



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Advent/Christmas – LOVING

\*Note to teachers/parents and carers.

This work comes from the Come and See Religious Education programme which is taught in all Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. We have given a general guide to the learning opportunities that children may have come across under normal timetabling in school. We have suggested and selected a small amount of the programme. The activities aim to keep Religious Education practical and fun. They are in Year groups however, there is no harm in completing other year group work as this will help children to remember and strengthen their learning. The first part of learning is called – **EXPLORE**. This shares your child's everyday experiences and helps them to see how the Catholic faith is lived in their everyday lives. The second part, called – **REVEAL** shares bible stories that links to their everyday life.

Advent is a time when we appreciate the love in our lives and prepare to celebrate love becoming a reality in the person of Jesus. Christians at Christmas celebrate the gift of Jesus, given by God as a sign and expression of God's love for us. Giving and receiving reflects the truth that all life is given by God and life is given meaning through the gift of Jesus.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – EARLY YEARS – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE: Waiting for a birthday



Read together and share: *God's Story 1* page 12

Talk about...

- What is happening in the picture? What they are waiting for?
- A new mum that you might know. It might be a friend's mum or even your own mum. Talk about her child's 'birth-day' – the joy and excitement and how she has longed for and waited for the arrival of her new baby. How did she prepare for the new baby? Who came to see the baby? How did they celebrate?
- What do you need to celebrate a birthday?
- Do you have any photographs of your own birthdays? Talk about what happened.
- Do you have photographs of someone else's birthday? Talk about how they celebrated.
- You might also like to read a story about '*Kipper's Birthday.*'  
@<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mm1BXicbFeU>

### Choose Activities

- Play some birthday party games – musical bumps, pass the parcel, hokey-cokey etc.
- Make and decorate a birthday cake or make a cake out of cardboard or paper and decorate it. Take a photograph and send it to your school.
- Can you make a list and cut out pictures or draw the things a new mum might need for her baby? nappies, bottle, changing mat, baby cream etc.
- Play with your dolls, teddies, toys and pretend you are celebrating a birthday.

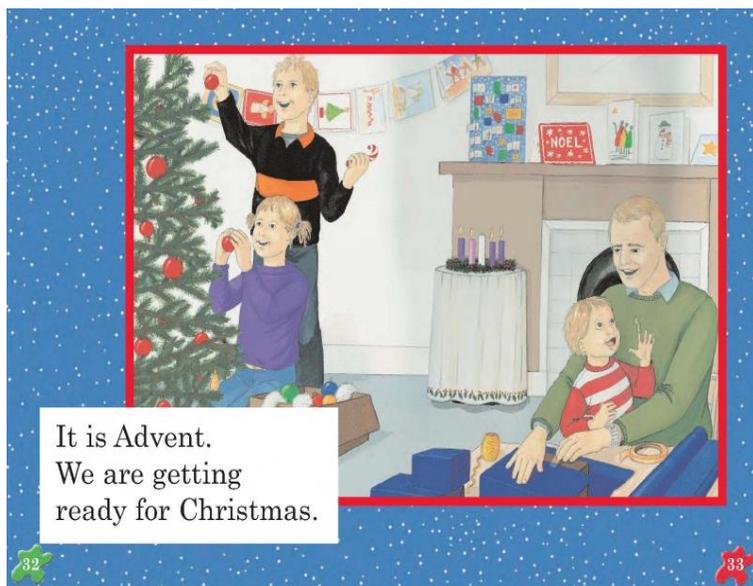
You might wish to...

- invite your family to your teddy or dolls birthday party.
- make a birthday card for them.
- make some pretend food for your doll or teddy.
- make some party hats and place mats out of paper or paper plates.
- make some bunting out of paper and decorate it.



## REVEAL: What is Advent? What was the first Christmas?

**A note for parents & carers.** ADVENT is a time when we are preparing for Christmas, the birth of Jesus. The four Sundays before Christmas Day are known as the four Sundays of Advent. Each Sunday one candle is lit on the **Advent Wreath** as we wait for Jesus' birthday. There are three purple candles to remind us to help others and be kind. There is one pink candle which helps us be happy and joyful. There is sometimes a white candle lit on Christmas Day to remind us that it is Jesus' birthday.



