



build. plant. grow.  
*the word this week*



advent



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### 1st Sunday of Advent

Lectionary I

#### Reading I: Isaiah 2:1-5

Today we enter into the season of Advent. The word Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, which means coming. We are therefore awaiting the coming of the Lord. Often times waiting seems to imply a passive frittering away of time, and yet the waiting that we do during the season of Advent is an “active “ waiting.

In today’s selection from the prophet Isaiah, we can see that the waiting for the one who is to come involves a journey, as well as transformational activities such as transforming swords into plowing instrument and spears into implements to assist in helping thing grow. The active waiting indicates that the one we are waiting for is one dedicated to peace, since our activity is changing weapons of war into instruments dedicated to peaceful activities. Therefore, it makes complete sense that the one we are preparing for is the Prince of Peace. We are called then to be vigilant and active in our waiting for the one who is coming.

#### Reading 2: Romans 13: 11-14

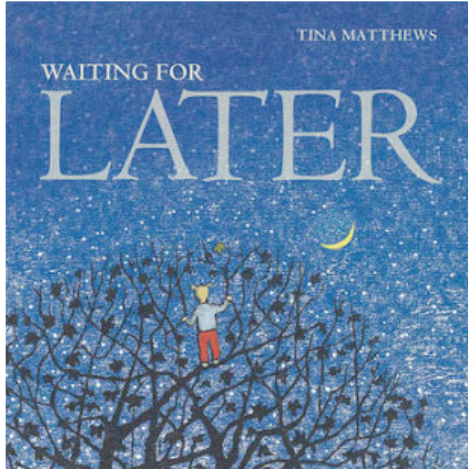
Saint Paul clearly instructs the Roman Community to be **vigilant** as they live their life actively anticipating the coming of the Lord. He encourages them to “throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” Again the “active waiting” parallels the one we are waiting for. The works of light prepare us for He who is the Light of the World.

#### Gospel: Matthew 24: 37-44

Vigilance is the absolute theme of this passage from Matthew’s gospel selected for this First Sunday of Advent. Jesus clearly indicates that calamity often occurs when one is not prepared or focused on that which is important. For the follower of Jesus it is essential to keep our eyes fixed on Him and on the Kingdom He preached. We are called to be prepared, that is **vigilant** and not passive in our waiting for the coming of the Lord. This Sunday and the Second Sunday of Advent place an emphasis on the second coming of the Lord, whereas the Third and Fourth Sundays will emphasize the coming of the Lord in history.



children's  
story



### Waiting For Later

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character  
education  
activity

**The word Advent comes from the Latin word "adventus" which means coming. So for us the season of Advent involves our vigilant and "active" waiting for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.**

## Waiting for Later

Later never seems to come soon enough for any of us as we wait. Waiting can be full of surprises. This is a story of a little girl who wishes to play with members of her family and is told "later." With that, she climbs a tree in the backyard to wait for "later." In that tree she enters into the activity of imagining and some wonderful things happen.

Each time we are told to "wait for later" we have a choice. We can concentrate on the disappointment of something not happening right now or we can enter into our imagination and dream about or envision things that could be. In dreaming of beautiful and wonderful things and being dedicated and **vigilant** to such an approach, something wonderful indeed may happen.

The prophet Isaiah is dreaming the dream of God for the people of Israel, when he speaks of the weapons of war becoming instruments of peaceful existence that provide for life and not death. Isaiah and the other prophets remain **vigilant** in proclaiming this dream that God has for humanity. Saint Paul and Jesus both evoke our imaginations by calling us to be **vigilant** about our waiting and making sure that our waiting is not an idleness that allows time to pass. Our waiting is a preparation period for the greatest gift God will give us, Emmanuel, God in the midst of us, God becoming one of us in Jesus Christ.

## Activity

Step One: Provide the students with many art supplies that are as varied as possible. Have them brainstorm the things they might do to actively wait for the coming of Jesus.

Step Two: Using two poster boards create an Advent Calendar for the class. On one poster board place the tasks or prayers that would be revealed when the window of the particular day of Advent is opened. The other board will serve as the cover of the events. Make windows that would cover the events or prayers and number them. Allow the students to open them and enter into the event or prayer of the opened window.

**Discipline and perseverance are things that we will always have to work at. Think of it as always trying to be the best in whatever you do!**



**case study**

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

## What could you do today?

Imagine that you are at home in your room and that a very special guest is coming to see you. What do you want your room to look like? What efforts will you have to take to get the room ready for this important person? You want to have everything perfect and you also want to provide a gift for this very important person. What would that gift be? Now imagine that the guest is Jesus and the room He will be visiting is your heart. What are some of the things you can do to prepare your heart for Jesus?

## Look Feel Know Act

**Vigilance** is being prepared, and when we are involved in the process of waiting we may very well get derailed as boredom sets in. This is precisely why our waiting must be “active” waiting, dreaming and then putting into action those parts of the dreams that we are able to bring about. It is one thing to dream something but quite another to put the dream into action. Dreaming or envisioning a difference alone does not bring about the dream or the vision. The dreaming stage needs to move into a planning or designing stage and then onto a building phase for the dream or vision to be actualized.

Think or dream about something that you and a few others might accomplish. Remember that for the dream or vision to come about you and the others involved must remain dedicated and **vigilant** about the dream or vision. Brainstorming will help you and the others put together a plan and a design and eventually a method for the achievement of the dream. For example, suppose your dream is to provide gifts for those who may not receive a gift at Christmas. What would be some of the ideas you might think of to bring this about, who would you involve, and how would you get the help of others to bring this dream to reality? Sometimes when we are asked to wait we can take the time to use our imaginations as yet another place where God will be with us. Again another manifestation of Emmanuel, “God in the midst of us.”

In *Waiting for Later* we see Nancy taking the opportunity to be creative with her waiting time while her family is too busy with other things to play with her. She climbs the tree, and finds a place where she can dream, be creative and allow wonderful things to come about. God invites us to dream, and in doing so, we can enter into God's dream for us and bring about something wonderful for others. Through this we also bring about something wonderful for God.



## closing tool

Pray that you will allow the “waiting” for the coming of God to be a time of preparation. Pray that while waiting for the Prince of Peace you will do something to advance peace. Also that as you prepare for the Light of the World that you would bring light into the darkness of someone's life. Amen.



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