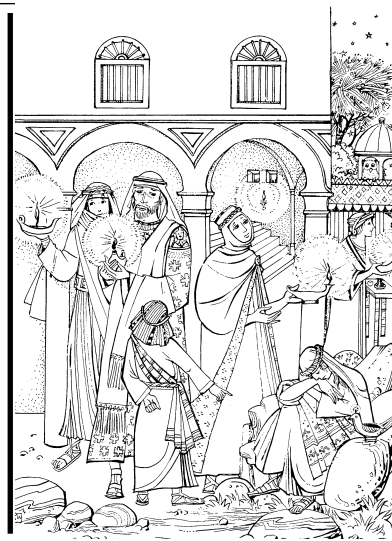
**RESPONSE: Psalm 122**

In the House of our God,  
in the House of our God,  
we give praise to the Lord  
in the House of our God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

Stay awake, be ready.  
You do not know  
the hour  
when the Lord is coming.

Stay awake, be ready.  
The Lord is coming soon!  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
“The Lord is coming soon.”



## LITURGICAL SEASON BACKGROUND

We often describe Advent as a time of waiting. But it is a special kind of waiting; it is waiting with hearts full of hope — waiting in joyful anticipation. Advent is not the kind of waiting we do, for example, in the doctor’s office, or at a red light, or at a bus stop. Such waiting is often characterized as a time when we have “nothing” to do. When we wait, however, with hearts full of hope, as we do during Advent, we have plenty to do. We spend our time preparing for what is to come, making things ready for the Promised One. Although we know the outcome, we know who is to come, we are still filled with joy over the prospect of what Jesus will do in our lives. So we quiet ourselves and our lives, and look for ways to welcome the Redeemer, who promises to make all things new again.

## SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

God assures us in today’s readings that we will always have God’s unfailing care. The prophet *Isaiah* speaks of how the world will be when everyone follows God’s ways. We today have the same choice as the people of *Isaiah*’s time: we can make the world better by following God’s way. The choice is ours. However, the Gospel reminds us that the decision about *how* we find the presence of Jesus in our lives is God’s alone. God asks us simply to be ready. Our God is the God of surprises. We are better off not knowing what to anticipate, because our imaginations are limited. God’s love is unlimited. We simply need to be ready at all times, so that when Jesus comes, he can transform our lives, and carry us to places beyond our fondest dreams.

## LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The mood for Advent is quiet, simple, and hushed. Basic symbols include an Advent wreath, lectionary, incense, and perhaps small pine trees or pine branches. You might start especially simply and add weekly to the decor, to add to the sense of unfolding through the season.

Consider ways to join the Advent symbols and decor with those of the Christmas season. For example, you might use small, undecorated pine trees in Advent, then light them simply for Christmas time. Or bunches of pine branches that are tied with purple or blue ribbon during Advent could then be re-done with gold or red ribbon for Christmas time.

Some parishes use blue as an Advent color rather than purple (the rubrics do permit a “violet” shade of blue during this time); it would be best if those planning the Liturgy of the Word for children were to follow the parish custom in this.

You might display the *SUNDAY Scripture Poster* on an easel to help the children enter into the biblical experience. The poster could be sent home with a different family each week to color for the next celebration. When reflecting on the Gospel, you can refer to the poster; it shows *Isaiah*’s vision of the house of God. The book of God’s word, displayed facing the assembly, is the focal point of the gathering space.

## CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

You might use the same centering / gathering song for the entire Advent season. *Suggestions:*

- “Prepare the Way of the Lord” (Berthier, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #1, Treehaus Communications).
- “A Voice Cries Out” (Vol. 2 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #2, Treehaus Communications).
- “Soon and Very Soon” (Crouch, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #2, Treehaus Communications).
- “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (Vol. 2 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #1, Treehaus Communications).

If this song has been used earlier for the gathering of the larger assembly, children may be able to sing an entire stanza from memory. The children can also be taught to join in on the refrain.

You may wish to follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God a Simple Song*.

## FIRST READING *Isaiah 2: 1-5*

The reader can be either a child or an adult; in either case, this person should know ahead of time in order to prepare carefully. This reading might be read with a sense of assurance and comfort.