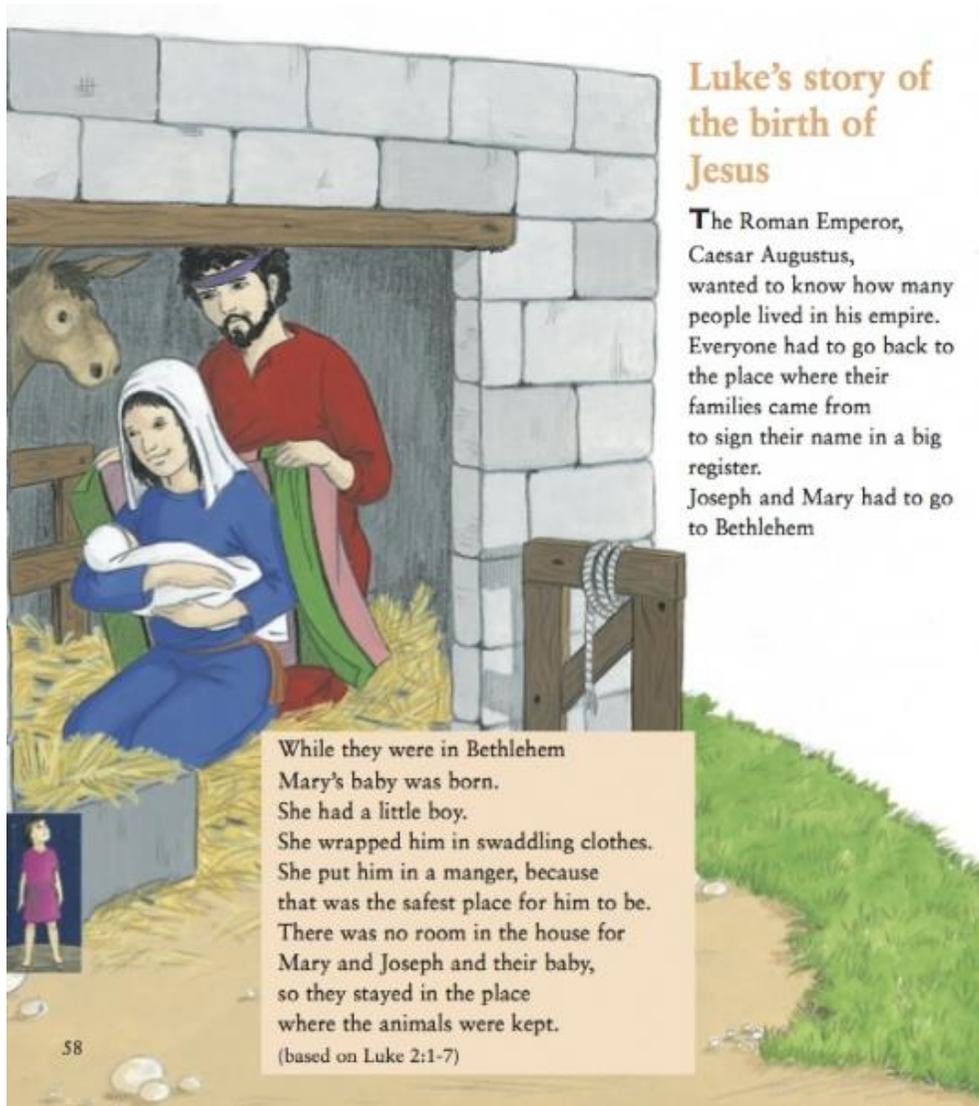
### **Read together, share and talk about...**

- What can you see in the picture?
- How many candles are on the Advent Wreath?
- What colours are the candles?
- Can you see the Advent Calendar?
- Do you have an Advent calendar at home? What does it help you to do?

### **Choose Activities**

- Make some decorations for your home to get ready for Christmas. See the ideas below and the link to activities may help with ideas for decorations and play activities. <https://www.teachwire.net/news/19-of-the-best-early-years-christmas-activities>
- Write down four things you are going to do to help others and be kind to get ready for Jesus' birthday.





## Luke's story of the birth of Jesus

The Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, wanted to know how many people lived in his empire. Everyone had to go back to the place where their families came from to sign their name in a big register. Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem

While they were in Bethlehem Mary's baby was born. She had a little boy. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes. She put him in a manger, because that was the safest place for him to be. There was no room in the house for Mary and Joseph and their baby, so they stayed in the place where the animals were kept. (based on Luke 2:1-7)

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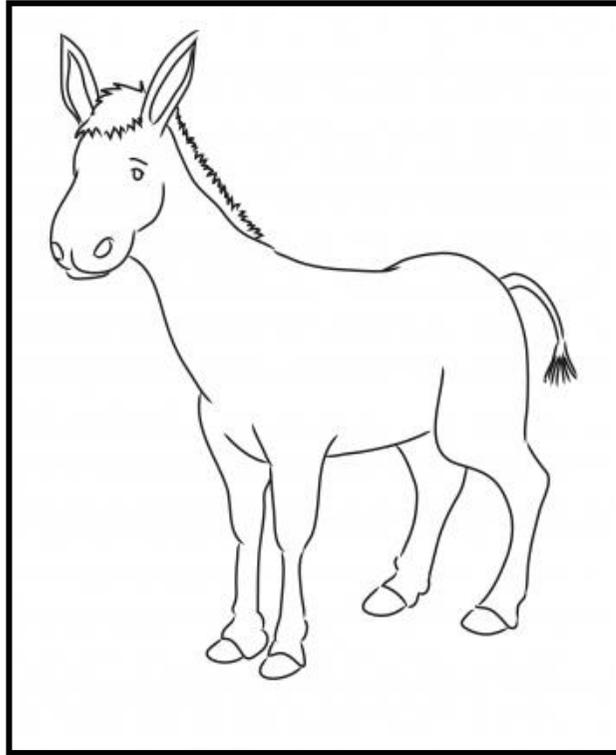
### Read together, share and talk about...

Read the Gospel of Luke's story about the birth of Jesus together.

- Who can we see in the stable?
- Mary is Jesus' mother. What is she doing?
- Joseph is Jesus' father. What is he doing?
- What do you think they are thinking about?
- Can you find out why there is a donkey in the picture?
- Why were Mary and Joseph in a stable?
- What is a stable?

### Choose Activities

- Make a card with Mary, Joseph and Jesus on it and give it to someone in your family. Can you write the story inside the card? Tell the story of Jesus' birthday to your family.
- Colour and cut out Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the donkey. You might wish to cut out the figures or around the boxes to make it easier. Use them to ...
  - place on your card
  - place into a stable you have made
  - write their names underneath
  - decorate them for your home
  - arrange them in your book or on paper and write the story about Jesus' Birth
- There are some more stable ideas on this website ...
  - <https://rainydaymum.co.uk/12-days-of-nativity-story-inspired-arts-and-crafts/>
- Sing John Burland's Lullaby...
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKkgzjiYntI>



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 1 – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

**EXPLORE:** When do we have to wait? What can we do when we wait?

### Talk about and share together:

- The times in our lives when we must wait and how we use that time.
- Talk together about a time you or someone in your family had to wait. You might have waited for a new baby, puppy, a birthday, holiday, a day out, going to visit someone or waiting for someone to get better.
- How did you and your family feel?
- Was there anything special you and your family did whilst you were waiting?
- Were other people involved getting ready for something to happen?
- Who was getting things ready while you were waiting? What were they doing to get ready?
- It is hard waiting for something to happen like Christmas or birthdays? Why is it hard to do? What can it help us to do?

