

Lectionary-Based Resources for Youth Ministry

*Sharing*  
THE SUNDAY  
SCRIPTURES  
*with Youth*



Maryann Hakowski

Saint Mary's Press  
Christian Brothers Publications  
Winona, Minnesota

# Contents

Introduction 7

## Advent

First Sunday of Advent 15  
 Second Sunday of Advent 16  
 Third Sunday of Advent 18  
 Fourth Sunday of Advent 20

## Christmas

Sunday in the Octave of Christmas (Holy Family) 25  
 Second Sunday After Christmas 27  
 Epiphany Sunday 29  
 Baptism of the Lord Sunday 30

## Lent

First Sunday of Lent 35  
 Second Sunday of Lent 36  
 Third Sunday of Lent 38  
 Fourth Sunday of Lent 40  
 Fifth Sunday of Lent 42  
 Palm Sunday 44

## Easter

Easter Sunday 49  
 Second Sunday of Easter 51  
 Third Sunday of Easter 53  
 Fourth Sunday of Easter 54  
 Fifth Sunday of Easter 56  
 Sixth Sunday of Easter 58  
 Seventh Sunday of Easter 59  
 Pentecost Sunday 61  
 Trinity Sunday 63  
 Corpus Christi Sunday 64

## Ordinary Time

Second Sunday of the Year 69  
 Third Sunday of the Year 71  
 Fourth Sunday of the Year 73  
 Fifth Sunday of the Year 75  
 Sixth Sunday of the Year 76  
 Seventh Sunday of the Year 78  
 Eighth Sunday of the Year 80  
 Ninth Sunday of the Year 81  
 Tenth Sunday of the Year 83  
 Eleventh Sunday of the Year 85  
 Twelfth Sunday of the Year 87  
 Thirteenth Sunday of the Year 89  
 Fourteenth Sunday of the Year 92  
 Fifteenth Sunday of the Year 94  
 Sixteenth Sunday of the Year 96  
 Seventeenth Sunday of the Year 98  
 Eighteenth Sunday of the Year 100  
 Nineteenth Sunday of the Year 102  
 Twentieth Sunday of the Year 103  
 Twenty-first Sunday of the Year 105  
 Twenty-second Sunday of the Year 107  
 Twenty-third Sunday of the Year 109  
 Twenty-fourth Sunday of the Year 111  
 Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year 113  
 Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year 115  
 Twenty-seventh Sunday of the Year 117  
 Twenty-eighth Sunday of the Year 119  
 Twenty-ninth Sunday of the Year 121  
 Thirtieth Sunday of the Year 123  
 Thirty-first Sunday of the Year 125  
 Thirty-second Sunday of the Year 127  
 Thirty-third Sunday of the Year 129  
 Thirty-fourth Sunday of the Year (Christ the King) 131

Audiovisual Distributors 133  
 Resources 133  
 Index of Themes 134  
 Index of Gospel Readings 135

# Introduction

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, NRSV)

## Recognizing the Hunger

Today's youth are hungry.  
They are hungry for the word of God.  
They are hungry for the Good News of Jesus Christ.  
And many of them have not had a taste of it.

*The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization*, by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, challenges youth ministers to feed the hungers of young people. The document identifies the following hungers:

- the hunger for meaning and purpose
- the hunger for connection
- the hunger for recognition
- the hunger for justice
- the hunger for the holy

(Pp. 5–6)

By effectively sharing the word of God with young people, we can help them find purpose and meaning for their lives. They will discover that they are connected with God and with others through a faith community in which God's word is shared, explored, and lived. They will find that God recognizes the gifts of all persons and celebrates their worth. They will see that God's word really is Good News for the oppressed, and it offers the possibility of countering the materialism and consumerism that are rampant in our world. Finally, they will find that God's purpose is to make them holy.

## Overview

### The Lectionary

The lectionary contains the Scripture readings for all the eucharistic celebrations (Sundays and weekdays) of the liturgical year. The liturgical year, and consequently the lectionary, begins with the first Sunday of Advent. It continues through the Christmas season, after which Ordinary Time begins. Ordinary Time is interrupted by the seasons of Lent and Easter, then it resumes and continues to the end of the liturgical year.

The Sunday readings are divided into three cycles that rotate year to year. The Gospel of Matthew is used in year A, the Gospel of Mark in year B, and the Gospel of Luke in year C. The Gospel of John has a special place in the Lenten and Easter seasons of all three cycles.

