

# LIVING FAITH



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B  
DECEMBER 10, 2017

## THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;  
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’



## TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

What might it mean for us to make a straight path for the Lord, or to prepare the way for Him? Well... let’s look at what happens in your home when you are preparing for relatives to come home. First of all, you clean house! You scrub the floor and make sure that everything is tidy. Often, when relatives are coming to stay with us, some people in our family move out of their room, in order to let the visitors have a comfortable place to stay while they are with us. What has all of this got to do with Jesus? When we want to welcome Jesus into our hearts, we clean house, too, and we make space for Jesus. Sometimes, this means looking into our hearts to see if there is any anger or jealousy or meanness lurking there, anything that would make it harder for us to recognize Jesus and welcome Him into our hearts. Sometimes, looking into our hearts, we find that there are people we need to forgive, or maybe there are people who we need to ask forgiveness of.

This is what making a straight path for Jesus means for us. It means looking into our hearts and trying to be more like Him—more loving, kinder, more forgiving. How have you prepared the way for Jesus in your own life?



## Candle of Peace Coloring page

*As a family,  
name and  
discuss 5 ways  
how we can  
bring peace in  
our world this  
week:*

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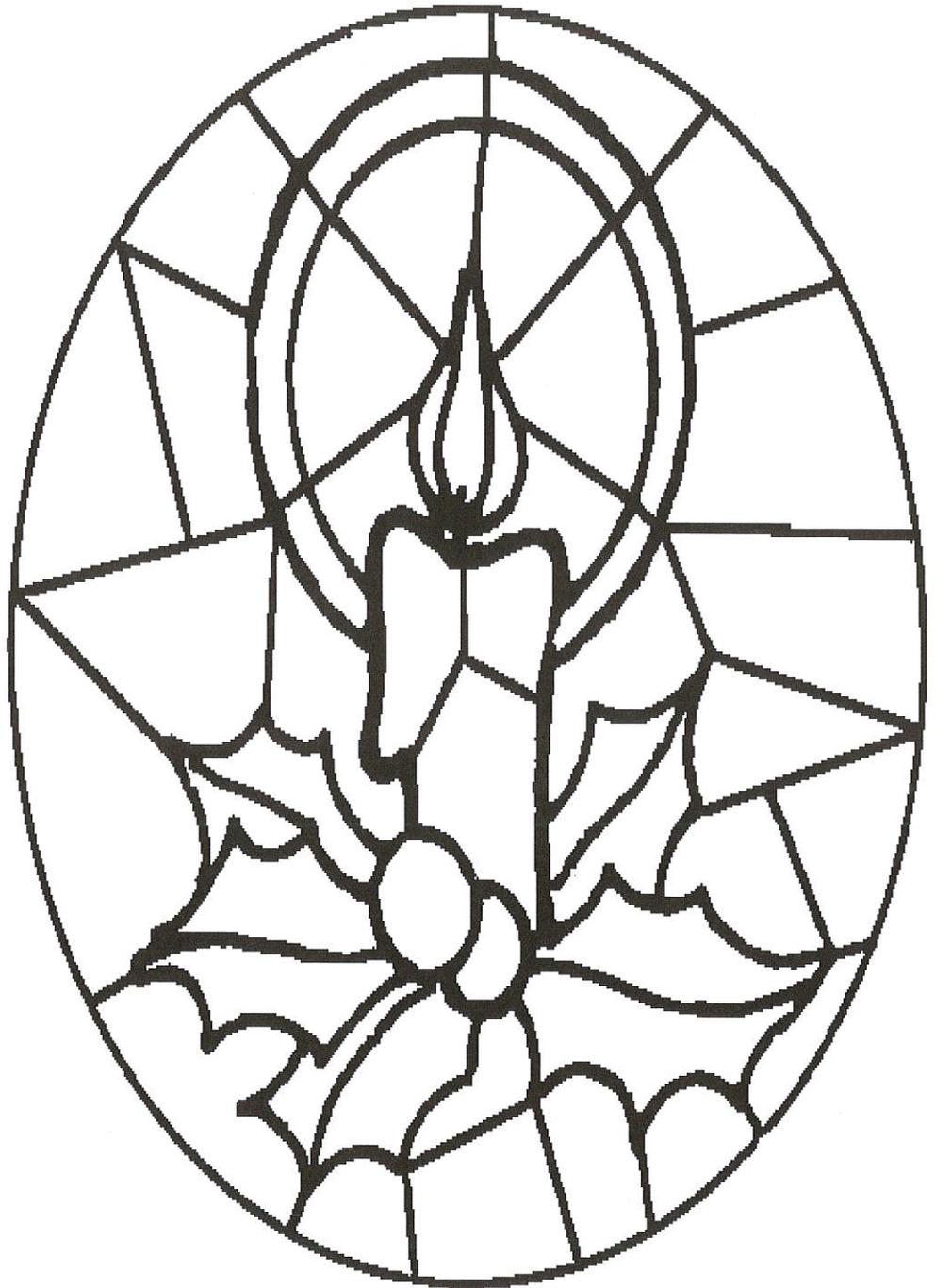
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*View a video about Advent here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSsMq6UXXwo>*