### Watch and sing about waiting...

- You might wish to watch a TV Advert about waiting

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iET\\_eI438Fc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iET_eI438Fc)

- A song to sing about waiting

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d5vd5o\\_zFA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d5vd5o_zFA)



### Choose Activities

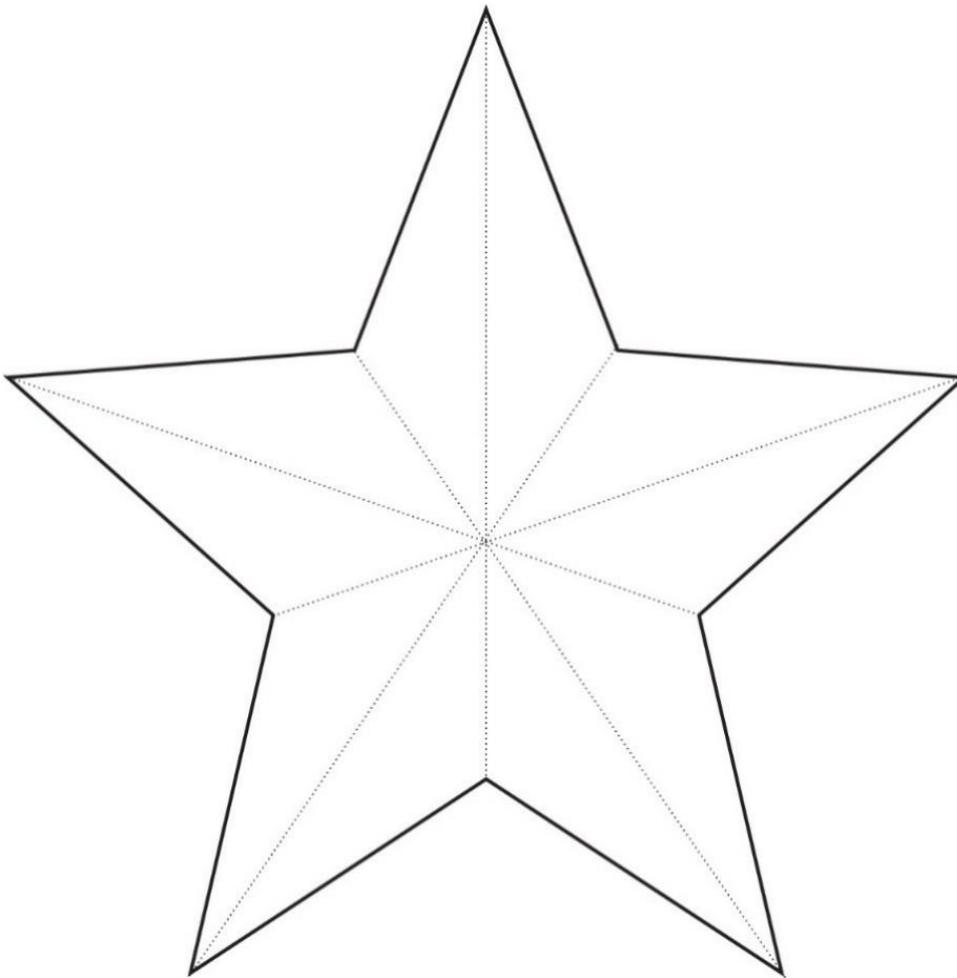
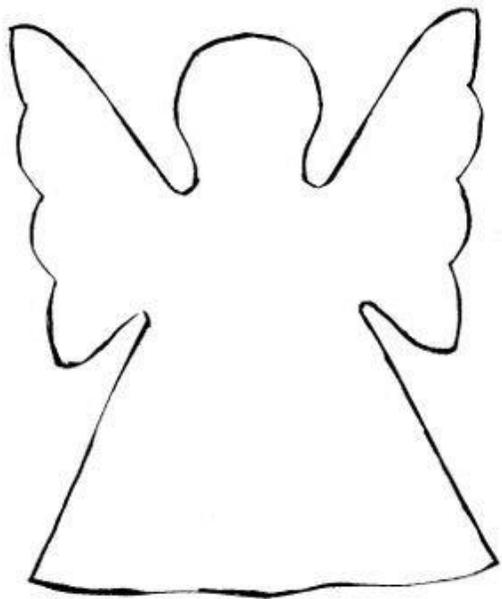
- Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves waiting for an event. Underneath write about waiting.  
*I am waiting for...*  
*I feel...*
- We are waiting for Christmas!  
What can you do while you are waiting?

Make some promises you might make while you are waiting?  
*I promise to ...*

Make Christmas decorations while you are waiting. You can use the templates on the next page, from the photographs or even make your own!  
Write a promise on your decoration.



