

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Rorate Coeli · Middle School · Student Edition

For the student: Read along, fill in the blanks, and write your answers on the lines. Your parent has the answers.

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 and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; 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 part is missing?

2. This collect begins with the same words as the Advent 1 collect. Compare what each one asks to be done about our sins.

3. By what means does the collect ask for our sins to be lifted? Why "quickly"?

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

John 1:19-28

19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He confessed, and did not deny, but

confessed, "I am not the Christ." **21** And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." **22** So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" **23** He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) **25** They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" **26** John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, **27** even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." **28** These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

1. Why did the leaders ask whether John was Elijah or "the Prophet"?

2. John keeps saying "I am not." Why does he call himself only a "voice"?

3. In verse 26 John says, "Among you stands one you do not know." What were the leaders missing?

4. Untying sandals was a slave's job. What does John's comment in verse 27 show about Jesus?

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.

2. Read John 1:29, the verse right after today's reading. How does it answer the collect?

Step 4 The Small Catechism

Baptism, Fourth Part. What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. **Where is this written?** St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

Cross-reference. "For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." (Psalm 38:4)

1. John baptized with water to prepare people for Christ. What does Luther say baptizing with water indicates?

2. We are baptized only once. Why does Luther say "daily"?

3. Psalm 38 calls sin a burden "too heavy for me." How does the Fourth Part of Baptism say the burden is removed?

Think about it. What is the "Old Adam," and why does he have to be drowned every day? Read Romans 6:4 in the catechism box and be ready to talk about it.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

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

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do with your sins?
