

# The First Sunday in Advent

*Ad Te Levavi · Middle School · Parent Edition*

**For the parent:** Read each part aloud and work through the questions together. Your answers are printed in blue italics, so no preparation is needed. Your child uses the Student Edition.

## Step 1 Understand the Collect

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Which of the five parts is missing?

***Answer:** Address: "O Lord." Petition: "Stir up Your power... and come." Purpose: "that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance." Ending: "for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit." The reason is missing. The prayer goes straight to the plea, the way a person in danger calls for help.*

2. To which Person of the Trinity is this collect addressed? How can you tell?

***Answer:** To the Son. The ending says, "You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit." Most collects are prayed to the Father through the Son. This one asks Jesus Himself to come, which fits Advent, the season of His coming.*

3. From what does the collect ask to be rescued?

***Answer:** "The threatening perils of our sins": the dangers our sins bring on us, which are guilt, death, and God's judgment. No one can escape them alone, so we ask the Lord to come and deliver us.*

## Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

### Matthew 21:1-9

**1** Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." **4** This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, **5** "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

**6** The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. **8** Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

1. Why did Jesus ride a donkey instead of a war horse? Look at verses 4 and 5.

***Answer:** To fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. A king on a war horse comes to conquer. A king on a donkey comes humble and in peace. Jesus came to save, not to make war.*

2. Verse 4 says, "This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet." What does that tell you about Jesus?

**Answer:** He is the King God promised hundreds of years earlier. Nothing here happened by accident. Jesus planned it, and God keeps His promises.

3. "Hosanna" comes from Psalm 118:25 and means "Save us, we pray." Many in the crowd hoped for a king who would drive out the Romans. What kind of saving had Jesus come to do?

**Answer:** To save His people from sin and death. Within the week He would do it by dying on the cross and rising again, not by fighting Rome.

4. Why did the crowd spread cloaks and branches on the road?

**Answer:** It was a royal welcome. In 2 Kings 9:13 the people spread their cloaks under Jehu when he was proclaimed king. The crowd was honoring Jesus as King.

### Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

**Answer:** "Come" matches "Behold, your king is coming to you" (v. 5). "Saved by Your mighty deliverance" matches "Hosanna," which means "Save us, we pray" (v. 9). "Stir up Your power" matches the King's arrival, though His power comes hidden in humility (v. 5). Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. The collect asks for Jesus' power, yet He comes "humble, and mounted on a donkey." How can humble also be powerful?

**Answer:** Jesus' power is the power to save. He uses it by going to the cross, where He defeats sin, death, and the devil. What looks weak to the world is the mighty deliverance the collect asks for.

### Step 4 The Small Catechism

**The Second Petition.** Thy kingdom come. **What does this mean?** The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also. **How does God's kingdom come?** God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

**Cross-reference.** "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14)

1. Luther says God's kingdom comes "by itself without our prayer." Where do you see that in the Gospel?

**Answer:** No one asked Jesus to come. He sent for the donkey Himself (vv. 1-3), and it all happened to fulfill what God had promised long before (v. 4).

2. If the kingdom comes anyway, why do we pray for it?

**Answer:** We pray that it may come to us also. Many who shouted "Hosanna" did not receive Jesus as their King. We ask the Father to give us His Holy Spirit so that we believe His Word and do not miss the King when He comes.

3. Which word in Colossians 1:13 also appears in the collect? What does Colossians say we are delivered from, and into what?

**Answer:** "Delivered" (the collect says "deliverance"). We are delivered from the domain of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son, where we have the forgiveness of sins.

**Parent note: the question they may ask.** "Why do we hear the Palm Sunday story at the start of Advent?" Advent means "coming." The church begins its year with the King's coming. He came humbly to Jerusalem to die for us, He comes to us now in His Word and Supper, and He will come again in glory, which is next Sunday's Gospel. The crowd's

"Blessed is He who comes" is sung every Sunday before the Lord's Supper for that reason.

## Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short Advent collect of your own. Use all five parts.

**Answer:** *Answers will vary. Example: "Lord Jesus, You rode into Jerusalem as a humble King to save Your people. Come to us now in Your Word and Supper, that we may receive You with joy and be ready for Your coming again; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."*

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do for you when He comes?

**Answer:** *He comes to save me from my sins. He came to Jerusalem to die and rise for me, He comes to me now in His Word and Supper, and He will come again to take me to Himself.*