

BEFORE ADVENT BEGINS:

THE ADVENT WREATH

We light one candle on the Advent wreath every week as we prepare for Christmas. There are three purple candles on the wreath. Purple is the colour of 'looking forward'. A pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent. Pink is a happy colour. It reminds us that Christmas is getting nearer. The wreath is in the shape of a circle because a circle has no beginning and no end. It goes on forever, just like God's love for us. Colour the wreath each week as you prepare for the coming of Jesus on Christmas Day.



Light the Advent candle one,
Now the waiting has begun.
We have started on our way,
Time to think of Christmas Day.

Light the Advent candle two,
Think of humble shepherd who,
Filled with wonder at the sight,
Of the child on Christmas night.



Light the Advent candle three,
Think of heavenly harmony.
Angels singing "Peace on Earth",
At the Blessed Saviour's birth.

Light the Advent candle four,
Think of joy forever more.
Christ Child in a stable born,
Gift of love on Christmas morn.



MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

You will need:

- An empty biscuit tin covered in green paper and filled with damp sand
- Evergreen branches
- Four candles: three purple and one pink
- Purple Ribbon



Place the candles at intervals in the sand. Place evergreen branches between and around the candles to cover the sand. Use the purple ribbon to decorate.



FOR INFANT CLASSES

You can also make a 'no burn' Advent wreath for Infant classes!

You will need:

- Green card or sugar paper
- Scissors and glue
- A paper plate
- A sheet of yellow, purple and pink card

Using green card or green sugar paper, have each child trace around their hand and cut it out. These will become the 'leaves' on your wreath. Cut a hole in the centre of a paper plate, and glue the 'leaves' on. Make 'candles' by rolling pieces of purple and pink card, using sticky tape to hold the ends in place. Make 'flames' for each candle using yellow card. You can add the flames each week as you 'light' your Advent wreath!

BLESS THE ADVENT WREATH

You might like to invite the priest or chaplain to bless the Advent Wreath.

The following prayer may be used. Use Holy Water to sprinkle and bless the wreath.



Loving God,

Bless these candles and make them a sign of your love for us and our hope in you.

May our Advent Wreath be a source of joy in our school and in our classroom.

As light comes from these candles, may it guide us and brighten our way as we wait for your coming. May you bring light into our schools, homes and communities as we wait and prepare this Advent season.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BEFORE ADVENT BEGINS:

THE JESSE TREE



The Jesse tree is like the family tree of Jesus. Its name comes from Jesse, who was the father of King David. Jesse and King David were ancestors of Jesus. The Jesse tree shows us more of the important people in the Old Testament. It shows us how long they waited for a king. We know that Jesus is the king that God promised to send. We use the Jesse Tree to remind us of God's promise.

CAN YOU FIND JESUS' ANCESTORS IN THE BIBLE?

Look in your Bible to find the names of Jesus' family. Write each name in the spaces below. Then match the person to the symbols at the side.

GENESIS 3:20	
GENESIS 7:1	
GENESIS 22:1	
EXODUS 19:20	
RUTH 2:2	
2 SAMUEL 5: 3	
LUKE 3:16	
MATTHEW 1:24	
LUKE 1:38	
MATTHEW 2:2	



MAKE YOUR OWN JESSE TREE

It's fun to make your own Jesse Tree, either at home or in school. Just use a dead branch, or draw and cut out a branch on cardboard. You can use the symbols above and even add more! You can download some Jesse Tree Symbols from www.osv.com/Portals/0/images/pdf/JesseTree.pdf.

Cut them out and colour them in, and then attach a string or coloured ribbon to hang them from the branch.

Our Journey



Tomorrow is the feast of St Nicholas. Be generous – share with others.



Light two purple candles on the Advent Wreath.



Show the people you live with that you love them.



Pray for your granny and granddad today.



Today is the feast of St Francis Xavier. Pray for peace in the world.