Each Sunday in the lectionary includes three readings and a psalm. The first reading is typically from the Hebrew Scriptures and is selected to relate with the Gospel reading. It often foreshadows something that will happen in the Gospel, and occasionally the Gospel even quotes it. The psalm usually complements the first reading and the Gospel. The second reading is from one of the letters of the Apostles. It is not chosen for its relationship with the other readings. Rather, it is intended to provide a semi-continuous reading of all the letters over the three-year period. The third reading is the Gospel, and it is taken from one of the four Gospels in the aforementioned fashion.

The resources in this book are based on the Scripture readings in the lectionary for the Sundays of the B cycle.

## Why a Lectionary Approach?

Why choose the lectionary as the basis for a Scripture resource for teens? For many Catholics—including young people—exposure to the Bible comes primarily at Mass, when the Scriptures are read from the lectionary. For these Catholics, the activities in this book will review and reinforce the scriptural word they hear on Sunday. For those who do not attend Mass regularly, this book will put them in touch with the Sunday Scriptures and may even serve as an invitation to celebrate the Word with the community in the Sunday Eucharist.

Also, the Catholic lectionary offers an organized and thorough method for listening to God’s word as it comes through the Scriptures. The selection of Sunday readings for the three cycles of the liturgical year ensures that the principal portions of God’s word will be heard and considered over a suitable period of time.

At the same time, *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth: Cycle B* is not intended to be an alternative to the catechetical component of a youth ministry program, nor even as a substitute for the study of the Scriptures in a catechetical component. Rather, it is intended to be a Scripture-based supplement for ongoing catechesis and other elements of a youth ministry effort. This book can also serve as a connection between youth ministry efforts and Sunday liturgical celebrations in the parish.

## The Activities Action-Centered

The Scriptures are most often experienced by reading them or listening to them and then having them explained. The resources in this book go beyond that method. By way of hands-on activities, the participants not only hear and understand God’s word but are actively engaged with it and are invited to respond in a personal way.

### Relevant

The activities in *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth: Cycle B* make every attempt to be authentic both to the Scriptures and to the experiences of teens living in contemporary U.S. society. With the vast experiential differences among teens of different parts of the country in mind, as well as differences in age, race, and socioeconomic status, I chose activities that relate to needs, questions, concerns, and celebrations most common to all.

The scriptural themes on which the activities are based are chosen from the Sunday readings as a set rather than on a line or phrase from just one of the readings.

### Diverse

This book employs a wide variety of activities and learning methods. The following list identifies each type of activity, along with a distinguishing icon. The icons will help you quickly locate a particular type of activity that you might want to use. Some activities are a combination of more than one type.



**The Format** The resources for each Sunday are set up in the following sequence:

### Initial Information

Each set of resources begins by identifying the Sunday of the year being considered, the lectionary reading number to help one find the readings for that Sunday in the lectionary, and the Scripture citations for that Sunday.

### God’s Word

The “God’s Word” section contains a major theme drawn from the readings and a brief synopsis of the readings. Also included in this section are several additional themes called “Themes for Teens,” which connect with the lived experience of today’s teens.

### Our Response

“Our Response” includes one specific, detailed activity with all the information you will need to prepare and facilitate it with a group of young people. This activity is usually based on the major theme that is drawn from the Scripture readings. Also included are several pithy activity ideas for alternative activities that are related to the suggested themes and connected with one or more of the Scripture readings.

## Strategies and Contexts

The resources in this book can be used in many ways and in many settings. Select the way that appropriately addresses your setting and best engages your group of teens. Here are some possible uses:

- as starting points for weekly youth group meetings
- as Scripture-related supplements for youth group meetings
- as a general resource for planning retreats and lock-ins, or as quick ideas for meetings
- as aids for youth ministers who grapple with the Scriptures themselves, to ease their fears of using Scripture-related activities with young people
- as Scripture- and liturgy-related supplements for high school religion teachers, especially in courses on the Scriptures, the Mass, or the liturgical year
- as a homily help for pastors preparing for youth liturgies or any parish liturgy

**Advantages** Using a lectionary-based resource with an activities approach has a number of advantages, including the following:

**Excites Catholic youth about Scripture study.** Most teens could think of at least ten things they would rather do than read the Bible. This book provides a variety of fun, exciting, and challenging ways of experiencing the Scriptures.

