

## ⊕ PREPARATION PAGE ⊕

### ***Items needed:***

- Lectionary
- Binder(s) with examination of conscience
- Presider's script and binder
- Advent wreath or candle(s) and stand
- Matches
- Worship aids
- Microphones, if needed

### ***Ministers needed:***

- Presider
- Cantor and accompanist
- Lector
- Two additional readers

### ***Music needed:***

- Advent hymn for gathering
- Psalm response
- Communal setting of the Magnificat

### ***Preparation:***

- Light appropriate number of candles on Advent wreath
- Prepare hymnals or worship aid
- Set reading in the Lectionary
- Prepare binder with examination of conscience text for readers
- Prepare script and binder for presider

✠ GATHERING ✠

*(all stand)*

### Introductory Dialogue

PRESIDER: God, come to my assistance. ✠

*People: Lord, make haste to help me.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever.  
Amen. Alleluia.*

### Hymn

*All sing an appropriate Advent hymn.*

### Collect

PRESIDER: Let us pray.

*Brief silence.*

Gracious and merciful God,  
your love for us knows no bounds.  
Open our eyes as we come before you now,  
that we may see ourselves as you see us.  
Give us wisdom that we may recognize our need  
for your mercy.  
And grant us courage that we may forgive others  
as you forgive us.  
May our lives always be a sign  
of your reconciling peace  
for which our world waits in hope.  
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

✠ **WORD** ✠

*(all sit)*

**Reading**

A lector proclaims 1 John 1:1, 5-7, 2:1 or another appropriate Advent reading.

**Silence**

Pause for silent reflection.

**Response**

All sing Psalm 24 or Psalm 84, or another appropriate psalm response.

✠ **PENITENCE** ✠

*(all remain seated)*

**Examination of Conscience**

PRESIDER: Dear friends, with faith in God's mercy,  
let us lay bare our hearts to the Word,  
and let it pierce us that we may ever be changed by it.

Two readers lead the examination of conscience.

Reader 1:

**Most blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb. [pause]**

- Have we greeted one another with curses instead of blessings?
- Have we borne bitter fruit in our thoughts, words, and deeds? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.*

Reader 2:

**And how does this happen to me  
that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** *[pause]*

- Have we denied our own worth or the worth of others, disbelieving that God is present in ourselves or in others?
- Have we missed the presence of God because we are too busy, too hurried, or too anxious? *[pause]*

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 1:

**For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears,  
the infant in my womb leaped for joy.** *[pause]*

- Have we closed our ears to the sound of God's voice coming from unexpected people, places, and encounters?
- Have we grown so serious that we cannot leap for joy? *[pause]*

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 2:

**Blessed are you who believed  
that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.** *[pause]*

- Have we stopped believing in the goodness of others, of ourselves, our leaders, our world?
- Do we delay the Word from being fulfilled by our apathy, cynicism, despair, or complacency? *[pause]*

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 1:

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.** *[pause]*

- Does my very being, my very presence preach the goodness of God?
- Do I sing, dance, play, and rejoice with others as often as I can? *[pause]*

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 2:

**For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;  
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. [pause]**

- Have we looked down upon others because of their spirituality, lifestyle, politics, educational background, or economic wealth or poverty?
- How has our need to help others dismissed their dignity or desire to be agents of change for themselves or for their own communities? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 1:

**The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. [pause]**

- When have we taken credit for what we have not done?
- When have we denied our own participation in the wrong that our communities, churches, families, countries, or other associations have done? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 2:

**His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. [pause]**

- Have we lost our sense of mercy and compassion, becoming desensitized to injustice, so that nothing ever angers or sickens us?
- Have we lost our sense of fear, awe, and reverence that nothing ever moves us at our core? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 1:

**He has shown might with his arm,  
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. [pause]**

- Have we been secretly arrogant?
- Have we used our own power, status, education, or religion to put others down, even in the silence of our hearts? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 2:

**He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones  
but lifted up the lowly. [pause]**

- Have we done all we can to participate in and influence the political life of our cities, states, and nations?
- Have we been afraid to be prophetic even at the cost of our own comfort? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 1:

**The hungry he has filled with good things;  
the rich he has sent away empty. [pause]**

- Have we become gluttonous for praise, solitude, piety, or the safety of those who are like us?
- Who have we sent away empty, without our acknowledgment, thanks, care, or gratitude? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

Reader 2:

**He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy,  
according to his promise to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever. [pause]**

- Have we refused to give help and mercy?
- Have we broken our promises?
- Will we leave this world a more merciful, just, and beautiful place for our descendants? [pause]

*All: Holy Mary...*

***(all kneel or stand)***

## **Confession**

**PRESIDER:** Together let us bow our heads and pray.  
*I confess to almighty God...*

## Lord's Prayer

PRESIDER: Let us pray for forgiveness  
in the words that Jesus taught us.  
*Our Father...*

*(all stand)*

## Song of Praise

All sing a setting of the Magnificat.

## Closing Prayer

PRESIDER: Gracious and loving God,  
you show us mercy  
and make us a new creation in the image of your Son.  
Make us living signs of your love to all those we meet.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## Closing Blessing

A priest or deacon gives the final blessing in the usual manner.

A lay minister concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross, saying:

PRESIDER: May God bless us and keep us. ✠  
May God smile upon us and be gracious to us.  
May God look upon us kindly, and give us peace. *Amen.*

All may share a sign of peace.