

A NOTE TO PARENTS

When I first began teaching Sunday School, I remember brightly announcing to my class of preschoolers, "Advent means *coming!* Who's coming?" With one voice, they chorused, "*Santa Claus!*"

Advent can be confusing to children. It can be confusing to adults. It looks forward to Christmas, yet only in its fourth week do we begin to hear of Mary and Joseph and the birth of a child; up till then the readings in Advent carry us to the end of Jesus' ministry, his predictions of the Last Days, and then back again to the days of John the Baptist. Not only do children need to learn that the Church's Christmas is not about Santa Claus but about Baby Jesus; they then need to learn that the season that builds toward Christmas is about much more than waiting for Baby Jesus.

Advent is about God's coming into our world. At one, chosen time in history, God came in a special and unique way, and it is this we celebrate at Christmas. That coming was promised, and in Advent we remember the promise. But Christ's coming in history—Christ's birth as a human baby—is not the only or the final fulfillment of God's promises. So, in remembering the promises of God's coming in Christ, we are led also to consider every other way that God fulfills those promises and comes to us: in history, in our personal lives, and in the still unfulfilled promise of the Kingdom when Jesus comes again. Advent proves to be about *time*—time past, time present, and time future.

This is all too much for children to grasp firmly. But it is not hard to help them begin to make the connection between Advent and time. The Advent wreath and the Advent calendar, counting the days and the weeks till Christmas, associate this season with a special consciousness of the power and the holiness of time. There is the time that we can count: the four candles on the wreath, the 24 little doors on the calendar. Then there is God's time, which follows its own rules.

We do not know when Jesus will come again. But as we count the days till Christmas, we can make ready our hearts—and to them he can come any time, and right now.

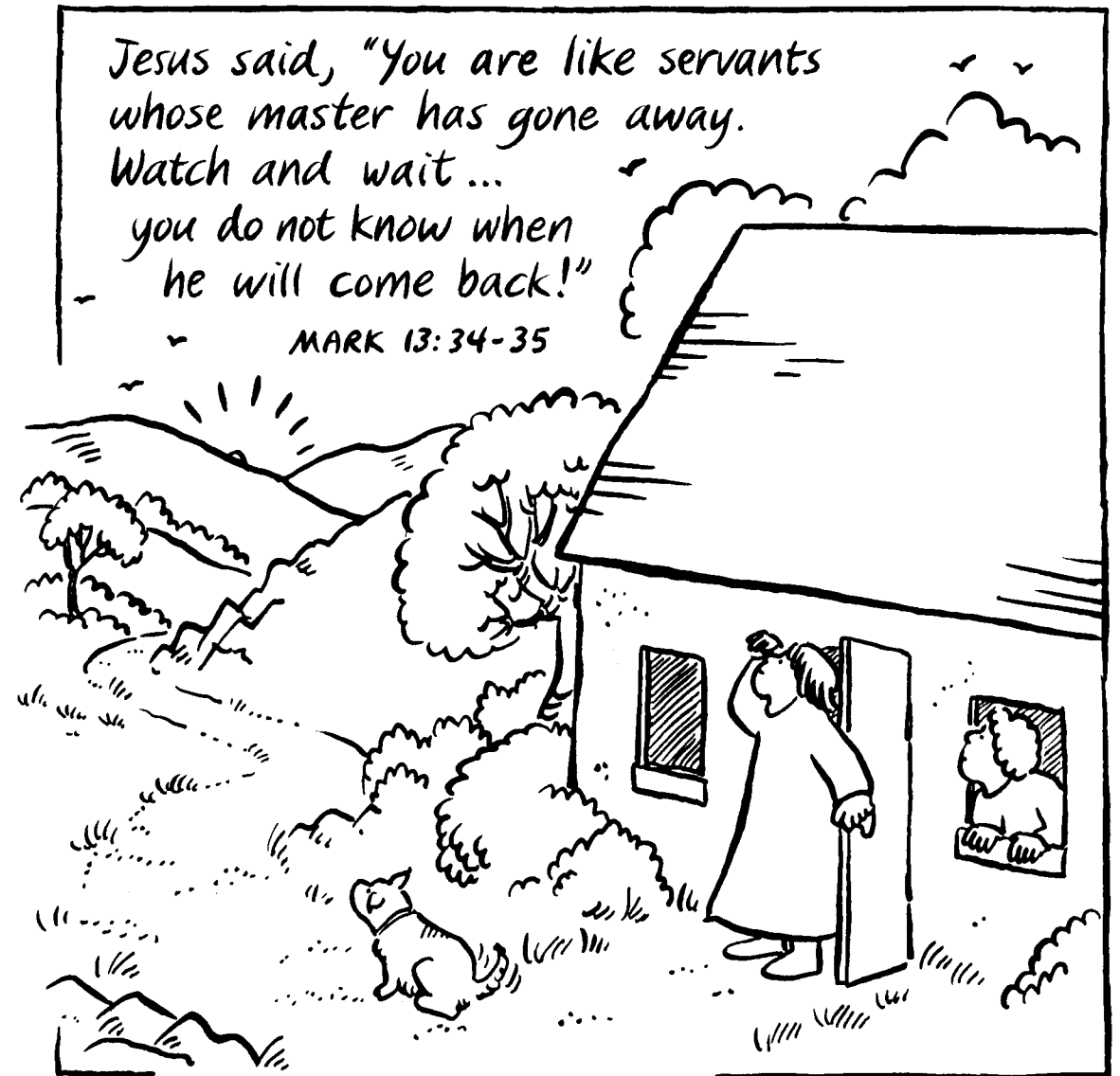
© 1987 by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard. All rights reserved.
THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA
203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com



