

ONEWITH

OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

December 8, 2019

Reflection Break Outline Grade 9 ~ Session #6:



Session Goals

Mass Unpacked (Mass Moment):

Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year (Roman Rite). The season of Advent derives from the Latin phrase "Adventus Domini", meaning arrival of the Lord. The season of Advent is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to the miracle of God's incarnation – Jesus (Christmas). The Church also reflects on the mystery of Christ's second coming at the end of time.
[see full notes on pg. 8]

Mass Learning Goals:

- *Advent marks the beginning of the Catholic liturgical year and is 4 weeks long.*
- *Each week of Advent has a special focus.,,*
 - *Peace; Hope; Joy & Love*

Catholicism Unpacked

The season of Advent calls the people of God to pause and consider the world around us; to examine our actions and interior spiritual readiness in preparation to welcome "the arrival" of Christ.

Catechetical (Catholicism) Learning Goals:

- *Season of Advent focuses on spiritual reflection and preparation (anticipation) for Christmas.*
- *Explore Catholic Advent traditions (wreath/candles; calendar; etc.) and their meaning.*
- *Reflect on the meaning of Advent in the modern world.*
- *Ask youth for a commitment to engage in at least one Advent practice prior to Christmas.*

Unpacking the Mass: Happy New Year!

Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year (Roman Rite). The season of Advent derives from the Latin phrase "Adventus Domini", meaning arrival of the Lord. The season of Advent is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to the miracle of God's incarnation – Jesus (Christmas). The Church also reflects on the mystery of Christ's second coming at the end of time.

Reflection Questions (20-25 minutes)

Many of our favorite Christmas traditions have deeply religious roots that we may take for granted. Take some time to talk about your favorite Christmas rituals, signs, symbols and traditions, then "connect the dots" to their Christian meaning.

- *What is your favorite Christmas tradition... and **why** is that so memorable to you?*
- *Do others share your enthusiasm for this particular tradition? Why/Why not.*

Make a list of the signs and symbols of Christmas (Christmas Trees, Santa, gift-giving, etc.) Choose 5-6 and see if you can "connect the dots" to their Christian meaning. This website might help (www.whychristmas.com/customs/ also see Resource Notes)

- *Which "traditions" on your list have obvious "Christian roots" – what are they?*
- *Which "traditions" do not have obvious "Christian roots" (or no apparent Christian ties) – why are they celebrated during this time of year?*
- *How do these "Christmas traditions" help support your Christian faith?*

The season of Advent help all of us prepare for Christmas.

Advent reminds the people of God to pause and consider the world around us; to examine our actions and interior spiritual readiness in preparation to anticipate and welcome "the arrival" of Christ.

The season of Advent focuses on spiritual reflection and preparation (anticipation) for Christmas –

- *What is the value of "Advent" preparation – why not skip it and just celebrate Christmas?*

The season of Advent is a time to help us prepare for the arrival of "Immanuel" (God with us)...

- *How do today's readings speak to you about preparing your own life to receive Christ?*

Brainstorm several reasons why we should pay attention to "Advent" in today's world.

- *Send me your list, I would like to post a few to our website/facebook page.*

"Waiting" is not a strength of our fast-paced "on-demand" society...

- *How can you practice the art of patience, reflection, or spiritual anticipation during the next few weeks?*

Considering the wisdom of God's Word, the Gospel reflection (homily) and the insights shared by your group...

- *In what ways can we offer hope and peace in the world today?*

Coordinators Notes:

These two sections (Discipleship Challenge & Presentation & Prayer) can be done in any order you like. Some group leaders find that collecting the prayer intentions makes for a nice icebreaker at the beginning of the Reflection Break. I also know of at least one group that write their Discipleship Challenge on the note cards during check-in time at the very beginning of the session. I have placed them in this order as it roughly follows the Order of the Mass, but the only thing that really matters is that it happens.

Discipleship Challenge (2-3 minutes)

*With your group brainstorm some concrete ideas for the following question. Ask each member of the group to write down one of the brainstorm ideas (or one of their own) on an index card, post-it note, or **on their phone** – somewhere that they will be able to see and be reminded of the challenge to connect and act.*

- *How can I offer to others the Advent practices of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love?*
- *What is one thing I can do to prepare my heart to receive Christ?*

Presentation & Prayer (5-8 minutes)

Both of these are part of the Mass experience so make sure to leave time for them. They also provide a prayerful tone as you transition back for Mass.

