***LSW***

children

Year C

### Third Sunday in Advent

**Images**

Cleaning our hearts

**Points to note**

This story follows on from last week’s reading. We take the theme of waiting just that one step further.

The concept of repentance that forms the basis of this reading is not easy to explain. As adults, we too may end up grappling with the idea and it really is part of a very personalised life-long journey. Mine started as a child and I believe if done right, the children is then started off on their own life long journey starting with the first steps that we help them along today.

Again, we focus on drawing parallels with the aspects of life for the children. From ideas that they are familiar with, we move to concepts that they would understand but may not appreciate the depth of meaning. In years to come, we hope they will return in their mind to what we discuss today and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the treasures of Jesus’ teachings to be opened to them.

**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 you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Lk 3:10-18)

When all the people asked John, ‘What must we do?’ he answered, ‘If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.’ There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, ‘Master, what must we do?’ He said to them, ‘Exact no more than your rate.’ Some soldiers asked him in their turn, ‘What about us? What must we do?’ He said to them, ‘No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!’

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, ‘I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.’ As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Discussion**

###### Have you ever have someone from far away coming over to your house to stay? What preparation did you do? *Discuss the coming of a favourite aunt or grandparents. Focus the discussion on the preparation of the guest bedroom and the cleaning of the house. I am sure Mom and Dad wouldn’t want grandpa and grandma to see how messy the house is.*

###### *Discuss the anticipation the children feel when preparing the house. Isn’t it fun to do all that cleaning when someone is going to be coming? Somehow, cleaning the house without anyone coming doesn’t seem to be so fun, does it?*

###### *Explain someone is coming soon and we in the Church are preparing for that someone to come. Discuss the preparation we do for Christmas but do not spend too much time on it. You can discuss instead what the children will do if Jesus would be coming to stay in their house – what preparation would they make to clean out the house.*

###### *Explain that when we invite Jesus to come on Christmas Day, we are really inviting Jesus to come into our hearts. Discuss how we make our hearts ready to meet Jesus. Discuss how we clean out our hearts if we were to invite Jesus in there just as we clean the house if we were to invite Jesus into our house.*

###### *If Jesus were to come into our hearts, our hearts must be made pure. Discuss how to purify our hearts. Be sorry for the wrongs we have done and for those old enough they can go for confessions. More importantly, we do not repeat our wrongdoings if we were to keep our hearts clean.*

###### *If you have time, discuss how we prepare for Jesus coming in light of John the Baptist’s answer to the first question in the reading. What is the children’s equivalent of giving up one of two tunics? Discuss how they can welcome the Jesus who is in those who are less fortunate than we are?*