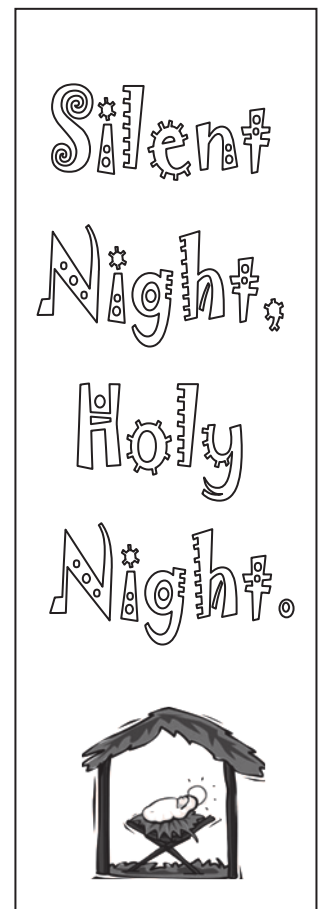
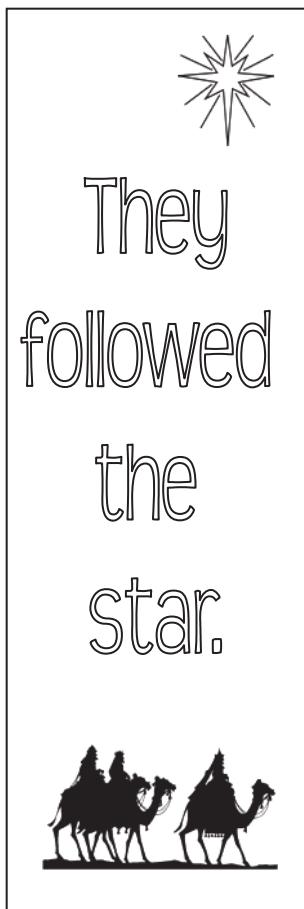
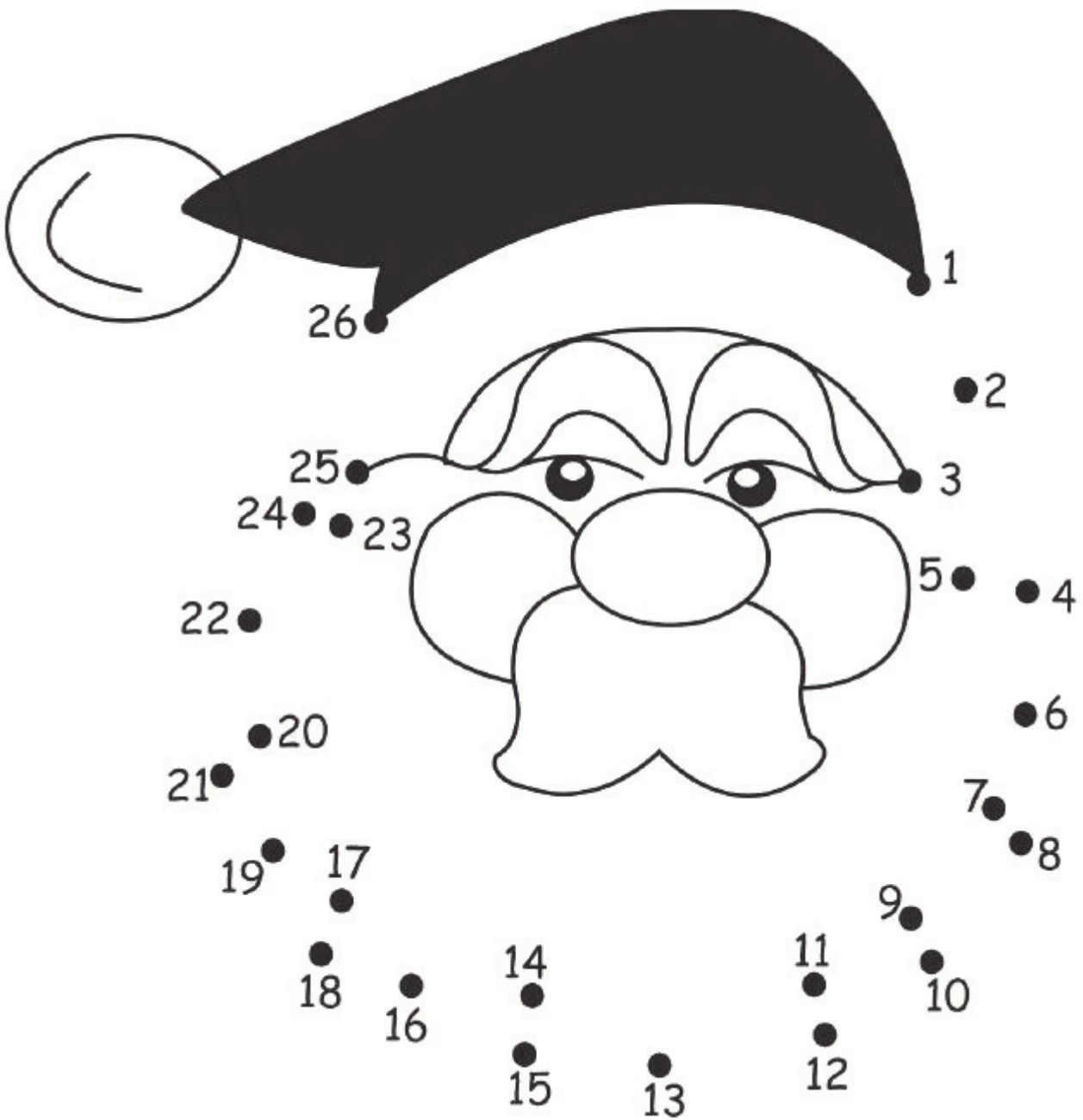