*I promise to ...*



# My Advent Promises

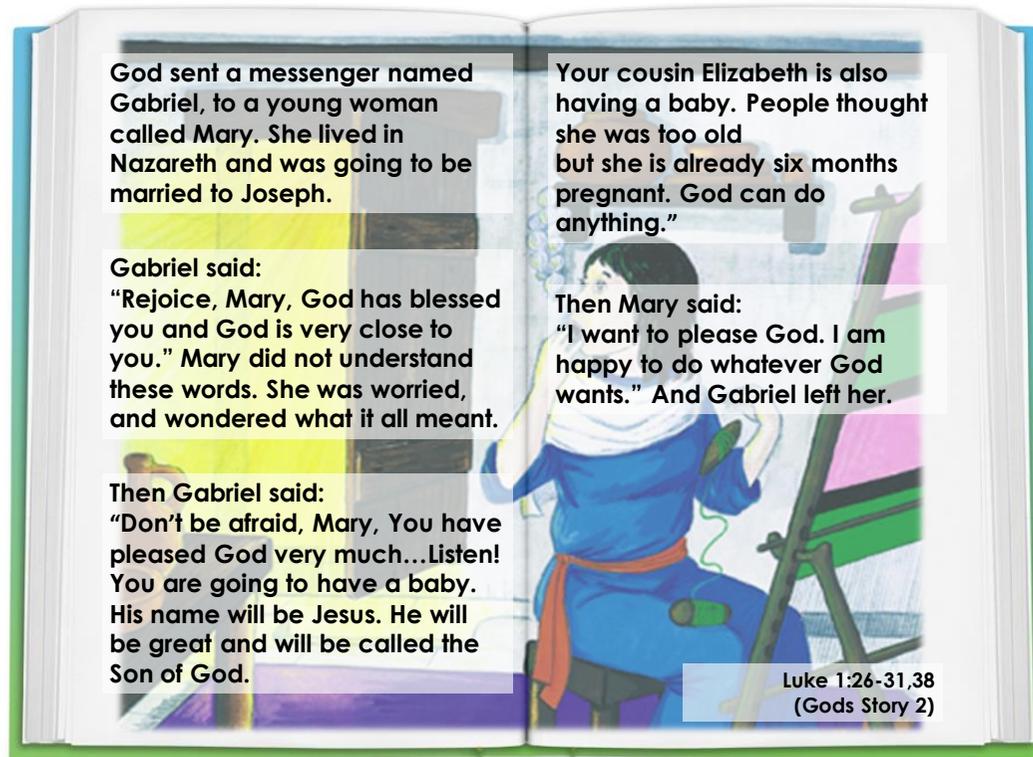
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 HOPE How I will be hopeful</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2 PEACE How I will be peaceful</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3 JOY How I will be joyful</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 4 LOVE How I will be loving</p>

My Advent Candle Promise

**A note for parents & carers.** ADVENT is a time when we are preparing for Christmas, the birth of Jesus. The four Sundays before Christmas Day are known as the four Sundays of Advent. Each Sunday one candle is lit on the **Advent Wreath** as we wait for Jesus' birthday. There are three purple candles to remind us to help others and be kind. There is one pink candle which helps us be happy and joyful. There is sometimes a white candle lit on Christmas Day to remind us that it is Jesus' birthday.

**REVEAL:** During Advent, we remember that Mary had to wait for the birth of Jesus.

Read and share together:



- Who visited Mary?
- How do you think Mary felt?
- What was the message?
- What did Mary say?
- What do you think Mary did whilst she was waiting for Jesus, God's Son, to be born?



### Choose Activities

- Write and tell the story showing how Mary loved God so much that she wanted to please God by saying yes to God.
- Talk about the things Mary would have to do whilst she was waiting for the birth of Jesus. Make a list for Mary.
- Draw or paint a picture of the messenger Gabriel and Mary.
- Make a Christmas card. Draw Mary and write the words... *You are going to have a baby. His name will be Jesus.*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 2 – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE: Preparing for special times.

*\*Note to parents/carers - before you begin talk to your child about what the word **preparing** means*

#### Read together and share:

- Talk about preparing to come to school in the morning.  
What do you do?  
Is it the same each day?  
How do we prepare for special occasions: e.g. a party or going on holiday etc.  
What jobs does each person have to do?

#### Choose Activities

- Look at each picture. Can you write a list in order of the things you have to do each day to prepare for school?

1. I get up at ...
- 2.



#### Read together and share:

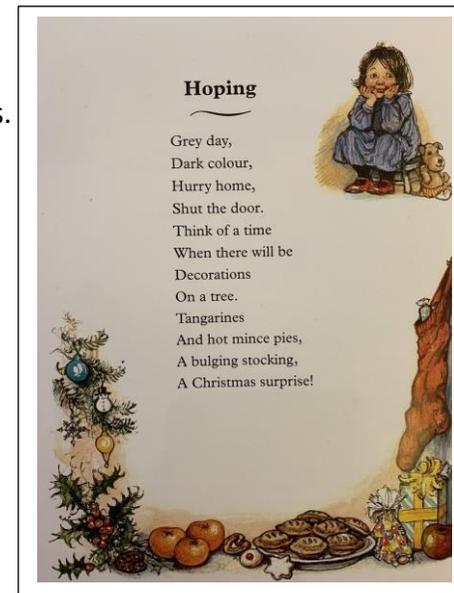
- Talk about preparing for Christmas.  
Read the poem by Shirley Hughes

What is the little girl hoping for?  
What preparations will have to be made?  
What would happen if no preparations are made?  
Have you prepared for a special time?  
Is it hard to prepare? Why?