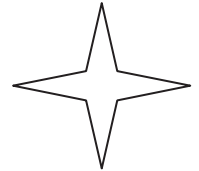
Today is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Say the Hail Mary.



Say thank you to everyone who helps you today.



Forgive someone who has hurt you.



Remember your prayers before bed tonight.



Offer to help an older neighbor with an odd job.



Start here, on the First Sunday of Advent – November 29th. Complete one task each day, and color the stone to show that we are one day closer to Christmas



Give away one of your best smiles today!



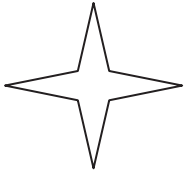
Light the first purple candle on the Advent Wreath.




Be polite – hold the door open for someone.



to Bethlehem



 Sing some Christmas carols at home or in school.

 Say a prayer for the people you love who have died.

Write a Christmas letter or card to someone you love.




Say a prayer for people who are lonely at Christmas.



Remember to say the grace before meals today.



Light three purple and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath.




Recycle your Christmas card envelopes and give your used stamps away.



Read the story of the First Christmas in Luke's Gospel.



 Draw a picture of the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

Light two purple and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath




Help to tidy the house to prepare for Christmas Day.



Tomorrow is the feast of St Lucy. Visit a Church and ask for help to light a candle



Go to Mass tonight or tomorrow and celebrate that Jesus is born!



A REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS:

LESSONS FROM THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

BY RAYMOND TOPLEY

Originally published in the Irish Catholic, Advent 2008

'The Little Drummer Boy' is one of the most popular carols of the Christmas season. Its message, telling the story of an imaginary encounter with the new-born Jesus, is familiar to all. In this regard, it has much to teach the Christian disciple of any age. Particularly appealing are the touching and inspiring lines, "I played my drum for him," and "I played my best for him."

The song is simplicity itself and this is very much part of its universal appeal. Against the backdrop of the gentle yet catchy tune, the words recount the meeting between a boy drummer and a boy king. But the apparent simplicity reveals a profound message. The drummer boy not only plays his drum for Jesus, he also plays his best for him. The commitment is one hundred per cent. There is no holding back and in this total giving he becomes a model for all Christian disciples in their relationship with the Lord. The song, therefore, is essentially Christological. It imagines an encounter with Christ and points to the ideal response namely, service of the Lord to the best of one's ability.

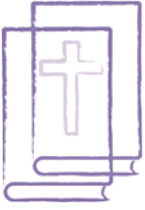
What lessons, therefore, has the little drummer boy for teachers and catechists, for instance? Firstly, Christian ministry is rooted in an encounter with the Lord. Each annual celebration of Christmas presents an opportunity for deepening that experience. Secondly, it is important to identify one's particular talent with a view to placing it at the service of God and God's people. For this boy it was drumming. However, each one has something special to offer as noted in the jingle, "God has a job for you to do, as hand fits glove and foot fits shoe" or as expressed more soberly by Cardinal Newman when he declared, "God has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another" (*Mediations and Devotions*). But while each one responds in a particular way to the call of God there remains one thing that is common to all, and that is the fulfilling of one's role to the very best of one's ability.

For the Christian believer to be able to say at the end of life, "I played my drum for him" and "I played my best for him" is truly to have answered the call of Christian ministry and discipleship. Besides that, it also inherits the affirmation of Christ expressed succinctly in the closing words of the song, "Then he smiled at me." If this 'eschatological smile' of Christ were sub-titled it might read, "Well done, good and faithful servant, come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:24). This carol, therefore, is not just about a simple visit to a crib. It has more to it than that. It is eschatological in that it fits in with the end of life, with the Christian believer's final encounter with the Lord and the notion of Christ as King. Inheriting such a royal divine 'smile' for a job well done or a life well spent is the eternal lot of both adults and children, who 'drum' for the Lord to the best of their ability following the spiritual rhythm of the little drummer boy.



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

THEME: WATCH!