*View Art and Faith Video reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Advent here:*

*<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/advent/arts-and-faith-advent/cycle-b/second-week-of-advent-cycle-b-video>*

*<https://sermons4kids.com/candle-of-peace-colorpg.htm>*

# A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF MARK



## **JESUS IS MORE ABOUT ACTIONS THAN WORDS**

Mark does not emphasize the sayings of Jesus as much as the other Gospels do. Mark has left out large portions of discourse, which has resulted in the shortest and most action-packed Gospel. Some Biblical scholars tell us that Mark wanted to write for us a story that would capture our imaginations, and touch our hearts. He wanted us to meet Jesus.

## **JESUS IS ALWAYS IN A HURRY**

It's almost as if Jesus knows that His time is short, and so he is always in a hurry, making the most profound impact that He can.

## **THE "MESSIANIC SECRET"**

One of the most predominant themes in Mark's Gospel is the messianic secret. In the entire first half of Mark's Gospel, Jesus does not reveal who He really is. In the second half of the Gospel, however, He acknowledges it to the disciples after Peter's confession, but commands them not to tell anybody. The demons realized who He was, but even they were commanded to stay silent. Some who were healed by Jesus also knew who he was, yet they too were commanded to keep it to themselves. In the end, at the foot of the Cross, the secret is revealed in the confession of the centurion who said that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

## **THE KINGDOM OF GOD and DISCIPLESHIP**

The Gospel of Mark also focuses on the kingdom of God and discipleship.

## **THE SLOWNESS OF THE DISCIPLES TO COMPREHEND**

It is critical to note that Mark did not conceal the failures of the disciples. They had a hard time understanding many of Jesus' teachings. So, therefore, we who are slow to take it all in today might take some comfort from this! Mark is also quick to show the shortcomings of his own personal friend, Peter. First Mark reveals Jesus' rebuke of Peter, and then illustrates the depths of Peter's failure and denial of Christ.

**IF YOU WERE GOING TO WRITE YOUR OWN GOSPEL...**

**WHAT STORIES OF JESUS WOULD YOU INCLUDE? WHAT HEALINGS?  
WHAT MIRACLES?**

# ADVENT PEOPLE

## JUAN DIEGO AND OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is dear to many of the native peoples of North America. Why?

- Mary spoke in the native language, identifying herself with them and their struggles.
- Mary chose to appear to a poor person, not someone rich and powerful. In this, she endeared herself to the native peoples.
- Mary reassured Juan Diego that he was her chosen one, that he had dignity, and that she would be with him. This message is one that all people, especially those who lives on the margins of society, need to hear.

The opening of the New World brought with it both fortune-seekers and religious preachers desiring to convert the native populations to the Christian faith. One of the converts was a poor Aztec Indian named Juan Diego. One day in 1531, on his way to pray at a chapel, Juan was walking through the Tepayac hill country in central Mexico, and encountered a beautiful woman surrounded by a ball of light as bright as the sun. Speaking in his native tongue, the beautiful lady identified herself:

"My dear little son, I love you. I desire you to know who I am. I am the ever-virgin Mary, Mother of the true God who gives life and maintains its existence. He created all things. He is in all places. He is Lord of Heaven and Earth. I desire a church in this place where your people may experience my compassion. All those who sincerely ask my help in their work and in their sorrows will know my Mother's Heart in this place. Here I will see their tears; I will console them and they will be at peace. So run now to Tenochtitlan and tell the Bishop all that you have seen and heard."

At first, the bishop did not seem to believe that a poor peasant boy could have encountered the Blessed Virgin. The next time he met Mary, he begged her to find a better messenger. But Mary said, "My little son, there are many I could send. But you are the one I have chosen." Eventually, after seeing roses blooming in the snow and the image of the Virgin imprinted on Juan Diego's cloak, the bishop believed him.

### WHEN YOU HEAR THIS STORY, WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

- Mary always points to her Son, Jesus.
- Mary's words to Juan Diego are God's words to you, "I love you... you are the one I have chosen."