

**Worship Material**  
**How John responds to searching questions**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Father God, thank you for your presence here today.  
Thank you that you speak to us through our worship.  
Thank you that you speak to us through your Word.  
Thank you that you speak to us through each other.  
Help us to listen to your voice as we worship.  
Help us to listen to your voice as Scripture is read.  
Help us to listen to your voice as we seek your truth.

**Amen.**

**Read John 1:6-8, 19-28**

**Bible notes**

The lectionary's choice of verses for this reading shines a spotlight fully on John the Baptist. In the first three short verses (vv.6-8), we learn four things about John: that he was 'sent from God'; that he 'came... to testify to the light'; that he came to enable others to believe; and that he is not to be confused with Jesus – who is the light of the world. Then, just in case we didn't quite get it, this is repeated in vv.19- 28, but at greater length and in a more dramatic fashion. Here the priests, Levites and Pharisees ask questions on our behalf. But note also that, in his answers, John cites Isaiah. This shines a light on the way that John is telling them that the Scriptures they already know are about to be fulfilled. One of the key tests for true faith and Christian ministry is that we don't become confused about who we are. John knows who he is, enabling him to answer the questions posed. He stands in the great prophetic line that stretches through the Old Testament. John is not the Messiah, he is 'simply' a herald of what is to come.

**Prayer**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Something good lies just around the corner.  
We can't see it yet, but we know it's good.  
Excitement is mounting.  
We thank you for what and who is to come.  
We thank you for what we have now.  
You bless us day by day.

Even when we're sad, we can praise you.  
You catch our tears; you turn negatives into positives;  
you turn our dark times into light and make us laugh again,  
clothing us in garments of praise.  
You make the sun shine and flowers bloom.  
**Something good lies just around the corner.**  
**We can't see it yet, but we give thanks –**  
**for we know it's good. Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Lord, help us to reflect you at work.  
Help us to reflect you at school.  
Help us to reflect you at home.  
Help us to reflect you when we're out.  
Help us to reflect you with our friends.  
Help us to reflect you to our neighbours.  
Shine your light so all may see your love this Christmas.  
**Amen.**