**Engages youth with the Scriptures.** The Bible is a whole library of books of different literary forms, so it can be intimidating at first glance. Most teens have no idea where to begin or even why they should open the Bible. The activities in this book give young people a taste of what is inside the Bible and an invitation to read more.

**Promotes a lifelong habit of spending time with the Scriptures.** Experiencing God's word in a more personal and meaningful way can encourage young people to make the Bible a lifelong companion.

**Introduces the Scriptures as a tool for building relationships with God and others.** The Scriptures include wonderful recipes for how to live in relationship with others and how to relate to God. Teens are always struggling with relationships. They are often pulling away from parents and moving toward peers. This resource pays special attention to relationships with one's self, others, and God.

**Encourages adults who work with youth to spend more time with the Scriptures.** Many adults working with youth—especially volunteers—are intimidated by anything related to the Scriptures or prayer. A synopsis of the Scripture readings for each Sunday is provided to familiarize such persons with the readings and to help them use the learning activities to open the Word with young people.

**Makes spending time with the Scriptures exciting and meaningful.** Approaching the Scriptures with a sense of adventure invites teens to unlock the mysteries found there. With some guidance and creative ways for unlocking these mysteries, teens will be encouraged to delve into them to find meaning for themselves.

**Explores symbols and rituals found in the Scriptures.** Taking part in the activities in this book, especially the prayer experiences, allows young people to experience the rich symbolism in the passages they read. They will discover, firsthand, connections between Catholic rituals and rituals portrayed in the Scriptures.

**Helps young people experience the Scriptures as good news in a world filled with bad news.** Young people today are in great need of hope. They see many reasons for despair as they look around at their families, their communities, and their world. The Scriptures can help them discover and celebrate the goodness in themselves and others as well as the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

**Begins with the Bible message.** Many youth Bible programs begin with critical issues facing youth and try to weave the Bible in where they can. This resource is different in that it *begins* with the Scriptures and relates its message to developmental, relational, and societal issues in the lives of teens.

**Enables teens to make connections between the Scriptures and their own life.** The Scriptures come alive when they find expression in life. The activities in this book engage teens and help them actively apply the Scriptures to their own experience.

**Proclaims the Good News effectively and enables young people to proclaim the Good News in return.** Sharing the Scriptures with young people is only the beginning of evangelization. Jesus preached the Word to his disciples, related it to their lives, and taught them how to share it. This resource helps young people find the language and the courage to share the Good News with others.

**Limitations** Using a lectionary-based approach to exploring the Scriptures with youth has some limitations. First, a strict lectionary-based approach—one that always uses the resources for the current Sunday—may not match the needs and circumstances of a particular group of young people at a particular time. It may be necessary to look to another Sunday's readings—or even a Scripture passage not in the lectionary—for a theme and activities that speak to a current happening.

Second, the Scripture readings chosen for the three cycles of the Catholic lectionary do not encompass all the readings in the Bible. Studying only the Scriptures included in the lectionary ignores a number of books of the Bible, especially some of those in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Finally, the resources found here are by no means designed to replace the liturgy of the word at Mass. And though it may be true, unfortunately, that many teens do not attend liturgy on Sunday, this sharing of the Scriptures should be a means of inviting them back to Mass rather than a replacement or excuse for missing Mass.

**The Challenge** In her book *Fashion Me a People*, Maria Harris suggests that the key to Scripture study is knowing the Word, interpreting the Word, living the Word, and doing the Word (pp. 60–61).

Our challenge is to enable young people to experience the Word, grapple with its meaning, connect it to their own life, share it with their peers, and find the courage to respond to the God revealed in it.

Being a minister of the Word to young people is challenging, but it is eye opening and exciting, too. One cannot help but be changed in experiencing the Scriptures through the eyes of a young person.

One of my favorite Scripture passages is the one in which Jesus feeds the hungry with both the word of God and bread and fish, blessed and shared.

We need the word of God, blessed and shared, to fill our hunger. May God bless you in your ministry and nourish you and your young people as you share the word of God together.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:14, NRSV)

# Advent





# First Sunday of Advent

**Scripture Readings**  
(2)

- ❖ Isa. 63:16–17,19; 64:2–7
- ❖ Ps. 80:2–3,15–16,18–19
- ❖ 1 Cor. 1:3–9
- ❖ Mark 13:33–37

## God’s Word

A major theme of the Scripture readings is “Come, Lord, come.”

