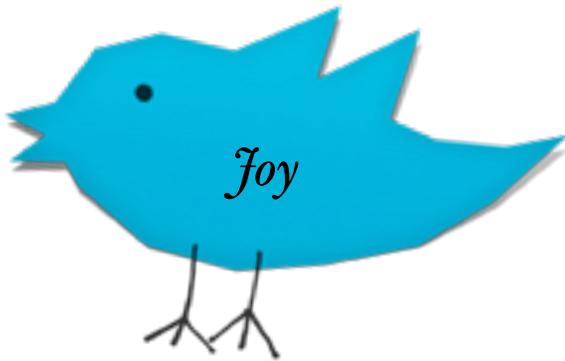




build. plant. grow.
the word this week



advent



lectionary
 reading

Cycle B

Third Sunday of Advent

Lectionary #8

Reading I: Isaiah 61:1-2A, 10-11

In this portion of the book of Isaiah, the prophet is referred to as Second Isaiah. The prophet is announcing that the exile of Israel in Babylon is about to come to an end. This is indeed **joyful** news, because the Israelites have been in captivity for two generations and had almost given up hope of returning to their beloved Jerusalem. Isaiah speaks hope-filled and **joyful** words to people longing to hear a joyful message, to be healed of their brokenness and to believe that their captivity, in a foreign land was going to come to an end. **Joy** permeates the message.

Reading 2: I Thes. 5: 16-24

Saint Paul echoes the theme of rejoicing in this letter written to the Church at Thessalonica. The early churches expected Jesus to return within their lifetime and as time went on they began to become discouraged. Thus, Saint Paul writes this letter encouraging them to remain faithful and to rejoice in the fact that their waiting will not be in vain. He encourages them to dedicate themselves to prayer, thanksgiving and to a sense of **joy**, for indeed they have been chosen and called. The message remains the same for us. We too have been chosen and called and for this reason alone we have every reason to be filled with **joy**.

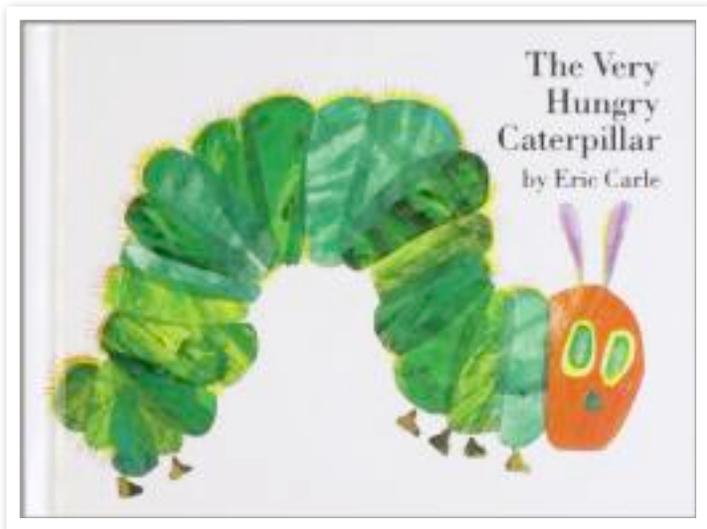
Gospel: John 1: 6-8, 19-28

Just as Second Isaiah prepares captive Israel for the appearance of a **joyful** time and Saint Paul announces to a people waiting anxiously for the Lord to do so with a joyful heart, so too does Saint John the Baptists prepare the people for the coming of **joy**, and the one who will be forever the light of the world.

Saint John is serving as the advance man for the one who is really being anticipated and makes it clear that he is not the one but is merely the one preparing the way.



children's
story



The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Written by Eric Carle

Illustrated by Eric Carle

Copyright 1986 Philomel: Min edition

ISBN-10: 9780399213014

ISBN-13: 978-0399213014



character
education
activity

**Joy is the expression of inner
happiness and contentment.
As joyous people we are
always called to look for the
good in every situation**

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Here is a story of waiting and wondering about how things might change. One sunny Sunday, when the caterpillar hatched out of a tiny egg, he was very hungry and went about eating everything in sight and still wanting more. Finally full, the caterpillar builds a cocoon around himself and goes to sleep only to wake up a few weeks later as something totally transformed and different, a beautiful butterfly. There are very clear parallels with the waiting we are called to do during the season of Advent and to wait patiently for what is to come, a **joy** anticipated and fulfilled.

Activity

Step One: Using the Advent wreath in the prayer corner of the classroom, ask the students to look at the four candles that represent the four Sundays of Advent. After they have viewed the four candles ask them if they see anything different about one of the four candles. They will most likely recognize that one of the four candles is pink. At this point you can speak to the fact that the third Sunday of Advent is what is known as the **Joyful** Sunday for Christmas is almost here.

Step Two: Find a large clear glass or plastic jar that you would label colorfully at the **Joy Jar**. Explain to the students that the jar will sit in the middle of the Advent Wreath and that they will have the opportunity to think of things they could do for others that might bring about a **joyful** spirit in the person.

Step Three: Have the students write a good deed on one side of the slip of paper and on the other side the person that they intend to perform the good deed for. Give them 5 to 10 slips of paper and have them write the deeds and persons and place them in an envelope that they will keep in their desk. They can only put the good deed slip in the **Joy Jar** once they have completed the good deed.

Joy is the gift that came into the world with the birth of Jesus Christ. For indeed at Christmas we sing "Joy to the world."

What could you do today?

Make a commitment to be a source of joy to your family and do all that you can to be positive and happy in your home and among your family. Just as you entered into the activity of the **Joy Jar** at school you could think of kind deeds to do for your family members and neighbors.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

Look Feel Know Act

Remember that **Joy** is something that resides within you and is a gift from God and as such there is no material thing in the world that can bring you the same joy. Make a commitment to yourself to be joyful in as many circumstances as possible. When you feel joy you are bound to express that joy in the words you use with others and your actions. Being **joyful** can be contagious, so acting joyful in as many situations as possible may in fact cause others to catch on and become connected to the **joy** that is within them waiting to be expressed.

In *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* we encounter a great lesson for young children. Just as a caterpillar grows and changes physically so too do we as human beings. This story becomes an opportunity to share with the children that not only do we grow physically and emotionally but also spiritually. The students can learn that for them to grow spiritually that this will occur over time and that it takes patient but active waiting on their part. The Season of Advent is given for us to enter into patient yet active waiting, and that waiting is for our greatest joy, Jesus Christ.



closing
tool

Pray that you will strive to be joyful in all circumstances and know that in your waiting the Holy Spirit is there to inspire you to be joyful. Amen



**Santa Clara
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