CHRISTMAS BOOKMARKS

Below are some Christmas bookmarks that you can use yourself or as presents for family and friends. Photocopy the bookmarks onto card or coloured paper, cut them out, and decorate them. Use a hole-puncher to make a hole near the top, and attach a ribbon or piece of string. You can personalise the bookmarks by writing your own Christmas greeting or message on the back.



SANTA



Join the dots and colour the picture!

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

BRAZIL

Many Brazilian people make a nativity scene or Presépio. The word comes from the Hebrew word "presepium" which means the bed of straw upon which Jesus first slept in Bethlehem.

Papai Noel (Father Christmas) brings the gifts in Brazil. He lives in Greenland. December is in the middle of summer in Brazil and so Santa wears silk clothes to help him stay cool.

Feliz Natal

POLAND

Polish people often celebrate a special supper called 'Wigilia' on Christmas Eve.

The celebration begins with a prayer, followed by the breaking of the Christmas wafer, called the 'oplatek', which is shared among those present.

*Wesołych Świąt
Bożego Narodzenia!*

MEXICO

In Mexico, they have a special celebration called 'La Posada'.

Two children are chosen to represent Mary and Joseph, and they go from door to door to look for a place to stay. When they are finally let in, they have a party and break a piñata!

Feliz Navidad!

IRELAND

Lighted candles are placed in windows on Christmas Eve, as a sign of hospitality.

It is also a symbolic guide for Mary and Joseph, who may be looking for shelter.

Nollaig Shona Duit!



CHINA

Christians in China celebrate by decorating their houses with beautiful paper lanterns and decorating their Christmas trees, which they call 'Trees of Light', with paper chains, paper flowers, and paper lanterns.

Chinese Children hang muslin stockings and await a visit from Santa Claus, whom they call 'Dun Che Lao Ren'.

圣诞快乐 新年快乐
(shèngdàn kuàilè xīnnián kuàilè)

Do any children in your class have a Christmas tradition from the country in which they or their parents were born?

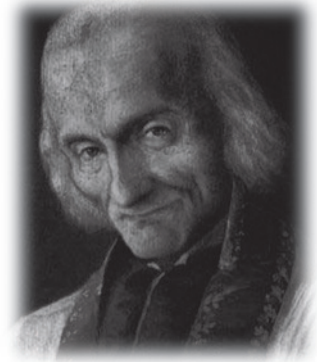
Make a chart of all the ways Christmas is celebrated in your class or even in your school!

Find out how others say 'Happy Christmas' in their native languages.

CELEBRATING THE YEAR FOR PRIESTS JUNE 19TH, 2009 – JUNE 11TH, 2010

"Curé of Ars": Saint John Mary Vianney

Pope Benedict XVI has made this year a year to pray for priests. He said that the reason for this was that 2009 was the 150th anniversary of the death of the patron of priests, St John Marie Vianney. Pope Benedict said,



"I think of all those priests who quietly present Christ's words and actions each day to the faithful and to the whole world, striving to be one with the Lord in their thoughts and their will, their sentiments and their style of life. How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labours, their tireless and hidden service, their universal charity? And how can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as "friends of Christ", whom he has called by name, chosen and sent?"

St John Marie Vianney was born in 1786 near the city of Lyons in France. He wasn't a very good student in school or when he was training for the priesthood, but he was ordained to the priesthood in 1815 and was sent to a small parish called Ars. As a result of popularity he became known as the Curé of Ars. Curé is the French word for parish priest.

