### LSW

children

Year B

**Third Sunday in Advent**

**Images**

Spreading the joyful message

**Points to note**

This Sunday is Gaudete Sunday, or Joyful Sunday. Instead of the purple that has been used in all the previous Sundays, this colour for this Sunday is pink. This is thus scheduled by the Church as a respite from the more sombre penitence of the long season of reflection.

We move on from last week’s theme of our mission of having been anointed as a prophet to the message of joy that we are to bring to the world. In this discussion, the joyous nature of the message is more important than the details of the message.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor. Alleluia!

Gospel

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with your spirit.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Jn 1:6-8, 19-28)

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,

as a witness to speak for the light,

so that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light,

only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ‘Well then,’ they asked ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?’ So John said,

‘I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.’

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, ‘Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?’ John replied, ‘I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.’ This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

This is the Good News of the Lord

**Dialogue**

How are your Christmas preparations coming along? *Get the children to discuss the plans. Lead the discussions to a sense of anticipation of the event. Note that preparations, while tiring, can also be fun. Some people say that the preparation is more fun than the event itself. I think they could be right.*

What is a message? *Discuss the nature of a message. It*

* *Given by a person*
* *Comes from a person*
* *About something that has happened or about to happen*

*Discuss who was the one bringing the message in today’s reading – John the Baptist. Explain who was John the Baptist – a cousin of Jesus, older by just a few months. He was sometimes called the last of the prophets.*

*Who did the message come from – from God. Messages carried by prophets all come from God. That is their job, their role.*

*What was the message about – the coming of Jesus. Explain that John the Baptist was sometimes called the forerunner of Jesus. That he was the one who went ahead of Jesus to tell them of his coming.*

*Notice that the message of one of expectation. In those days, the people were oppressed under the rule of the Romans and the cruel King Herod. There were looking for someone to take away their problems. Nobody knew who Jesus was but there was something there in what John said that made it worthwhile to look forward to it. They knew something wonderful was about to happen.*

*Discuss when someone was going to have a surprise birthday, whether the birthday child was told about it or not. Think of the anticipation and how much they were looking forward to it – wasn’t it fun to look forward to something wonderful. Explain that for the people who heard John the Baptist, it must have been the same sense of expectation.*

*Discuss how we could bring the same sense of joyful message to people today. Remember the message was for the people who were oppressed and needy.*