In the first reading, Isaiah presents to the Lord a people who have become so unfaithful that they need a powerful and merciful God who will take the initiative to save them. Isaiah wishes that God would find the people doing what is right, but in fact, they are filled with guilt for their sins. Isaiah acknowledges that God is their Father-Creator who has saved them in the past, and he asks God to come to their rescue, as God would do for people who turn to the Lord and wait for the Lord to come.

The psalmist also recognizes the need for God to take the initiative in saving the people. If God will send someone who—as one of them—will turn away from what is wrong and look on the face of God, the whole people will be saved.

For Paul, the beginning of the salvation that the psalmist hoped for has been realized in Jesus. He begins the First Letter to the Corinthians with an acknowledgment of this blessing of grace and peace that has come from God through Jesus. For the Corinthians it is now a time to wait faithfully, trusting in the fullness of salvation still to come.

The Gospel reading echoes the theme of faithful waiting. Jesus tells the parable of a man who goes away to a far-off country, leaves his servants in charge, and then returns unexpectedly. Jesus uses this parable to deliver a wake-up call to the disciples. He tells them to remain on guard because the Master might return at any time.

As we start the Advent season, we long for Jesus to come and be with us so that we may turn our life more fully and completely to God. We pray, “Come, Lord, come.”

## Themes for Teens

The following themes from the Scriptures relate to the lives of teens:

- You are the potter; we are the clay.
- Turn around to Christ.
- God’s deeds are amazing.
- Wake up; Jesus is coming.
- We wait for the Lord.

## Our Response

### Activity Wake-up Service



This prayer service is keyed to the Gospel reading. It invites the young people to think of Advent as a time to wake up and take a close look at their life.

Before the prayer service, obtain an old-fashioned alarm clock with bells on the top. Wind it up so that it is set to ring.

Gather the young people in a circle in the prayer space, with only a small table in the center. Place the alarm clock on the table.

Begin the prayer service with verse 1 of the song “City of God,” by Dan Schutte (*Glory and Praise*, vol. 3 [Phoenix, AZ: North American Liturgy Resources, 1982], no. 187).

Next, read Mark 13:33–37.

After the reading, pull the alarm stop and let the alarm ring until it is finished. Say, “The Lord is coming. Are you awake?”

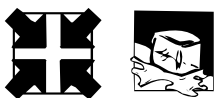
Take time for quiet reflection and then close with the second verse of “City of God.”

### Activity Ideas

The following activity ideas also relate to the Scripture readings. You may want to read the passage(s) indicated as part of the activity.



- Buy some inexpensive clay or play dough and allow the teens some time to work with it. Read the last passage from the first reading, where it says that God is the potter and we are the clay. Have the teens pretend they are God, creating each person as someone special. Direct them to create a symbol of the person they hope to be. (Isa. 63:16–17,19; 64:2–7)



- When Paul greets the Corinthians, it is with the beautiful blessing, “Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” How do we greet one another? When your group members arrive, ask them to go around to each person in the room and greet him or her. The only catch is that they must use a different greeting for each person. Afterward, ask them how they can make people in the group feel more welcome. How can they extend a greeting to newcomers as warm as Paul’s blessing? (1 Cor. 1:3–9)



- If the young people are unfamiliar with the Advent wreath, introduce them to this tradition. Together, bless the Advent wreath and light the first candle as a sign of waiting in hope for Christ to come. Plan to light the candles on the wreath together each time you gather as a group during Advent. (All readings)

## Second Sunday of Advent

### Scripture Readings (5)

- ❖ Isa. 40:1–5,9–11
- ❖ Ps. 85:9–10,11–12,13–14
- ❖ 2 Pet. 3:8–14
- ❖ Mark 1:1–8

### God’s Word

A major theme of the Scripture readings is “A call for change.”

The first reading is a great comfort to people who suffer oppression in exile. It sounds like a newspaper vendor crying out, “Extra! Extra! Read all about it.” The prophet’s message—to prepare a way for the Lord—strongly suggests that something new is about to begin, that a great change is going to

take place. The images of God, for whom the way is to be prepared, are contrasting ones—a powerful God with strong arms, but also a gentle comforter who speaks tenderly and holds lambs in those arms.