Presentation of Gifts: Ask each teen to fill out a note card describing a contribution that they have made to the community since the last time the group has met. *Ideally it will be a response to the challenge given by the priest during the closing prayer at the previous session, but this “gift” can be pretty much anything! A good deed, a monetary contribution to a worthy cause (almsgiving), talking to a friend about God, Jesus or the Church are all examples of the gifts we bring with us to Mass. Youth will offer these gifts (drop card into the basket) along with their tithe or donation during the Presentation of the Gifts portion of the liturgy. Then watch what God can do with our ordinary gifts!*

After everyone has filled out their cards, choose one person to represent your group and bring all of the cards with them to the Worship Space. That representative will be part of the procession for the Presentation of the Gifts. Meet at the statue of Jesus & Joseph in the Gathering Space for detailed instructions. Choose a new representative each week.

Intercessory Prayer: Pray for your needs and the needs of the world. Collect prayer requests from your Discipleship Group and add them to the universal intentions. *Ask a volunteer to read the intentions aloud; and ask everyone to respond to the prompt “**Lord in your mercy...**” with “**Hear our prayer**” (following each intention).*

Leader: Our prayer response is “*Hear our prayer*”

For the Church, that we may always be a sign of God’s Faith, Hope, Joy and Love...

For parents, teachers, coaches, sponsors and other mentors...

For victims of war, refugees, the widowed and orphans...

For those who are suffering from disease and addiction ...

For profound peace in our world, nation and community...

For our sister parish, St. Catherine’s in Bouzy, Haiti...

For those who have died...

For [Read your group’s intentions here...]

For the prayers we hold in silence, (pause) ...

Lord in your mercy: “Hear our prayer”

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Session Goals/Resources

Addendum: Session Goals/Resources

Mass Unpacked:

The Mass focus for this session will be on the season of Advent.

- Particularly notice the changes in the liturgical environment (colors, decorations, etc).

Catholicism Unpacked:

Advent Unpacked:

Advent comes from the Latin word meaning "coming." Advent celebrated as time of reflection and anticipation for the arrival Immanuel (God with us).

Advent has a twofold character:

- It is a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered;
- It is a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time.

Catechetical Outcomes:

Sunday Readings: <http://uscgb.org/bible/readings/120819.cfm>

Optional Advent Video Resources:

“Seek”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb9YVx26ljg>

“Christmas in a Nutshell”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXgH8ZlZ9jQ>

“Christmas Spirit (The Right Way)” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwBDXbUIJCw>

Advent Conspiracy:

- <https://vimeo.com/187692524>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsdOHQOoQfQ&t=>
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAKcjHNFhHg
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg4Fmw8tdMg>

The Bible Project: (<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-advent-series/>)

- “Shalom/Peace” - <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/shalom-peace/>
- “Yakhal/Hope” - <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/yakhal-hope/>
- “Chara/Joy” - <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/chara-joy/>
- “Agape/Love” - <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/agape-love/>

Music Videos...

Better Than A Hallelujah - Amy Grant (*Sarah Hart song*):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rm5kx3xqmg0&index=10&list=RDular4xtYzdo>

Breath of Heaven - Amy Grant:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ular4xtYzdo&start_radio=1&list=RDular4xtYzdo&t=

Mary, Did You Know? – Pentatonix:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE&list=RDular4xtYzdo&index=5>

O Come, O Come Emmanuel: Sovereign Grace:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JpvW9FU_Rg&list=RDular4xtYzdo&index=20

Looking for more resources on Advent?

- <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/> (US Bishops site)
- <https://www.catholic.org/advent/advent.php?id=28> (Advent traditions from around the world)

Catholic Connection: Advent and Christmas Traditions

Advent wreath: The Advent wreath has German origins and is probably the most recognized Advent custom. The wreath made of evergreen branches which are bound in a circle. It symbolizes the many years from Adam to Christ in which the world awaited its Redeemer; it also represents the years that we have awaited His second and final coming. The wreath holds four equally spaced candles, the three purple ones lit on the penitential Sundays and a pink one for Gaudete, the joyful third Sunday in Advent.

The Nativity scene

The first Nativity Scene is credited to monks in Italy! St. Francis of Assisi and his followers built the life-sized figures in 1223 to tell the story of Jesus' birth.

