

Script 1 “Get Ready!”

Advent 1

Mark 13:32-37

THEME

Advent is an exciting time. Christmas is coming, and today’s Gospel sounds adventurous. Who was the guy who went off on his travels? And why do his servants have to be so on the ball? This session introduces the children to the idea that Christians have to be alert and up for anything.

SET UP

- The liturgical color is Purple or Blue.
- Change up the color in church by wearing some purple or blue—tie, scarf, socks, anything.
- No bells are used in preparation for the Gospel, and there is no separate Gospel Procession—just place the Gospel on the table or lectern at the front.
- Pictures from the CD-ROM.
- A stuffed animal, preferably a toy lion or (failing that) a teddy.
- Check with the priest that it’s okay to run down the aisle when you go back to church.
- Optional Advent Wreath.



(An Advent Wreath helps define the Sundays in Advent. Traditionally there are three purple or blue candles (for Sundays 1, 2 and 4) a pink one for the cheerful Sunday (number 3) and sometimes a white candle in the middle for Christmas Day.)

WELCOME *the children and lead them in* **The Sign of the Cross** ✠ (p. xxxvi).

Leader This Sunday I want us to be on our toes, ready for anything. Does anyone know what position a runner gets into at the start of a race?
They probably do, show them the classic stance.

Okay, we all look as if we're at the start of a race.
Christians look a bit like that in church—you change one leg...

Get the kids to copy you as you move your back leg.



And bring your hands up. *(Put your hands together for prayer.)*
Now *we* are at the start of something—our service.
Let's say the Kyrie together.

The Kyrie and Opening Prayer are short this morning as the children are probably kneeling on bare floors.

THE KYRIE Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.



Ask the children to repeat The Prayer for Forgiveness after you (p. xxxvi).

OPENING God our Father
PRAYER Thank you for bringing us together.
 Help us to be very wide awake this morning
 And ready for anything. *Amen.*

INTRODUCING ADVENT

Run through the change to Advent Purple (or Blue) in church:

Leader Anyone notice the color in church today?

Give them a hint: "What color's my tie?" (**purple or blue**)

Yes, the church is in purple (or blue).

Name is dressed in purple (or blue), I've got purple (or blue) socks on—it's purple (or blue) time.

This particular purple (or blue) time is called Advent.

Introduce the Advent Wreath if you've got one.

OPTIONAL ADVENT WREATH

Run through the colors on the Advent Wreath and help a child light a Purple or Blue candle, for the first Sunday of Advent.

BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Leader Advent means "coming."
 We're getting ready for somebody to come.
 Can you guess who? (**Jesus**)
 Jesus is coming. We'll see Him in the Manger at Christmas, looking like a tiny baby.
 But actually Advent isn't just about Jesus coming at Christmas, it's also about His *Second* Coming. The one that hasn't happened yet—at the End of the World.
 That's a bit worrying—when do you think the End of the World may happen? Tomorrow? (**no**)

Go with the flow, most kids are quite confident the End of the World is not going to affect them. If they want to speculate on the timescale, throw it open. The small ones normally think that ten years is far enough away, the older ones—after some hasty arithmetic—usually suggest a hundred. Make sure somebody suggests thousands of years hence.

Well, any of us may be right, because we don't know.
 Fortunately, when it does happen, Jesus will be right there in the middle of it, so we'll be fine.

Actually, the early Christians were so looking forward to seeing Jesus again that they wanted the End of the World to come right now.

Their favorite prayer was “Come, Lord Jesus!”

They were the sort of people who would have really enjoyed today’s Gospel. Let’s hear it.

Remind the children that we don’t have bells or processions in Purple (Blue) time. Read the Gospel, putting up the pictures from the CD-ROM as you go.

THE GOSPEL *Mark 13:32-37*

Adapt verse 32 to read.

Jesus said, “Nobody knows when I shall come again, neither the angels in Heaven...” *etc.*

AFTER THE GOSPEL

A Leader goes through the pictures.

Leader So Jesus said that His Second Coming was like the master of a house going off on a journey.
He left his servants behind, and told them to do something.
What was it? (**Watch out; be ready.**)
Yup, you can see one servant at the door, looking down the road.
Can you see any other watchful servants?
Anyone fall asleep?

Encourage the little kids to point out the various characters.

Jesus told this story to explain His Second Coming. He’s like the master who’s gone off on a journey, and He’s left His servants—that’s us Christians—behind. But we’re not to fall asleep, we must be awake, looking out for Him, because He might turn up anytime. So Christians have to be ready.
We can be ready in lots of ways.
By being the sort of people Jesus will be happy to find when He comes back: kind people, prayerful people, *alert* people.
Alert means being ready for anything.
Okay, let’s go down the end of the room and practice being alert.

GAMES

If you've got a big enough hall you can do the running game suggested below. If your room is too small, you can turn the game (Ready, Steady, Go!) into Ready, Steady, Jump! or Ready, Steady, Sit! and so on.

**Ready, Steady, Go!**

Leader Can you remember how runners get ready for a race?
(*Line the kids up.*)

Okay when I say "go," run down to the other end of the room.

Anyone who moves before "go" is out. (*Be merciful the first time round.*)

Ready—(pause)—steady—(pause)—GO!

They run down to the other end.

Let's get this right because being alert means you don't rush around.
You listen—ready for anything.

Run the race a couple more times. Congratulate the children and then play the next, and much quieter, game

Okay we've figured out being alert, now let's see how good we are at being watchful.

Lion Cub

Select a person to be the lion. (Start off with a Leader.)

The lion sits with its back to the children, who are sitting at least ten feet away.

Place the stuffed animal (its cub) behind the lion and get the kids to sneak up, one by one, to steal it. If the lion hears somebody it roars and the thief, if caught standing, has to go back to sit with the others. If the thief has managed to sit before the roar, they can carry on.

Anyone who manages to steal the cub is the lion next time round.

(Since some kids take the precaution of roaring practically continuously, make sure other leaders or teenagers take a turn, on the understanding they let the cub-napper win.)

REHEARSAL

Practice your presentation for when you go back into church (see below).

FINAL PRAYER

Get the children settled for prayer. Ask them to kneel as if starting a race and, when you say “Pray!,” kneel properly for prayer.

Okay, ready, steady—pray!

Lord Jesus,
This Advent help us to be alert and watchful.
Come Lord Jesus,
Come at Christmas.
Come at the end of time,
Come into our hearts. *Amen.*

BACK IN CHURCH

*Make sure the main aisle of the church is free of strollers and walkers.
Line the children up at the back of church; a Leader goes to the front.*

Leader This morning we discovered that Jesus wants His Church to be ready and alert this Advent.

To the children:

Are you ready? *(The children adopt the starting-a-race position.)*
Right, ready, steady—go!

The children run down the aisle and turn to face the congregation.

Kids So children, what message have we got for the church this morning?
Get ready!