

What Are You Waiting For? – A Lesson Plan on Advent

Advent, a sacred season in the Christian calendar, is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. This lesson plan, “What Are You Waiting For?”, will explore the significance of waiting and anticipation, as illustrated in the Scripture reading from Mark 1:1-8. Here, we see John the Baptist as a pivotal figure, preparing the way for Christ. This passage offers a rich context for understanding the value of spiritual preparation and patient waiting in our faith journey.

In a world where instant gratification is often the norm, this lesson aims to resonate with the youth by drawing parallels between everyday experiences of waiting and the deeper, spiritual waiting during Advent. By reflecting on their own experiences, such as waiting in traffic or in line, young learners can gain insight into the nature of anticipation. This connection will help them understand the more profound wait for something far greater – the coming of Christ. This lesson will engage them in considering how waiting can be transformed from a passive to an active and meaningful experience.

The lesson plan will focus on the theme of active waiting, encouraging the youth to reflect on how they can prepare their hearts for Jesus’ arrival. As John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ, so too are we called to prepare ourselves through repentance and conversion. This part of the lesson will inspire discussions on humility, service, and spiritual readiness. The ultimate goal is to help the youth recognize Advent as a time to enrich their faith and spiritual life, understanding that the wait for Jesus’ birth is not just a countdown, but a journey of personal and spiritual growth.

Opening Game for What Are You Waiting For?

Start this lesson plan by playing [Unlock Your Future](#). This exercise will not only be engaging but also a practical demonstration of the virtues of patience and teamwork. ([See the complete instructions.](#))

As they struggle and cooperate to unlock the combinations, the youth will inevitably experience moments of impatience and frustration, mirroring the waiting period of Advent. This game is a metaphor for the spiritual preparation during Advent, where the ‘unlocking’ symbolizes opening our hearts to Jesus.

Post-game Discussion Questions:

- Reflecting on Patience: Ask the youth if they felt impatient during the game and to share their experiences. This question will lead them to introspect about their natural inclinations towards patience or impatience.

<https://young-catholics.com/14383/youth-ministry-lesson-plans-reflections/>

- Efficiency vs. Rushing: Inquire if they found that rushing through the combinations helped or hindered their progress. This question encourages them to think about the quality of their actions when under pressure and the importance of deliberate, thoughtful effort.
- Team Dynamics: Discuss how well they worked as a team. This query focuses on the importance of community and cooperation, essential elements in the Christian journey, especially during Advent.
- Relating to Real-Life Scenarios: Link this experience to real-life situations of anticipation, such as waiting in line for an amusement park ride or the start of a concert. This connection will help them relate the patience and teamwork in the game to everyday life experiences, emphasizing the lesson that patience often enhances our experiences, making the awaited event even more rewarding.

This activity sets a foundational tone for the lesson, illustrating how Advent is not just a passive waiting period, but an active preparation that involves patience, collaboration, and self-reflection, mirroring our spiritual journey towards Christmas.

Scripture Reading for Lesson Plan on Advent

As we move from the engaging experience of our game” to our scripture reading, let us carry with us the lessons of patience and teamwork. These qualities, so vital in our game, also echo profoundly in the spiritual journey of Advent.

We now turn to Mark 1:1-8, where we encounter John the Baptist, a figure emblematic of preparation and anticipation. In this passage, John prepares the way for Jesus, exemplifying the very essence of waiting with purpose. As we delve into these verses, consider how John’s actions and message can inspire us in our own Advent journey, teaching us to wait not just with anticipation, but with active and meaningful preparation for the coming of Christ.

[Mark 1:1-8](#) (John the Baptist Prepares the Way) – the Gospel Reading for the [2nd Sunday in Advent – Year B](#)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed:

<https://young-catholics.com/14383/youth-ministry-lesson-plans-reflections/>

“One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

[Mark 1:1-8](#)

Discussion for This Lesson Plan

Waiting is difficult. And we spend a lot of time anticipating what is coming next. Here are a few interesting facts collected in a survey done by Timex, a watch company:

- We spend about 21 minutes watching for someone else each time we go out.
- We spend about 38 hours each year at a standstill in traffic.
- On average, human beings spend about 6 months of their entire lives in line

Putting what you are doing on hold can be boring and frustrating.

- What are some times you have spent twiddling your thumbs recently?
- Is there anything you can do to make the time pass more pleasantly?
- Is it easier to wait if you are looking forward to the end result?

Most people agree that waiting for something good to happen is easier than waiting for something we don't care about, or even worse waiting for something we dread.

This gospel paints quite the picture of John the Baptist. He is out in the desert, living and looking something like a wild man. Yet he has a large following.

