

The Third Sunday in Advent

Gaudete · Late Elementary · 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

A collect is a short prayer the pastor prays for the whole church. Here is today's collect:

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Words to know. *Implore:* beg, ask with all your heart. *Lighten:* bring light into. *Gracious:* full of kindness we do not deserve. *Visitation:* a visit; Jesus coming to us. *Offended* (in the Gospel): tripped up, turned away.

1. We are talking to the Lord Jesus _____.
Answer: Christ.
2. We ask Jesus to hear our _____.
Answer: Prayers.
3. We ask Him to lighten the _____ of our hearts.
Answer: Darkness.

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' 11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

1. Where was John when he sent his question to Jesus?
Answer: In prison (verse 2).
2. What did John ask Jesus?
Answer: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (verse 3).
3. Name two things Jesus said were happening.
Answer: Any two: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor hear good news (verse 5).
4. What did Jesus say about John?

Answer: That John was more than a prophet. He was the messenger sent to prepare the way for Jesus (verses 9-10).

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

Say to your child: Our prayer asks Jesus to hear us and to bring light into our dark hearts. In the Gospel, John is in a dark prison, and he has a question. Let's find our prayer in the story.

1. The collect asks Jesus to *hear our prayers*. Who sent a question to Jesus, and did Jesus answer?

Answer: John sent his question, and Jesus answered him (verse 4).

2. The collect asks Jesus to *lighten the darkness*. Find the words in verse 5 about people who could not see.

Answer: "The blind receive their sight."

3. The collect asks for Jesus' *gracious visitation*, His kind coming to us. In verse 5, who hears good news?

Answer: The poor.

Parent note. John was in a dark prison, and his heart may have been troubled. Jesus did not scold him. He sent him His Word. When our hearts are dark or worried, Jesus comes to us the same way: in His Word and in His Supper.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The First Commandment. You shall have no other gods. **What does this mean?** We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

1. John asked, "Shall we look for another?" What does the First Commandment say about looking for another god?

Answer: "You shall have no other gods." Jesus is the One to trust. There is no other.

2. Luther says we should fear, love, and trust in God. Which of those three words fits John's question best?

Answer: Trust. John was asking whom to trust, and Jesus answered by showing him that He is the Savior.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

Pray today's collect together one more time. Then ask:

1. What does Jesus do for you when your heart is worried or unsure?

Answer: He hears my prayers and answers me with His Word. He comes to me, lights up my heart, and shows me that He is the Savior I can trust.