#### Choose Activities

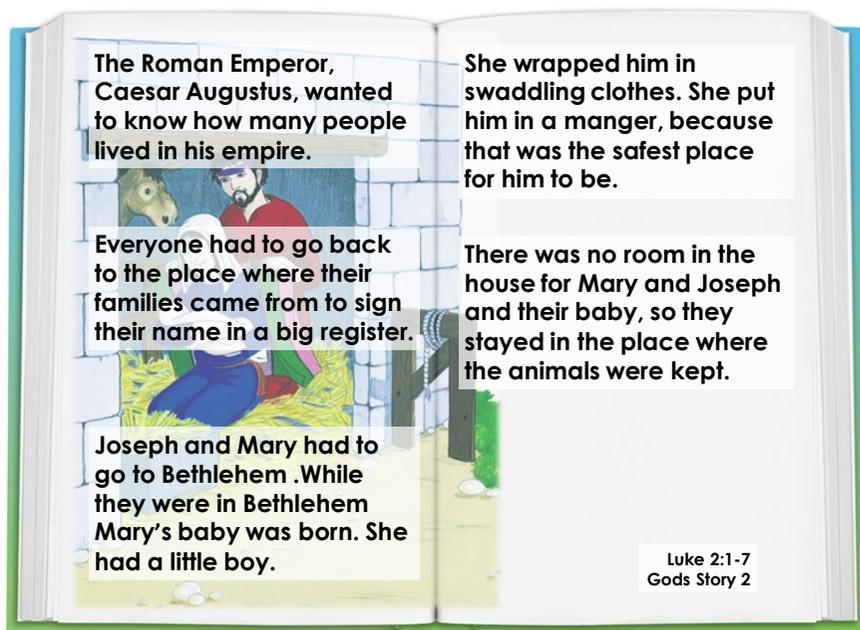
- Make a list of the preparations that are made at home in readiness for Christmas. For example, buying cards, stamps, gifts, food; making cakes, puddings, mince pies; preparing decorations, a tree; booking a special outing to a pantomime or a meal.
- Make Christmas decorations e.g. paper chains, baubles.

**(use some of the ideas from Year 1)**



### Read and share together:

- What preparations do you think Mary and Joseph made at home in Nazareth for the birth of the baby?
- Why did the Roman Emperor want everyone to return to the place their family came from?
- How would Mary and Joseph have felt when they realised, they had to make a long journey?
- How do you think Mary and Joseph lovingly prepared the stable for the baby's arrival?
- How did Mary dress the baby?
- What did Mary and Joseph call him?



### Choose activities

- Retell the story about Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem. Draw or paint a picture of Mary, Joseph and their new baby.
- Make a crib with figures of people in the Nativity scene, retelling the story. Can you make the figures out of paper or card?

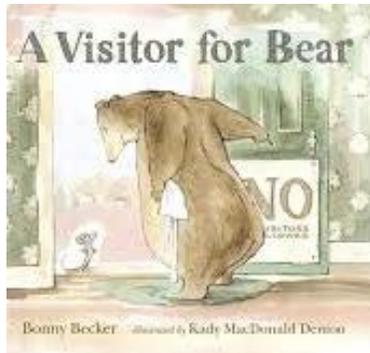


- You might wish to tell the story of Mary and Joseph by painting some story stones? Or using empty kitchen rolls?



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 3 – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE – The demands and joys of visitors



Watch and listen to the story – A Visitor for Bear (double click the link and open it with a wmv media file) or alternatively use the Youtube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lcGbli6bKA>



A Visitor For Bear  
Read aloud.wmv



Think about the characters in the story. How do you think bear feels about visitors? Why do you think he feels like that? How do you think mouse feels about being the unwanted visitor and say why? What

Talk about the experience of preparing for visitors and receiving visitors. What kinds of visitors do we look forward to? Which ones are difficult? What are the good things about having visitors and what demands do they make? Think about a situation where you might not want a visitor, but it turns out really well in the end and you enjoy the visit.

What do you think about visitors?  
How do you prepare for them?  
How do you feel as a visitor?

Think about the visitors we may have at Christmas and how we might make them feel welcome.

Draw up some guidelines for being good hosts or hostesses – you can use some of the ideas mentioned in the story by bear.



## **REVEAL – The Annunciation and the Visitation**

Advent is a time, a season, during which the Church reflects on and prepares for the coming of God into our world at Christmas. Visitors bring joys and demands. The coming of God also brings joys and demands. During Advent, the Church prepares for the celebration of the coming of God into the world at Christmas by listening to or reading passages from the Bible which tell of these joys and demands.

As we prepare for the coming of Jesus we remember and hear about the special visits which both Mary and Elizabeth experienced. Read the stories from the bible below of the Annunciation (the visit of Gabriel to Mary to tell her of God's Gift) and the Visitation where Mary visited Elizabeth her cousin.

### **The Annunciation (based on Luke 1: 26-31,38)**



God sent a messenger named Gabriel, to a young woman called Mary. She lived in Nazareth and was going to be married to Joseph. The messenger said: "Rejoice, Mary, God has blessed you and God is very close to you." Mary did not understand these words. She was worried and wondered what it all meant. Then Gabriel said: "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have pleased God very much. Listen! You are going to have a baby. It will be a boy and his name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God." Then Mary said: "I want to please God. I am happy to do whatever God wants." And the messenger left her.

Mary loved God so much that she was happy to do whatever God asked of her. She said YES when God asked her to be the mother of Jesus.

**Q** What demands do you think the visit of Gabriel placed on Mary?

### **The Visitation (based on Luke 1 39-58)**

Mary heard that her cousin Elizabeth was also going to have a baby. Elizabeth lived in the hill country of Judah. Mary went as quickly as she could to visit her. She went into Elizabeth's house and called out to her. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary calling, her heart was filled with joy and she said, "I am filled with happiness because you have come to visit me. Even my baby jumped when I heard your voice. God has blessed you and God is very close to you. Your baby will

be a very special child.” And Mary said, “God is so good. My heart is full of joy. God has blessed me very specially. God has done great things for me. Holy is God’s name. God’s love lasts forever. God always helps those who ask. God is always very close.” Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went home. Elizabeth had a little boy. When her family and friends heard about the new baby they shared her joy.

Look closely at this picture on the right. It is called the ‘Visit of Mary to Elizabeth’.  
Which part of the bible story do you think this shows?  
Can you see what each of them are doing?  
What might they be thinking?

Q What do you think are some of the joys which Mary and Elizabeth may have experienced?



