SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) Sunday 6 December 2026

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

CHRISTMAS ADVERTS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Prepare the way (Mark 1:1-8)
The Gospel reading is Mark's account of how John the Baptist prepared for the ministry of Jesus. John is portrayed as the messenger crying in the wilderness 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' Mark's account emphasises the appearance of John dressed like Elijah in the Old Testament. Many expected Elijah to return to prepare the way for God's Messiah. There is here a note of great expectancy in the message.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this note of great expectancy is *Christmas adverts.*

Core extracts from the Gospel (Mark 1: 4-6; for reflection throughout the week)

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
And people from the whole Judean countryside
and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him,
and were baptized by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.
Now John was clothed with camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
with John the Baptist
we are preparing for your coming.
Teach us to see you
in every sign of Christmas around us;
for you are the meaning of Christmas.
Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) Sunday 6 December 2026

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 1: 1-8

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight" ',

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) Sunday 6 December 2026

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Mark 1: 1-8)

Begin exploring Mark's presentation of how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What is significant about John's message 'Prepare the way of the Lord'?
- What is significant about John's choice of clothing?
- What do you make of John's relationship with Jesus?
- How do you understand baptism with the Holy Spirit?
- What does this passage say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare how Matthew and Luke develop this passage from Mark:

- Matthew 3: 1-12
- Luke 3: 2-17

Explore passages in the Old Testament on which Mark draws:

- 2 Kings 1: 8
- Isaiah 40: 3-5
- Malachi 3: 1

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Mark's presentation of how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Images of John the Baptist
- John the Baptist in the Gospels
- Christmas adverts

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) Sunday 6 December 2026

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark's presentation of how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus is *Christmas adverts*. Draw on your experience of Christmas adverts. For example:

- Which Christmas adverts have had an impact on you?
- How does your church prepare for and promote Christmas?
- How are you are getting ready for Christmas?

What have you learned about Christmas adverts?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Mark's presentation of how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus or by the image of Christmas adverts.

- Create a collage of Christmas adverts, placing Jesus at the centre.
- Create a poster to reflect how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus.
- Create adverts promoting Christmas at your church.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus or on the image of Christmas adverts.

Liverpool Cathedral

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.

Canolfan Y Santes Fair St Mary's Centre

The scripture quotations contained in these materials are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicised Edition, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and is used with permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright © Leslie J. Francis, 2026
Canon Theologian Liverpool Cathedral
with sponsorship and support from
St Mary's Centre, Wales