

Catechism Lesson for Adults and Teens
Sunday before Epiphany

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Read the Gospel Passage. Mark 1:1-8

Contextual Background:

-Each Gospel begins with a different focus or a different starting point. We jump right into the action with Mark's Gospel, starting off with John the Baptist proclaiming to everyone about Jesus

-St. John the Baptist preaches/teaches everyone to "repent". The Greek word, μετανοια, literally means "change of mind". Repentance meant changing one's opinion of actions, changing one's thoughts, changing one's attention. St. John the Baptist wanted everyone's thoughts, actions, and attentions to be towards the Kingdom of God, towards the Savior, Christ.

-St. John the Baptist lived a life of constant fasting, of "asceticism". Asceticism is a discipline we can practice to different degrees. St. John the Baptist didn't need a roof over his head, the same kind of diet as you or I, or even normal clothes. He lived in communion with God, and God provided for him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the strangest thing you have ever eaten? (DISCUSSION)
2. St. John the Baptist lived a life of "roughing it". What was the most difficult day/trip you've experienced or a time when you were "roughing it"? (DISCUSSION)
3. What would be the three hardest things to live without for a day? (DISCUSSION)
4. Over the course of the day, where do you find your attention/thoughts are on when you're not preoccupied? (DISCUSSION)
5. What is one thing you wish you could change in your life? (DISCUSSION)
6. What are three things we could realistically do today to turn our attention away from bad / turn our attention towards Christ? (DISCUSSION)
7. We typically make "New Years Resolutions" around January, and in January we hear "repentance" as a word a lot because we read about Epiphany and St. John the Baptist.
 - a. What has been a past New Years Resolution?
 - b. Did you keep that resolution? What was difficult about keeping it? Or what helped you keep it?
 - c. What is a New Years Resolution we can give to God?
 - d. What can help us see that Resolution through this year?