St. Francis narrated the story himself using wooden figures. After a couple of years, the play had become so popular that real people played the parts of the characters in the story. Songs were sung by the people taking part and they became what we call Christmas carols today!

Santa Claus:

Did you know that St. Nicholas was an actual saint and martyr?

St. Nicholas was a Bishop who lived in the fourth century in Turkey. He was a very rich and very kind man who had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it.

St. Nicholas died during Roman persecution in 352 AD and his Feast Day is celebrated on December 6th. St. Nicholas is the Patron Saint of children and sailors.

Presents:

Christmas itself is really about a big present that God gave the world about 2000 years ago - Jesus! One of the main reasons we have the custom of giving and receiving presents at Christmas, is to remind us of the presents given to Jesus by the Wise Men: Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh.

Most cultures around the world have a Christmas gift bringer. It is most often St. Nicholas or Santa Claus who brings the gifts, but in Germany they believe that it is the *Christkind* (Christ Child), in Spain it is the *Wise Men* and in Italy they believe it is an old lady - *La Befana* (the "Christmas witch"). These presents are also left in different places/ways. In most of Europe, the presents are left in shoes or boots put out by the children. In Italy and the UK presents are left in stockings. In the US and many other countries, presents for friends and family may be left under the Christmas Tree.

Christmas Tree:

The evergreen fir tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals (pagan and Christian) for thousands of years. The decorated evergreen tree traces its roots (*pun intended*) back to the "Paradise Tree" in the middle ages.

Paradise Trees were used in "Miracle Plays" that were acted out in front of Churches at Christmas to tell stories from the Bible (before the printing press, most could not read). The Paradise Tree represented the Garden of Eden. It was decorated with ribbons, apples, dried fruits, and treats (and eventually blown-glass ornaments).

The Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

Parts of the Mass

Introductory Rites: *The Introductory Rites help unite us as the Body of Christ and prepare us for worship.*

- Gathering Song
- Penitential Act
- Collect Prayer

Liturgy of the Word: *The Liturgy of the Word is the part of the Mass when we listen, reflect and respond to God's Word.*

- 1st Reading (*typically Old Testament*)
- Psalm (*typically sung*)
- Reading (*New Testament/but not a Gospel – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John*)
- Gospel Reading (*Priest or Deacon*)
- Homily (*Priest or Deacon*)
- Profession of Faith (*Creed*)
- Prayers of the Faithful (*Intercessions*)

Liturgy of the Eucharist: *The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the part of the Mass where the death and Resurrection of Jesus are made present again; our gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, which we receive in Holy Communion.*

- Presentation of the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - *Holy, Holy, Holy.*
 - *Institution Narrative and Consecration*
 - *Memorial Acclamation*
 - *Offering (Second half of Eucharistic Prayer)*
 - *Doxology (Through him, **and** with him, **and in him...**)*
- Communion Rite
 - *Lord's Prayer*
 - *Sign of Peace*
 - *Breaking of the Bread – Lamb of God*
 - *Communion*
 - *Prayer after Communion (sometimes a song)*

Concluding Rites: *In the Concluding Rites the priest blesses us in God's name and sends us into the community to live as disciples of Jesus.*

- Blessing
- Dismissal

Mass Moment:

Advent is a genius concept for the Post-Modern Christian. We are bombarded by advertisers telling us what we want/NEED, our schedules are piled with holiday gatherings and events – on top of our already packed schedule, and the pressure builds with the countdown till Christmas (only 15 shopping days left!).

Advent invites us to pause...

The word 'Advent' is from Latin, meaning 'the arrival,' or 'coming toward.' For Christian believers, Christmas represents one of the greatest events in the history of the world; the greatest gift ever given by God to mankind - Jesus.

As a liturgical season, Advent uses many signs and symbols to help us focus on what is important... We decorate our homes with nativity scenes to remind us how our mighty God came to us in the most humble way. We light candles and remember that light CAN banish the darkness of this world. We exchange gifts with the ones we love in honor of the Greatest Gift who IS love.

So let's remember to pause... to consider the unfathomable mystery of God becoming human, all because of his love for us!

*May the peace of Christ seep into the marrow of your life this Advent and Christmas.
~ Barry*

Simple Advent Prayer

Be with us, O Lord, as we enter this season of Advent.
We thank you for the many blessings in our lives,
and we look forward to the arrival of your Son, Jesus, the light of the world.
Amen.