He became well known, not because he was rich or clever, but because people noticed how much he prayed, how simply he lived and how reverent he was when he was celebrating mass. He was told before he went to Ars that there wasn't much faith there. However, the Curé began to instruct people in the faith, began to teach them about Jesus, and helped them to live their lives according to Christian values – by loving God, and our neighbour. As a result of this, it was said that up to 20,000 people a year came to him from every part of France to see him, to go to confession to him, and to come to mass. He once talked about the difference between our private prayers and the prayers that we say when we come to mass:

"Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there: If you set it on fire it makes a lot of little flames. But gather these straws into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky; public prayer is like that."

St John Marie Vianney lived and worked in Ars until he was 73 years of age. He worked hard in his parish and with all the people who came to see him and to hear

him preach. He continued to live a simple life and he died peacefully on August 4th 1859. His feast is celebrated on that day.

Like Pope Benedict said, the Year of Prayer for Priests is an opportunity to pray for priests, both those we know in our own parish and those who are working in difficult situations and ministries throughout the world.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Ask the school chaplain or the local priest to come and talk about his ministry
- Contact “Children Helping Children” <http://www.childrenhelpingchildren.ie/> about the possibility of a missionary priest coming to your school to talk about his work.
- Organise a tour of the church to talk about what a priest does there.
- Pray a prayer for the priests in your parish during the morning prayers at school
- Pray for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.
- Look at the sections in the *Alive-O* programme on priesthood (*Alive-Os Term 1, Lesson 12, p.85*) and the sections of the video/DVD relating to priesthood.

PRAYER

God our Father,
We pray for Fr. _____
Help him to be a good and holy priest.
Guide him in the work that he does
in our school and in our parish.
Help him to know
that it is through your love and guidance
that he will accomplish all that is asked of him.
Bless his family and all who minister with him.
We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen



Make a Christmas Card for your priest/s

You can celebrate the year for priests by making a Christmas card for your priest. Just photocopy the next page onto card or coloured paper, and cut it out. Fold it over in the middle and write a message for your priest on the inside. Remind your priest that you are praying for him during this special year, and thank him for being your priest.



Saint John Vianney

“Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

Happy Christmas
Father!



FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

JANUARY 6TH

Use the key below to help you to tell the story of the Epiphany.








Jesus




Wise Men


Star




Crown


At the time  was born, three  saw a  .


The  knew that the  would lead them to a



new king, so the  followed the  . When the 




came to Jerusalem, they asked  where to find the new



king,  .  told the  to go to Bethlehem where


the new king would be born, but  began to worry.


 didn't want a new king to take his place, so


 told the  to come back and tell him about

 .  didn't want  to be more powerful than he.

When the  found  , they knelt down and offered their

gifts to him. That night, God spoke to the  in

a dream and told them not to return to  . So

the  went home another way.

LOOKING FOR MORE?

Below are the addresses of some websites where you can find more Advent and Christmas resources. Good Luck!



www.dltk-holidays.com/xmas/index.html
www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/teacher/christmas.html

Two sites full of lots of Christmas activities for children including colouring pages, crafts, games, puzzles, poems, prayers, songs, worksheets and much more!

Resources to help you make a Jesse Tree and printable symbols are available from:

<http://www.rca.org/Page.aspx?pid=1628>
http://www.catholicmom.com/lesson_plan.advent
http://www.associatedcontent.com/topic/51327/jesse_tree
<http://www.associatedcontent.com/topic/105509/adventwreath>

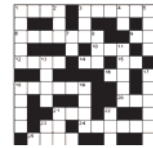
Word Searches & Crossword puzzles for middle and senior classes:

www.puzzle-club.com/christmas-word-search-carols.html
Christmas carols word search

<http://www.rscm-bristol-swindon.co.uk/words/advent%20word%20search.pdf>
Advent word search

<http://www.churchyear.net/adventpuzzint>
An interactive, on-line Advent crossword for Senior Classes

http://homeschooling.about.com/od/holidays/ss/nativityprint_9
A combination of word searches, crosswords, colouring pictures etc with different levels of difficulty



www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/nativity/index.htm

An ever-popular, interactive telling of the Nativity Story for junior classes. Perfect for use on interactive whiteboards, or individual computers



<http://www.carols.org.uk/>

A website containing the words and music of the most popular Christmas carols. Read the words and sing along as the music plays!

Great for senior classes! Perfect for use either on interactive whiteboards or individual computers



For teacher:

Check out www.sacredspace.ie for a daily prayer for Advent