## PSALM RESPONSE

The psalm is not only a response to the first reading, but “responsorial” is the style in which the psalm is prayed, with the children responding to the cantor or reader. You might use the same psalm throughout the season of Advent. *Suggestions:*

- “Psalm 122: I Rejoiced” (Dean, Vol. 2 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #6, Treehaus Communications).
- Psalm 25: “To You I Lift Up My Soul” (Gelineau and Murray, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #3, Treehaus

Communications).

- Psalm 25: “Levanto Mi Alma” (Peña, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #4, Treehaus Communications).
- Psalm 122: “We Shall Go Up with Joy” (Gelineau and Murray, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, Treehaus Communications).
- Psalm 85: “Let Us See Your Kindness” (MacAller, Vol. 2 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #7, Treehaus Communications).
- Psalm 122: “In the House of Our God” (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader’s Guide*, Year A, 1st Sunday of Advent, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/ O.C.P. Publications).

You may wish to follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God a Simple Song*.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Suggestions:*

- “Advent/Christmas Gospel Acclamation” (Haas, Vol. 2 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #4, Treehaus Communications- cations).
- “Soon and Very Soon” (Crouch, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #2, Treehaus Communications).
- “Stay Awake, Be Ready” (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader’s Guide*, Year A, 1st Sunday of Advent, Treehaus Communications, *Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).
- “Alleluia” (Gregorian, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #41, Treehaus Communications).

## GOSPEL *Matthew 24:42-44*

Usually the presider reads the Gospel. This Gospel might be read as giving practical advice and example for how we are to stay ready for the coming of Jesus, while avoiding making the “thief” reference sound too threatening.

## HOMILY OUTLINE

See *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year A, pages 2 and 3, for “Focus of Readings” and “Reflecting on the Readings With Children.” When reflecting on the scriptures with children, we always take our cues from the children’s responses. In so doing, you might enrich their appreciation of God’s word.

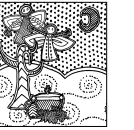
## EVALUATION

We are providing this brief evaluation form for use after you have celebrated this Sunday’s liturgy with the children.

*Notes for future reference:*

*What went well?*

*What needs improvement?*



WE LISTEN TO GOD SPEAK

- What might the children in the assembly hear God saying to them in today's readings?
- How might you engage the children in the biblical experience with open-ended questions?

*Concerning the first reading:*

- Imagine what it would be like to live in the "house of God." How do you think people living in the house of God would treat each other?
- What so you think Isaiah means when he says "will decide what is right for the people"?
- How do you feel in your heart when you hear Isaiah talk about people living in peace?

*Concerning the Gospel:*

- What words or phrases do you recall?
- Why do you think Jesus spoke of the Lord's coming as a thief in the night? What might we lose if we are not awake when Jesus comes?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said "Stay awake! Always be ready!"? Why do you think he told his disciples this?
- If you were one of the disciples listening to Jesus, how would you feel about not knowing when Jesus is coming again?

WE REFLECT ON THE REIGN OF GOD

- How can you invite the children to look out of the biblical experience at their lives today?
- How can you use the biblical imagery of today's readings to explore with children their experience of God's presence in our lives today?

*Concerning the first reading:*

- What is it like for you to follow God's ways?
- What is it like for you to have God decide what is right for you?
- How do you think God feels when people make tools out of weapons?

*Concerning the Gospel:*

- What does it mean for you to be ready?
- How does it feel when you have to wait for something? What is it like?
- What do you want to be doing when Jesus comes?
- How will you recognize Jesus when he does come?

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

- How might you attune yourself to encourage the children's own creative responses to God's word?
- How might the Spirit be moving the children to respond to God's word in praise and thanksgiving?

*Examples for this week's readings:*

- Think about your family: how can you make peace with each other?
- What are some things you can do to walk in the light of God?
- What can you do to follow God's ways in your family neighborhood, school?
- In what ways can you be ready for Jesus, when you do not know when he will return?

