

Children's Address:

Matthew 3:8

Do you have visitors coming to your house for Christmas? What will you do to get ready for those visitors? Will you help bake Christmas cookies? Will you help clean the house? What if a king was coming to visit? You'd want your house to be very clean, and you'd bake the very best cookies ever made!

During Advent, the weeks before Christmas, we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth. We'll welcome Him as our King. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. When He grew up, it was time for Him to start healing, helping people, and teaching about the kingdom of God. So before Jesus began His ministry, God sent a man named John to help people get ready to welcome Jesus as their King and Saviour. They didn't have to clean, bake, or decorate. To prepare for Jesus, John told the people to repent. To "repent" means to be sorry for your sins.

That's the best way to prepare and welcome Jesus the King. When we feel sorry for our sins, we understand we need a Saviour. We need Jesus! During Advent, we prepare to welcome Jesus by feeling regret for our sins. We ask God to forgive us because Jesus died on the cross for us. That's why Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He came to die on the cross and rise from the dead for us.

John told people to repent. Then he told them, "*Bear fruit in keeping with repentance*" (Matt. 3:8). They should live as people whose sins are forgiven, people who follow Jesus. We want to live that way too. We love Jesus and follow Him. Our sins are forgiven, and we want to forgive and be kind to others. Baking cookies and cleaning and decorating for Christmas are fun, but welcoming Jesus, our King, really means remembering He came to die on the cross to take away our sins. Our sins are forgiven, and now we want to live as His followers. That's preparing to celebrate Jesus' birthday!

Jesus, we are sorry for our sins. Thank You for dying on the cross so that our sins are forgiven. We welcome you as our King and look forward to Your birthday! Amen.