THE SUNDAY PAPER

JUNIOR

Year B
1st SUNDAY
in
ADVENT



TODAY IS THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

ADVENT is the beginning of a new year in the Church. Advent means "coming." Christmas is coming.



Long ago, God's people waited for God to come and save them.



Then, Jesus came. He was born and grew up. He died and rose again.



Jesus comes to live in our hearts. Someday, he will come again, to be our King!



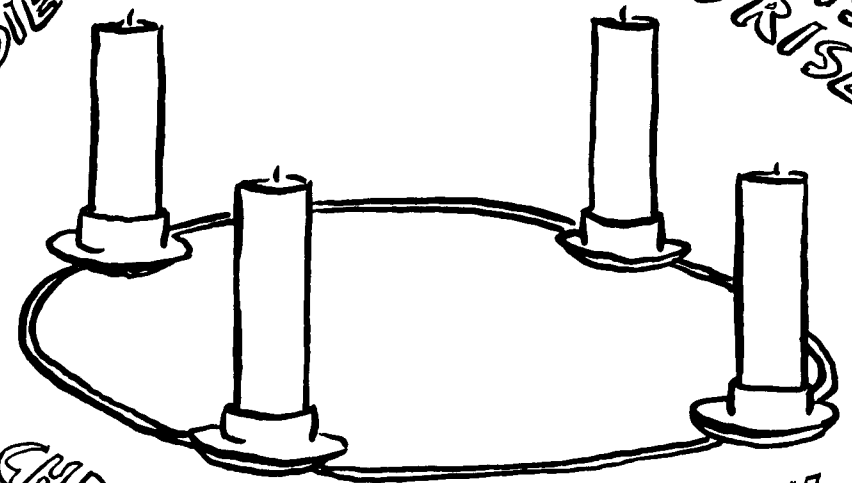
Advent is a time of waiting. We are waiting for Christmas. After four weeks of Advent, Christmas will come. We will be happy, remembering how Jesus came, long ago, to live with us.

We know when Christmas will come. But God's people did not know when Jesus would come. And we do not know when Jesus will come again, to be our King. He told us to watch and wait, and be ready!

+ CHRIST
DIED



+ CHRIST
IS RISEN



+ CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN +

Decorate this Advent wreath. Light one candle on it. Save this page, and light one more candle each week!