

## PREPARING AT HOME

December 10-16, 2018

*Focus reading:* Luke 3:7–18 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=409296534>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Zephaniah 3:14–20, Isaiah 12:2–6, Philippians 4:4–7

*Theme:* Collide with a Promise Kept

We are approaching the third Sunday of Advent, which is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday or “Rejoice Sunday.” We will light the pink candle as a sign of joy. Given that setting, the reading may appear to be an odd choice! Most of us would probably bring out our angry voices rather than joyful ones to read this passage. John the Baptist, whose birth we celebrated last week, seems less than thrilled with the crowds who have come to see him. Perhaps we are hearing his frustration rather than his anger. The people before him know the words of the prophets. They have known all along what God requires of them; yet they have not listened. John offers them practical instructions that leave little room for misinterpretation. As in the rest of Luke’s gospel, we find passionate concern for the poor. Anyone who has more than what is needed must share. Tax collectors need to be fair and honest. Soldiers are not to abuse their power. Each person, no matter his or her station in life, can lead a more God-centered life. John is telling them to start here and now exactly where they are. God calls each of us and meets each of us where we are, empowering us to change our lives and participate in God’s work of justice and peace. That is where we find joy!

## SHARING DURING ADVENT

People asked John what they should do. He told them to treat others fairly, to be honest, and to share what they had. He said that those who have two coats should give one to someone who has none and that those who have food should do the same. Look for ways to involve your child in acts of sharing this Advent season.

## PINK STANDS FOR JOY

Children and adults are often confused by the pink candle on our Advent wreaths! The change in color is a sign of rejoicing. Advent is not all joyful. The purple of Advent is the same as the purple of Lent. The hymns sung at the beginning of Advent are marked by minor chords with mournful sounds. Christ comes to a hurting world. In Advent, we face our great need for Christ. This Sunday, however, is the time for rejoicing! What reasons do you have to rejoice this Advent? Draw pictures of those reasons on pink paper. Cut the letters “J-O-Y” out of pink paper and put loops of yarn on the top of each letter to make Christmas tree ornaments.

## PRAYER

Loving God,  
During this Season of Advent and always,  
help us to share, to be fair and honest,  
and to show by our actions that we belong to you.  
Amen.

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