#### **Choose Activities:**

- Write a description to accompany one of the two paintings either the Visitation or the Annunciation explaining the use of colour, the setting and the message within the painting as it would be seen in an art gallery.
- Create your own picture/collage of the Visitation or the Annunciation using anything you can find at home – you can add it to your own Advent decorations as a reminder of the very special visits that took place as you count down to Jesus’ birth at Christmas.
- Write a diary entry as Mary and her visit from the Angel Gabriel (Annunciation) or Elizabeth and her visit from Mary (Visitation). Describe your thoughts and feelings.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 4 – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE: The Gift of Love and Friendship

#### Read Leah's Story

Leah was born with a defective heart and, although she had had several operations, she was still unable to do many of the things that girls of her age like to do. Most of the time, she was confined to a wheelchair and could not enjoy games, dancing or active sport. But she had one special gift – she was good at making friends. She always had time for people. She was always there for them.

She had lots of friends, not only of her own age, but also young friends like Peter and Mia, the twins (who were only six), and Mrs Page, who was almost eighty. The twins came each day after school with their Mum and brought lots of fun and joy into Leah's life.

Leah found that she could also help the twins, for she had lots of time and patience. Both Peter and Mia were finding reading difficult. So, each day, Leah had a special book to read with them. They loved to come and read the stories, and their Mum was happy to see them beginning to enjoy reading.

Most afternoons, Leah went around in her wheelchair to see Mrs Page who lived all alone and looked forward to Leah's visits. They enjoyed one another's company. Mrs Page taught Leah to knit and crochet and they made lots of blankets for people who needed them and toys for Bring & Buy sales.



Think about the gift of love and friendship and how it will make demands on the giver.



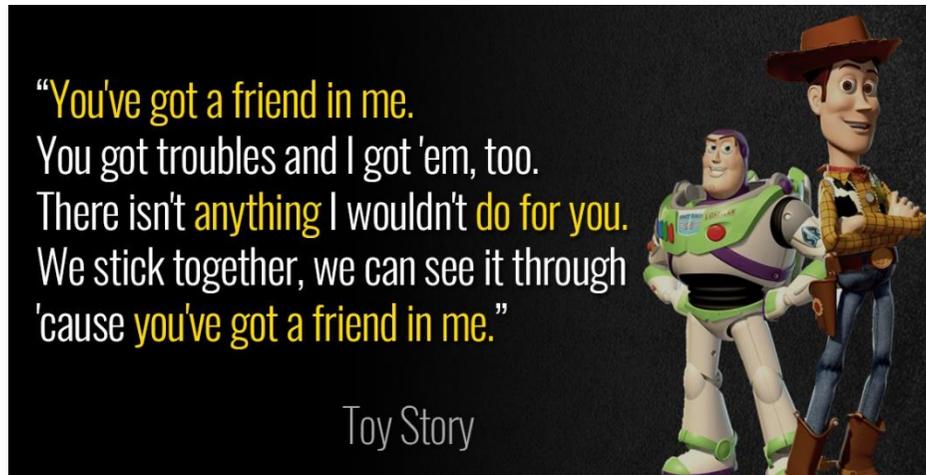
**Q** Did anything in the story surprise you?

**Q** Why do you think Leah gave so much of herself to other people?

**Q** Do you think giving is easy? Why?

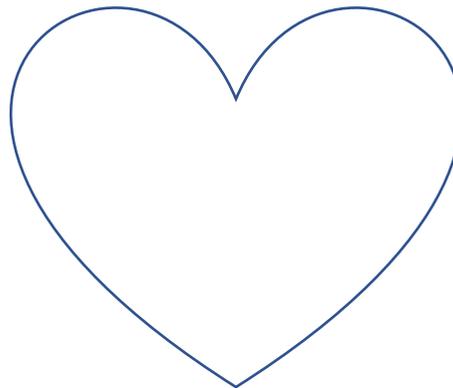
**Q** What do you think Leah got back in return?

## Choose Activities



on the other side write all the demands of good friendship.

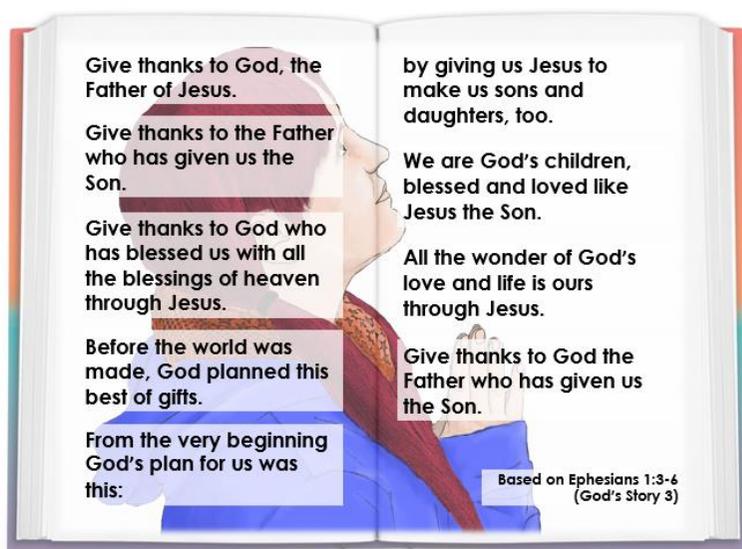
- Look at some of the words from the song 'You got a friend in me' from Toy Story. Write down what you think the words mean and say why you think friendship is important.
- Find an empty box (any shape will do) and decorate it to make your own gift box. Make little cards and on one side write the gifts of love and friendship are... and on the other side write down your ideas.
- Write a character sketch of 'an ideal friend'.
- Cut out a heart shape and on one side write all the joys and



**REVEAL:** Advent and Christmas: the Church's seasons of preparing to receive God's gift of love and friendship in Jesus

Advent is a season during which the Christian family thinks about God's great gift of love and friendship in sending Jesus to live among us on earth. The word Advent means coming or arrival. The season of Advent is focused on the coming of Jesus as Messiah. It is a time when Christians prepare to receive that love and friendship given in Jesus at Christmas. They do this by listening to or reading passages from the Bible, singing songs and hymns and saying special prayers which help them think about God's gift of love and friendship given to us in Jesus.

