

Youth Activities and Christian Education

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THE SEASON OF ADVENT: In the Armenian Church, the fifty day period before the feast of Theophany (Armenian Christmas) is referred to as ADVENT. The great theme of this fifty day period is PREPARATION. We are preparing for one of the greatest feasts of the Christian year, that is the feast of God-becoming man. The article, THE SEASON OF ADVENT, in the YACE publication STEP BY STEP, pages 35—36, gives a great deal of information on this season of preparation. In our Sunday School classes, we could easily present a full understanding of the importance of Advent by reviewing the weekly Gospel readings with our students. For your convenience, these are here presented:

- First Sunday of Advent - Luke 12:13-31

This reading presents the Parable of the Rich Fool. The great lesson is the need to always be prepared for the end. We are forcefully reminded that our ultimate well-being is not to be found in possessing an abundance of material goods and riches.

- Second Sunday of Advent - Luke 13:1-9

In this reading, we see the Lesson of the Fig Tree. The point is made that we are all sinners and hence all have a need for God's love and mercy. We are further admonished that unless we bear God's fruit, we are lost.

- Third Sunday of Advent — Luke 14:12-24

The parable of the Guests and the Banquet is here presented. We are shown that it is foolishness to refuse the invitation to God's Banquet, the kingdom of heaven. We are also shown the superficiality of the things which we all too frequently allow to come between us and Almighty God.

— Fourth Sunday of Advent - Luke 17:1—10

Our Lord's comments in this Gospel reading are directed to avoiding temptations to sin. We are reminded of the importance of doing God's will in all things.

- Fifth Sunday of Advent - Luke 18:9-14

The parable in this reading is the Parable of the Publican and the Sinner in the Temple. We are shown the foolishness of trying to compare ourselves with others with a view to making ourselves look better. The only legitimate comparison which can be made is a comparison with the standards and righteousness of Almighty God. As we consider these, we are struck with the inescapable truth that we are all found wanting.

- Sixth Sunday of Advent - Luke 19:12—28

Here we read the Parable of the Talents. The lesson is that we are all ultimately responsible to Almighty God for all that He has given us. We are merely stewards and not owners of what we seemingly possess. We are therefore bound to do His will, not ours.

- Seventh Sunday of Advent - Luke 22:24-30

Today's Gospel reading points out the great need for humility in all who profess to belong to Christ. Our Lord states that only those who have shared in His trials will be able to share in the Kingdom of God.