

**St. James Episcopal Church
A Moment for Kids—of All Ages!
DECEMBER 13, 2105—THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

“OK JOHN, WHAT NOW?”



Last week we learned about John the Baptist, and how he was telling people that something big was coming. “Get ready!” he said. The people asked him, “What should we do? How do we get ready?” The first thing John said was to be sorry for what you have done wrong. “Anything else?” they said. “Oh, Yes!” John said. “Be kind. Be fair. Share what you have with people who are hungry or cold or poor.”

BRINGING THE GOSPEL HOME: THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

John the Baptist is a very colorful figure—he railed and shouted at people and even insulted them. But his message is really very calm, simple and hopeful. He told the people that God is here for you. Be baptized, he said, and know that you are forgiven and go out as a changed person.

Today's readings echo with joy. We can rejoice because God rejoices over us, withdrawing any judgment against us. Knowing that, it seems somewhat absurd to harbor anxieties, grudges, or past hurt. When we realize how outrageously God cares for us, we are called to live and reflect that love ourselves. When “the Lord is near,” God's peace expels the demons of fretting and fear and God encourages us not merely to cope but to transform.

The heartening thing about John's advice is that it's something we can all do. The things he tells the crowds are fairly basic. He doesn't tell us to do the impossible or give up everything we love. It's doable and happens within the familiar parameters of our families, jobs, and neighborhoods, with the skills that we already have. So, the questions for us are “How can I do the things that John described?” “How can I share what I have with people who are less fortunate?” “How can I be kind, be fair?”

Dinner Table Conversation:

Ask the same question the crowds asked John, “What should we do?” or, “How shall we live?” Reflect quietly, then ask each family member how they'd answer.

What in our household can we share with those in need?

Do you think you should only do these things at Christmas time? Or all year long?

How different would my life be if I didn't have people to love me?

A note to frazzled parents during the holidays:

St. Paul promises that God's peace will stand guard over our hearts and minds. When children are whiny, nerves are frazzled, expectations are high and time is tight, pause, breathe deeply and remember this promise.

God is with you and you are doing God's best work as a loving parent.

This insert is prepared by Mother Bonnie. If you have any questions about it, please let me know. It is posted weekly on www.stjamesbatavia.org