Share this bible reading:



- Q What does this passage tell you about God?
- Q What do Christians thank God for?
- Q What are the gifts mentioned in the reading?
- Q Through God giving us Jesus, what does that make us?
- Q What does it mean to be called God's children?



Choose an activity:

- Write a poem called; *Jesus – God's gift to our world.*
- Write a 'thank you' letter to God for sending us the gift of Jesus. Say why you are glad that Jesus lived among us. Give reasons why this helps you to be a better person.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 5– ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE: Waiting hopefully



Life is full of waiting, we wait at bus stops, railway stations, in queues at the supermarket, we line up and wait to go into school, into lunch and into the hall for assembly. Sometimes waiting is quite ordinary, sometimes it is frightening or sad: waiting to be found out or told off or waiting to say goodbye to someone we love.

Sometimes waiting is exciting, full of fun: waiting for a birthday, for good news, for the arrival of someone we like, for a holiday and for a treat. Every day there are times of waiting. We wait for ourselves to grow up, to move to a new school. We cannot remove waiting from our lives.

Waiting is a mystery, there is a hidden meaning in all the times we have to wait. Everyone needs to learn how to wait well. Usually there is no option but to wait, but the important question is how we use the time whilst we are waiting. Good waiting involves hope and looking forward to what is to come.

Some people might have a worrying wait for a longer period of time e.g. the return of a loved one in the army or navy or from an operation in hospital etc. For Christians it will be the prayer and support of their families or wider community that keeps them going.

Q What has been your experience of waiting?

Q What do you think about when you are waiting for something exciting?

Q What do you think is the difference between hope and expect?

Q What do you think waiting hopefully means?

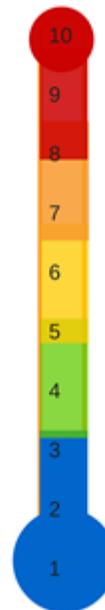


Choose an Activity:

- Draw a feelings thermometer like the one below and write alongside different scenarios for 'waiting'. Give reasons and ideas for why you think people might be feeling like this.
- Write a 'Counting down to...' extract. Describe in detail what you were waiting for, consider all the different emotions you felt as the event got closer and closer and say why. How did it end? Was it worth the wait?

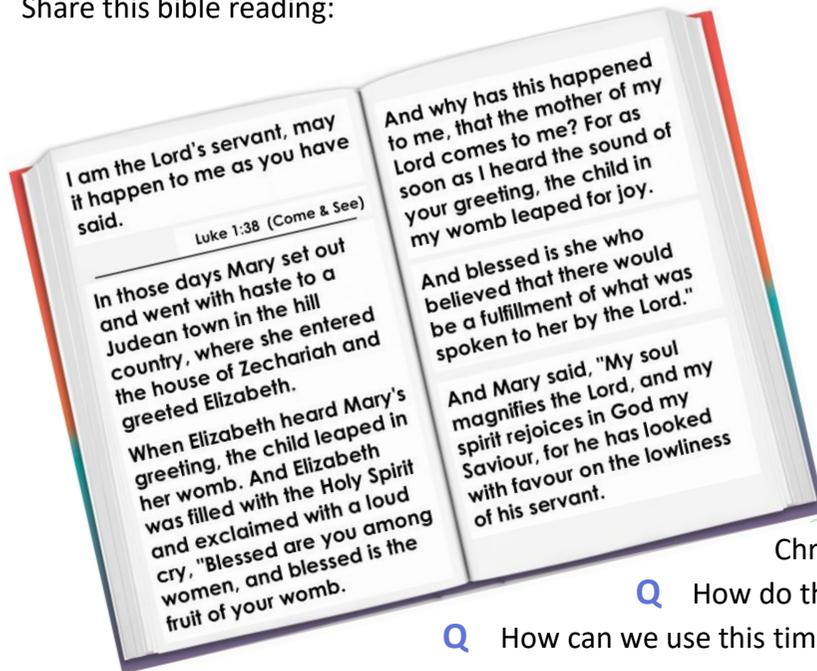


### Feelings Thermometer



**REVEAL:** Advent is the church's season of waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus, the promised one, at Christmas and at the end of time

Share this bible reading:



Advent is a time to remember God's promise to send a Messiah. The Prophet Isaiah told of the coming of the Messiah long before Jesus was born but no one was sure what the Messiah would be like.

Advent is about waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus at Christmas as the people of God were waiting for the Messiah. It is the opportunity to be ready and full of hope because what really matters is the coming of Jesus our Saviour.

Q How do Christians today prepare during Advent for the coming of Jesus at Christmas?

Q How do they wait in hope for the Lord?

Q How can we use this time of waiting purposefully?

Choose an activity:

- As Mary waited in joyful hope for the Lord, Christians spend Advent waiting in hope. Make a daily countdown of ways a Christian can use the waiting time of Advent as good preparation for the coming of the Lord at Christmas.
- Whilst you are at home make a special effort to do something kind for someone who needs your help. Through this service to another person, we are remembering and following how Jesus came to serve and show his love to others.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – YEAR 6 – ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

### EXPLORE – The meaning of expectation



Think about the difference between ‘I would like/wish for’ and ‘I expect’. What is the same and what is different?

What is the difference between: ‘*I would like/wish for a bike for my birthday*’, and ‘*I expect to get a bike for my birthday*’.

There is a lot of difference between ‘*I would like/wish for*’ and ‘*I expect*’. Suppose I am expecting visitors to arrive at my house for a party. I am not just wishing that they will come, I am expecting them to come and because of my expectation, I have made sure that there are enough food and party bags etc.

