

FAITH IN 5

Advent: Week 2

Ages 3-8

1. This week's Gospel reading comes from the book of Matthew (Matthew 3:1-12) Who is Matthew talking about in this Gospel passage? He is telling us about John the Baptist. **Who was John the Baptist?** John the Baptist was Jesus's cousin. From the reading, we learn that John the Baptist was the prophet/preacher who had the very important job of telling others that Jesus was coming! His clothes were made of camel hair, he wore a leather belt around his waist and he ate wild honey and locusts (bugs!)! In the Gospel reading, John tells us to prepare and repent for the Lord is coming! We can prepare and repent in this season of Advent the same way people did before Christ's birth!
2. **What week of Advent are we going into?** We are going into the second Sunday of Advent! **Did you notice anything different at Mass today?** Two candles were lit instead of one! **What colors were they?** Purple! **Does your family have any special Advent traditions? If so, what are they?**
3. St Nicholas's feast day is coming up on December 6th! **Who was St. Nicholas?** Saint Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra (modern-day Turkey) in the 4th century. He was an extremely devout man who loved our Lord and loved taking care of others. St. Nicholas is celebrated all over the world. News of him quickly spread from Russia to northern Europe, then to Germany, France, England and finally made it's way over to the United States! **Do you know the legendary story of St. Nicholas?** It goes like this: There was a poor man in town who did not have a wife, but had three daughters. It was time for those daughters to be married, but in those days, a dowry had to be paid. What is a dowry? It is money paid or property that was given in exchange for marriage. Since the father didn't have enough money to pay the dowry, he would have to sell his daughters into slavery. St. Nicholas found out about the man's troubles and that night while he was sleeping, threw a bag of gold coins into the window. The father was overjoyed, His first daughter would be married! But he still needed help paying for the second daughter's dowry. So St. Nicholas returned another night and did the same thing! The father desperately wanted to know who was helping him, and he was close to finding out! Since St. Nicholas wanted to keep it a secret, he threw the third bag of coins for the third

daughter into the chimney! The Father was able to marry off all three of his daughters, thanks to St. Nicholas's generosity! It's important to remember the story of St. Nicholas at Christmas because it reminds us how important it is to give to others, and what it means to be thankful! Some families may choose to give more to the poor at Christmas time or volunteer their time helping others. **Does your family have any special traditions for celebrating the Feast of St. Nicholas?**

- 4. On December 8th we celebrate a very special feast day, so special that it is a Holy Day of Obligation. What is a Holy Day of Obligation? On Holy Days of Obligation, we go to Mass! What is the special Holy day on December 8th? It is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What do we celebrate on this day? We celebrate Mary being born free from original sin. She was "immaculate"- meaning pure, perfect, and without stain. What are some ways we can celebrate this special day? We should first and foremost go to Mass, but we could also sing "Immaculate Mary" for Mother Mary or eat something white- white fish, white pasta, ice cream or whipped cream. Remember these feast days are celebrations!**
- 5. The Church: What is the altar and where do we find it in Church? The altar is the most important part of the Church! On the altar is where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus! For a long time after the resurrection, Christians met in people's homes to celebrate the Mass. People had to improvise and often used wooden tables and chests as their altars. Notice the altar in your church this week- what does it look like? What special things are on the altar?**

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