

Turn Back to God

An Activity and Liquid Picture Based on Mark 1:1-8

Responding to the Gospel

Background for the Leader

In this Gospel passage, John the Baptist shows us the path to God. In some ways, the path is straightforward: "Turn back to God." When we do that, all our sins will be forgiven. It's that simple. But as we know from our daily life, John's message is much easier said than done. The message of John the Baptist reminds us of two central aspects of faith: We are deeply loved by God, and we are sinners. John's message is a good reminder that although the path may not be easy, it is straightforward. Turn back to God (again and again as necessary in the face of our failings), and the path will be straight.

Activity

- Show the children the image of the two paths from point A to point B. (You could use masking tape to create two paths on the floor of the room. Make one a straight path and one with many twists and turns. Invite the children to walk single file along both paths.)
- Ask the children which path they would take if they wanted to get from Point A to Point B. Invite each child to explain their choice.
- Point out that both paths lead to the same place but provide very different ways of getting there.
- Ask the children which path would be the easiest.
- Tell them that this idea can represent the message of John the Baptist. As believers, we are always able to find our way to God, but it is up to us to identify the path.
- Ask the children to name some things that can make their path to God crooked and to think of ways to get back on the straight path when that happens.
- Tell the children that John the Baptist reminds us that no matter what, we can always take the straight path if we "turn back to God."

The simple message is that John the Baptist tell us that the straightest path can be found in turning back to God.



Reflecting on the Gospel

A Liquid Picture Based on Mark 1:1–8

A liquid picture is a type of Gospel drama that allows a story to be presented in a flowing or liquid manner. A familiar Scripture story is divided into five or six parts. The leader assigns a part to each child and asks the child to create a simple action to represent the part. For a larger group, children can be assigned parts in pairs—one to do the action and one to speak the phrase. If there are older children in the group, the leader may assign one the role of leader.

Proceed as follows:

Children with parts stand with their backs to the rest of the group.

The leader speaks first.

Child 1 turns to face the group, speaks their part while doing their action two or three times (once is not enough for children to remember!), and then freezes.

The group responds by repeating the phrase and the action.

This pattern continues until the last child speaks and the group responds.

The leader speaks the concluding line.

Leader: John the Baptist told everyone . . .

Child 1: Get ready!

Child 2: Follow Jesus!

Child 3: Do kind deeds!

Child 4: Speak kind words!

Child 5: Be a peacemaker!

Child 6: Follow Jesus!

Leader: Get the road ready for Jesus!

This activity is adapted from the Second Sunday of Advent as found in *Kids' Liturgy: A Comprehensive Liturgy of the Word*. © 2019 by Saint Mary's Press.