To expect something means that there is a strong possibility, even a certainty, that it is going to happen. It is good to have high expectations of a person. It gives them confidence. However, expectations of yourself and others have to be realistic.

Share this story:

Grandad was in his shed at the bottom of the garden and Harry and Emma really loved going to watch him make things. He was making a playhouse for the children. “I wish I was as clever as you,” said Harry. “When we make anything in school, I am rubbish. Nothing turns out as I want it!” “Me too,” joined in Emma, “I am useless at art and things like that.” “Well,” responded Grandad, “I don’t think you two are rubbish or useless. You can help me, and then we shall see. I have great expectations of you both.”

Grandad showed Harry how to saw and glue and to make a small table and bed to go into the playhouse. He helped Emma to paint the outside of the house. They worked together all day. Harry and Emma concentrated hard and asked Grandad for help when they were unsure. Eventually the playhouse was complete and ready for them to take home and play with. “I will bring it round to your house tomorrow when it is all dry,” declared Grandad.

Next day, Grandad arrived with the playhouse. Grandma had made covers, rugs and curtains. Harry and Emma’s Mum and Dad were amazed and delighted. The children couldn’t believe their eyes. They were so excited. “That is wonderful!” proclaimed Mum, “Grandad you are so clever.” “Not just me. This is the work of Harry and Emma. They are very good at making things. They are talented,” replied Grandad. “I knew they were good and my expectations of them were fulfilled.” Harry and Emma felt very proud and so did their parents.

What do you wish for?

What do you expect of yourself?

What kind of expectations do people have of you and why?

Where do you think patience comes into expectations?



Why is it good to have high expectations of others?

Why is it good to trust and believe in one another?

Choose an activity:

- Make a list of the expectations you have of yourself with the following tasks then add some of your own:
  - a) Doing your homework
  - b) Looking after your pet/s
  - c) Playing sports/ or a team game
  - d) Being a good friend
  - e) Looking after a brother or sister
  - f) Cleaning your bedroom

Now write down what others, such as parents and carers or teachers, expect. Are they the same? If not, why? Whose expectations are the most important?

- Create a piece of persuasive writing entitled... The importance of having high expectations. Don't forget to consider what effect your decisions have on others.

Persuasive  
Writing  
tells your  
opinion.

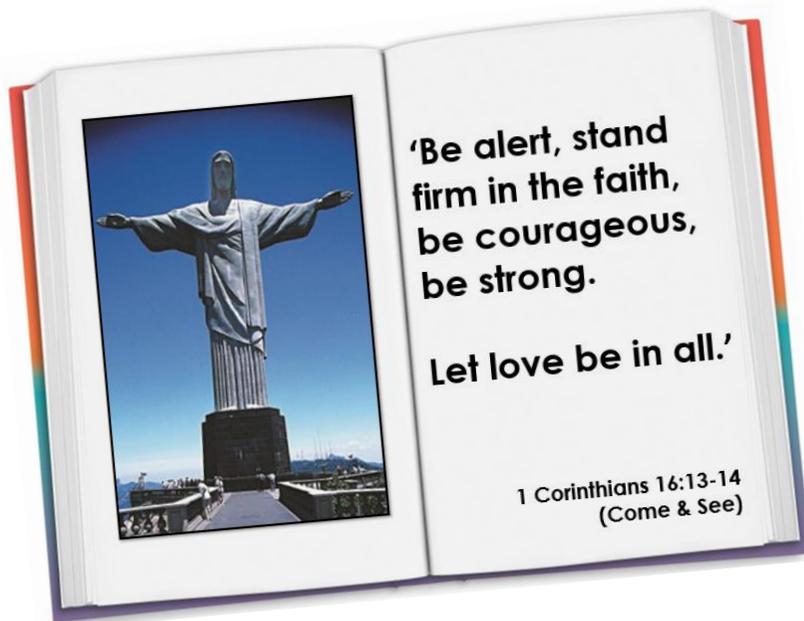


**REVEAL - Advent: a time of joyful expectation of Christmas, the Word becoming a human person, Jesus**

The word Advent means coming or arrival. It reminds us of the anticipation and expectation over hundreds of years by the people of Israel for their Messiah and Promised One – Emmanuel (God with us).

We wait in expectation of the coming of Jesus, God made human, God with us, because God is always faithful and loving and keeps promises.

Share this piece of scripture which Paul wrote in one of his letters to the people of Corinth.



- Q What message do you think Paul was trying to convey to the Corinthian community?
- Q Are the expectations of Christians today during Advent any different to the community of Corinth?
- Q How are Christians expected to prepare for the coming of Jesus?

let all  
you do be  
done in  
love

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

Look at the words of this hymn traditionally sung during the season of Advent. It is called 'Maranatha' which means 'Lord Come' in Aramaic; the language which people of the time of Jesus spoke.

Like a sea without a shore, love divine is boundless.  
Time is now and evermore and His love surrounds us.  
Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come!  
So that we could all be free, He appeared among us.  
Blest are those who have not seen, yet believe His promise.  
All our visions, all our dreams, are but ghostly shadows of the radiant clarity waiting at life's close.  
Death where is your victory?  
Death where is your sting?  
Closer than the air we breathe is our risen King.

Maranatha

**Choose Activities:**

- Create a mind map for each aspect of the words from the Scripture passage 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 '*Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Let love be in all.*' giving examples of how it is lived out within our daily lives.
- Using the meanings within the Scripture passage and the hymn, *Maranatha*, prepare some 'Advent Expectations' for Christians during their journey through Advent.
- Consider the last line of the Scripture passage – 'Let all you do be done in love'. Create your own Advent calendar with a different expectation for every day during December.