- Why do you think people were attracted to John the Baptist?

But John the Baptist tells his followers that someone greater than him is coming. They are supposed to wait for someone even better. Very few leaders and celebrities have the type of humility which John the Baptist had. He was willing to tell his followers that when Jesus arrived they should follow him instead.

- If you were a follower of John the Baptist, how might you react to the message that r somebody even greater was on the way?

Advent is a time for waiting. We are preparing to receive Jesus into our hearts at Christmas. Just as John the Baptist preached repentance before the arrival of Jesus, we are called to conversion as we wait for Him. John said to make the paths straight, to flatten the hills, to raise valleys. He was talking about getting rid of things which were in the way.

Small Group Reflection Questions for the Lesson Plan

Break into small groups for discussion. Here are some ideas for small group questions to get the conversation started:

<https://young-catholics.com/14383/youth-ministry-lesson-plans-reflections/>

- Understanding Advent Preparation: What are some ways we can prepare during Advent? This question encourages participants to think about the different spiritual practices and attitudes that can help us prepare our hearts for Christmas.
- Identifying and Overcoming Obstacles: What sort of things can get in the way of preparing for Jesus? How can we get rid of these obstacles? This prompts group members to reflect on personal challenges and distractions that hinder their spiritual preparation and discuss strategies to overcome them.
- Practical Spiritual Activities: Can you name some concrete activities we can do to change our hearts while we wait? (Sacrament of Reconciliation, service to others, prayer...) This question focuses on specific actions that can enhance spiritual growth during Advent.
- Relating to John the Baptist's Message: How does the message of John the Baptist in Mark 1:1-8 relate to our lives today? Discuss how John's call for preparation and repentance can be applied in the modern context.
- Learning from Patience: Reflecting on our "Unlock Your Future" game, how does the patience required in the game mirror the patience we need during Advent? This connects the earlier activity with the theme of the lesson.
- Advent and Community: How can we support each other in our Advent journey? This encourages discussion on the role of community in spiritual preparation.
- Personal Reflections on Waiting: Share a personal experience where waiting with anticipation for something positively affected the outcome. How can this experience be related to the Advent season?
- Impact of Modern Life on Waiting: In an age of instant gratification, how can we cultivate the virtue of patience, especially during Advent? This question invites youth to consider the impact of contemporary culture on their ability to wait and prepare spiritually.
- Role of Prayer in Advent: How can prayer help us prepare during Advent? Discuss the importance of prayer in getting closer to God during this season.
- Advent as a Time of Conversion: John the Baptist preached about conversion. What does conversion mean to you, and how can Advent be a time for personal conversion? This question allows for deeper spiritual reflection on the concept of turning towards God.

Challenge for the Lesson Plan

In this week's challenge, we encourage each of you to commit to undertaking one or more actions that will help you prepare spiritually during Advent. This is a time for self-reflection, repentance, and drawing closer to God, mirroring the anticipatory waiting that John the Baptist exemplified.

An especially meaningful step in this journey could be participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If it's been a while since your last confession, consider this a unique opportunity to renew your relationship with God, to seek forgiveness, and to receive His grace. The act of reconciliation is a profound way of preparing your heart for the coming of Christ, just as Advent invites us to do.

<https://young-catholics.com/14383/youth-ministry-lesson-plans-reflections/>

Additionally, remember that preparation during Advent isn't just about personal reflection; it's also about reaching out to others. Consider complementing your journey towards Reconciliation with acts of kindness, service, and prayer. Whether it's helping a neighbor, volunteering for a community service, or spending extra time in prayer, these actions embody the spirit of Advent. They not only prepare us internally but also manifest the love of Christ in our communities.

This week, let each action you take be a step towards a more profound spiritual readiness, echoing the preparatory call of John the Baptist and the anticipation of Advent.

Prayer for the Lesson Plan

Offer prayer intentions. Consider using the [Litany of John the Baptist](#) as a closing prayer.

As we conclude our lesson on Advent and the anticipation of Christ's coming, let us join together in a closing prayer, the Litany of St. John the Baptist. A litany is a form of prayer characterized by a series of invocations and responses, typically led by one person with the group echoing each petition. As we pray this litany, let us be inspired by the life of St. John the Baptist, whose unwavering faith and dedication prepared the way for Jesus Christ. May his example guide us in our own preparation during this Advent season, helping us to focus on the spiritual journey towards Christmas and the coming of our Lord.

Resources

[More Themes](#)

[Background Material](#)

[Music Suggestions](#)

[More Youth Ministry Lesson Plans and Reflections](#)