

The Second Sunday in Advent

Populus Zion · 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 our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You 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 our hearts... to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son." Purpose: "that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds." Ending: "through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit." The reason is missing, as it was last week.*

2. Last week's collect began, "Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come." This week's begins, "Stir up our hearts." What changed, and to whom is each prayer addressed?

***Answer:** Last week we asked Jesus Himself to come; that collect was addressed to the Son. This week we ask the Father to stir up our hearts so we are ready for His Son; the ending "through the same Jesus Christ... with You" shows it is addressed to the Father. First we pray for His coming, then for hearts ready to receive Him.*

3. "Make ready the way" echoes Isaiah 40:3, the words of John the Baptist. According to the collect, who makes our hearts ready?

***Answer:** God does. We ask Him to stir up our hearts, and the word "enabled" admits we cannot make ourselves ready. His coming is what equips us to serve Him.*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Luke 21:25-36

25 "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, **26** people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **27** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28** Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. **30** As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. **31** So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. **32** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. **33** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. **35** For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. **36** But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

1. Jesus describes frightening signs (vv. 25-26). Why does He tell His disciples to "raise your heads" instead of hiding?
Answer: Their redemption is drawing near (v. 28). The same day that terrifies the world is the day of rescue for those who belong to Christ.
2. What is the point of the fig tree parable (vv. 29-31)?
Answer: New leaves tell you summer is near. In the same way, the signs tell us the kingdom of God is near. They are meant to keep us watchful, not to let us calculate a date.
3. Verse 33 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Why does that matter when everything else is shaken?
Answer: Jesus' Word is the one thing that stands when everything else falls. It is what we hold onto, and His promises to us cannot fail.
4. Verse 34 names three things that weigh hearts down. What are they, and which one is easiest to overlook?
Answer: Dissipation (reckless pleasure-seeking), drunkenness, and the cares of this life. The cares are easiest to overlook: ordinary worry and busyness can make us forget He is coming just as surely as wild living can.

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: "Stir up our hearts" is the remedy for hearts "weighed down" (v. 34). "His coming" is the Son of Man "coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (v. 27). "Make ready" matches "stay awake at all times, praying" (v. 36). "Serve You with pure minds" is the opposite of dissipation and drunkenness (v. 34). Any two, well explained, are enough.
2. The collect asks for "pure minds." Jesus warns about hearts "weighed down." How are these the same concern?
Answer: Both describe a person who is spiritually awake. A heart dulled by pleasure or buried in worry stops watching for Christ. The collect asks God to clear our hearts and minds so we are alert and ready.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Second Article. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. **From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. What does this mean?** I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Cross-reference. "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:2-3)

1. Which line of the Second Article matches today's Gospel?
Answer: "From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead."

2. Luther says Jesus redeemed me "that I may be His own... and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness." Which words in the collect say something similar?

Answer: *"That by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds." Luther's "innocence" and the collect's "pure" describe the same life: service that flows from being redeemed.*

3. 1 John says everyone who hopes in Christ's appearing "purifies himself." How does that hope change the way we live now?

Answer: *We want to be ready for Him, so we turn from sin. We do not do this to earn His love. He has already made us His own with His blood, and we live as those who belong to Him.*

Parent note: the question they may ask. *"Should I be scared of Judgment Day? When is it?"* No one knows the day (Matthew 24:36). Jesus gives the signs to keep His people awake, not to frighten them. For those who belong to Him, the Last Day is the day of "redemption" (Luke 21:28). The Second Article answers the fear: the Judge who comes is the same Lord who has already redeemed me.

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 will come again with power and great glory. Keep our hearts awake and free from worry, that we may raise our heads with joy when You appear; 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 again?

Answer: *He comes to rescue me and take me to live with Him forever. He has already paid for all my sins, so I can raise my head and be glad to see Him.*