**CREED**

Invite children to profess our faith by creedal statements that echo the readings. Reflect on what the readings say about God as Creator, Jesus as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as Gift of Life. Express these statements so that the children can give their assent to them. This week's readings, for example, offer options like these:

- *God: who alone decides what is right for us.*
- *Jesus: who comes to us in the most unexpected and wonderful ways.*
- *Holy Spirit: who gives us life and the wisdom to prepare for the coming of Jesus.*

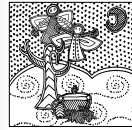
**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

After the children have offered their prayers and concerns, you might also offer petitions based on the scripture texts. In formulating the prayers, you might draw from the verbs or "action words" in this week's readings. For example: *may the time come soon..., prepare, stay awake, walk in the light of God...*

Here are some guidelines for preparing petitions:

- Rather than telling God what to do, ask for guidance in doing God's will.*
- Rather than expecting God to take action, ask God to support and strengthen us to do what God wants done.*
- Use inclusive language.*
- Let our prayers reflect the needs of our world, our church, and our communities (families, neighbors).*

*NOTE: Arrange to have SUNDAY Scripture Leaflets given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage children and parents to use these leaflets through the week to continue reflecting prayerfully on God's word. In addition, emphasize the use of Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal, pages 2 and 3, (Treehaus Communications, Inc.) as a way of assisting the family's deeper reflection on God's word at home.*



# Liturgy of the Word

## CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

- “Prepare the Way of the Lord” (Berthier, Vol. 1 *Sing God a Simple Song*, #1, Treehaus Communications).

## OPENING PRAYER

*Presider:* **God, we want to live the way Jesus teaches us to live. May we live in peace with one another, and may we be ready to recognize Jesus in our own lives and in each other. We pray in the name of Jesus, the promised one.**

*All:* Amen.

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## FIRST READING *Isaiah 2:1-5*

*Today's Reader:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Presider:* **Today the prophet Isaiah tells us a little about the wonderful time that is coming with the reign of God.**

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## PSALM RESPONSE

*Presider or Leader of Song:* **God, we are eager to experience your presence in our lives, and so we sing:**

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

- “Stay Awake, Be Ready” (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectioary Adapted for Children* and *SUNDAY Weekly Leader's Guide*, Year A, 1st Sunday of Advent, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

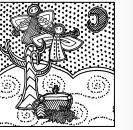
*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## GOSPEL *Matthew 24: 42-44*

*Today's Reader:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Preliminary Comments:*

# 1st Sunday in Advent • Year A



## HOMILY

*Focal Points:* God promises to enter into our world and transform it. We must be ready for the coming of Jesus, who is the one God sends to teach us how to live in new and better ways. Jesus comes in many ways. Let us be ready!

*Outline / Ideas:*

## CREED

*Presider:* **God, staying ready for your coming, we say:**

- **Do you believe in God, who alone decides what is right for us?**

*All:* Yes, we believe. *Or:* Yes, we believe in God, who...

- **Do you believe in Jesus, who comes to us in the most unexpected and wonderful ways?**

*All:* Yes, we believe. *Or:* Yes, we believe in Jesus, who...

- **Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us life and the wisdom to prepare for the coming of Jesus?**

*All:* Yes, we believe. *Or:* Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, who...

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

*Presider:* **God has given us the promise of a new and better world. Trusting in God's promises, we offer our prayers.** (*After the children have offered their prayers, you might also add petitions based on the scripture texts. For example:*)

- + **Jesus, the hope for all the world, may all nations live in your way of peace: to you we pray.**

*All:* Come and save us, Lord Jesus.

- + **Jesus, the light of the world, shine on all our churches so that we may find your light of holiness: to you we pray.**

*All:* Come and save us, Lord Jesus.

- + **Jesus, you may come at any time. May we be ready when you come to us: to you we pray.**

*All:* Come and save us, Lord Jesus.

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Presider:* **God, you call us to the table to celebrate the new life you bring into our world. May Jesus, who is Emmanuel, God-with-us, be welcome into every heart and home. May your Spirit keep us ready for your coming at all times. We ask this through Jesus, your Son, the promised one.**

*All:* Amen.

*Substitutions / Additional Notes:*

NOTE: Arrange to have the *Sunday Scripture Leaflets* given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage the children and parents to use these leaflets and the *Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal* throughout the week.