The psalm celebrates the kindness of God who comes with peace and justice for those who hear and fear God. The psalm captures both the frustration and the hope of God’s people. They are hopeful that God will bring justice and peace, yet impatient at having to wait for that to happen.

The Second Letter of Peter echoes Isaiah’s announcement that the Lord is coming and that a radical change will take place. The change will result in a new heaven and a new earth. Likewise, the people who await the Lord’s coming must change—repent and try to live without stain or defilement, and at peace in the Lord’s sight. Waiting in this manner is not a waste of time. God will decide when all is ready for the Lord’s Second Coming, and people can use the time to make things right between themselves and God.

The first words of the Gospel of Mark are from the Isaiah passage for this Sunday. These words are used to introduce John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. John sees repentance and the forgiveness of sins as the way to wait and get ready for the coming of Jesus. He baptizes those who believe him, as a sign of a new birth coming in Jesus.

John’s call—the call of Advent—is a call to change, a call to conversion, a call to wait patiently and confidently for the coming of the Lord.

### Themes for Teens

The following themes from the Scriptures relate to the lives of teens:

- Prepare the way of the Lord.
- Justice and peace walk with God.
- Repent and be saved.
- One who is more powerful will follow.
- Jesus is the Good News.

## Our Response

### Activity Making a List, Checking It Twice



This activity is keyed to the readings as a whole. It asks the teens to set their priorities for Advent and urges them to make a place in the hustle and bustle of commercial Christmas preparations to reflect on the spiritual messages of the season.

Ask the young people to make a list of all the things they need to do to get ready for Christmas. They can do this individually or as a group.

Next, tell them to make another list of things they will do during Advent to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Distribute Advent calendars to the teens or have them each make one. Direct them to write in the things they are going to do during Advent to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

### Activity Ideas



- Encourage the young people to schedule some quiet time into every day of Advent. Explain that quiet time can be the desert time referred to in the Scriptures as a time to listen to God’s voice. Have them pose these questions to themselves: How is God calling me? How is God hoping to change my heart? (All readings)





- Turn your group into headline writers for this activity. Have them write headlines for tomorrow’s newspaper, announcing a world where
  - kindness and truth shall meet,  
justice and peace shall kiss,  
truth shall spring out of the earth,  
justice shall look down from heaven.

(Ps. 85:9–10,11–12,13–14)



- Direct the teens to list in their journal the images of God found in the first reading. Have them note the image of God they most relate to at this time in their life. Then ask them to describe in their journal how this image speaks to them. Finally, have them write a prayer, using their chosen image to address God. (Isa. 40:1–5,9–11)



- Discuss how the following quote by Pope Paul VI relates to today’s readings: “If you want peace, work for justice” (quoted in Hamma, ed., *A Catechumen’s Lectionary*, p. 19). Then send the teens out on a scavenger hunt to collect quotes on peace and justice. Create a collage on a bulletin board to help raise community awareness of the need to work for justice. (All readings)

## Third Sunday of Advent

### Scripture Readings (8)

- ❖ Isa. 61:1–2,10–11
- ❖ Luke 1:46–48,49–50,53–54
- ❖ 1 Thess. 5:16–24
- ❖ John 1:6–8,19–28

### God’s Word

A major theme of the Scripture readings is “Prepare for Jesus, the light of the world.”

Isaiah is filled with the Spirit and anointed by God to announce and prepare for the coming of the Lord. As such he is called to service—to reach out to the poor, the brokenhearted, the prisoner. He sees God making justice grow like plants in a garden. Christians interpret this text as a description of Jesus’ role.

The responsorial psalm is not from the Psalms at all, but is taken from Luke’s Gospel, in which Mary, having conceived Jesus by the power of the Spirit, expresses the greatness that has come to her in being anointed by God to give birth to the Son of God.

The passage from the First Letter to the Thessalonians is exceptionally upbeat. The Second Coming of the Lord will be a great day for those who are open to the Spirit and remain faithful to God.

In the Gospel reading, John the Baptist makes it clear that his role is to prepare for the coming of Jesus, the light of the world. John isn’t the light. His job is to reflect the light of Jesus. He is only a voice crying out in the desert that the Lord is coming.