Advent is a time of joy, when we happily look forward to the coming of Jesus. Today's Gospel reading tells about how Saint John the Baptist went around telling everyone to repent and prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

An Advent wreath is a symbol of the coming of Jesus, our Light, into the world. It has three purple candles and one pink candle. One candle is lit on the first week of Advent, and one more is added every week until Christmas. Every week it gets a bit brighter because we are getting closer to Jesus' coming at Christmas.

The purple candles stand for repentance—being sorry and making up for our sins. The pink candle represents joy. It is lit on the third week of Advent because we rejoice that the waiting is half over.

In Advent we hear about Saint John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, who prepared the way for Jesus' coming. He preached to the people, telling them to repent, and baptized them.

When Jesus came Saint John told the people to follow Jesus because He was the Messiah.

Can you find your way from Saint John to Jesus?
Saint John of the Cross
December 14

John was born to a poor family in Spain in 1542. His father died when he was very young. For several years he worked in a hospital.

He met St. Teresa of Avila, who was a Carmelite nun. Here's what you can do...

St. John started a group of monks who would live by the old rule.

He escaped 9 months later, but while in prison John wrote beautiful poetry about God.

Hm. God's love is like a fountain...

By this time, John was quite sickly. He was treated badly at first, but by the time he died even his enemies realized his holiness.

Today Saint John of the Cross is best known for his writings. He taught that we will never be able to be perfectly happy here on Earth because we are made for God in Heaven. Next time you feel unhappy, remember that perfect happiness is waiting for you in Heaven!

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Saint John the Baptist Word Puzzle

Here is a prophecy about Saint John the Baptist. Use the words from the list below to fill in the blanks. The letters that are in circles fit into the matching spots at the bottom.

A voice of one ☐☐☐☐ out in the desert:

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ the way of the Lord,
make straight his ☐☐☐☐.

Every valley shall be ☐☐☐☐ and every ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ and hill shall be made low.

The winding roads shall be made ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐, and the ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of ☐☐☐☐.

GOD MOUNTAIN
PATHS STRAIGHT
ROUGH PREPARE
FILLED CRYING

What was St. John the Baptist?