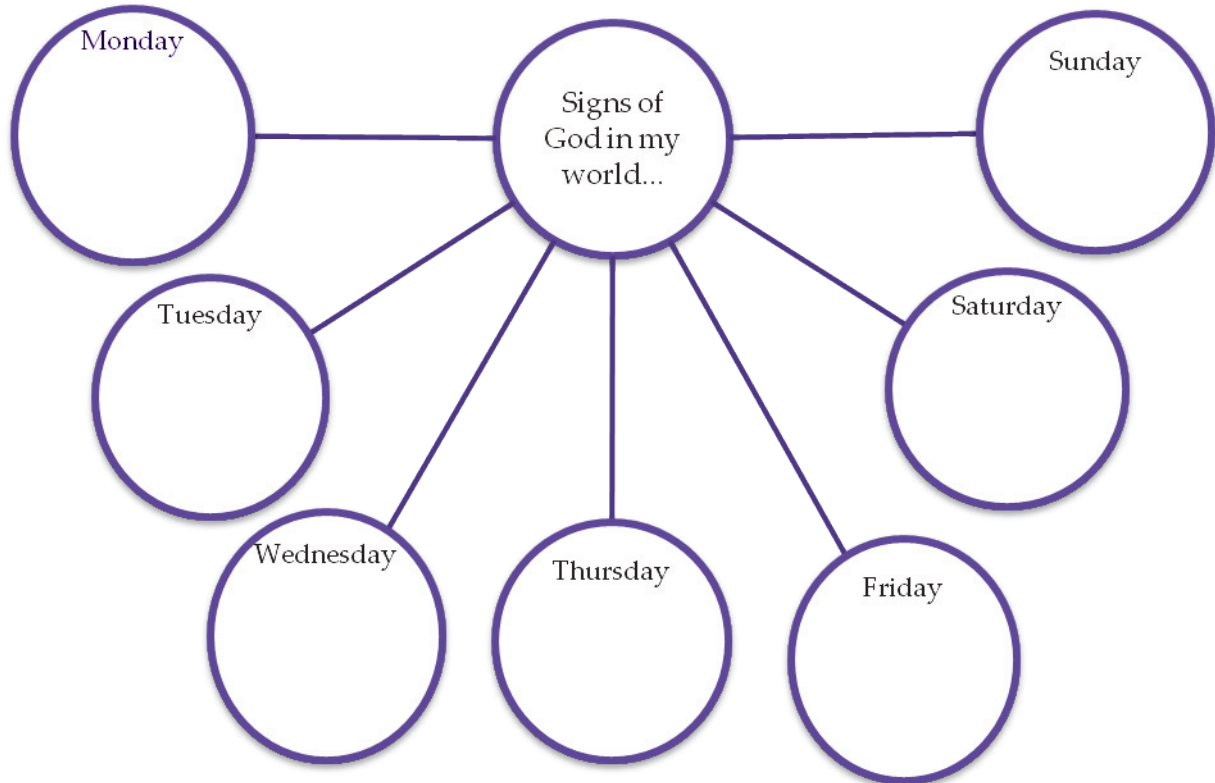


In this week's Gospel, Jesus tells us that we should watch for signs of God in the world. He also tells us that he will come again, at the end of time, and we have to be ready for that day too. Jesus uses an example from nature to help us to understand. He says that when we see leaves returning to the trees, we know that summer time will soon follow.

In the same way, we are to look for signs of him in our world. Jesus tells us to "Watch out and keep praying." You can read this Gospel in your class or family Bible. You will find it in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 21; verses 25-36.



This week, look out for signs of God's love in the world. Every day, write down or draw one of these signs. It might be that you see someone doing a good deed, or you might see something in nature that reminds you of God. Remember to say a prayer to God when see these signs. In this way, you are doing what Jesus asked you to do in this week's Gospel.



SACRED SPACE FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Start to create your sacred space for Advent by using a purple cloth. Add your Advent wreath, and light the first purple candle. Place a Bible in the sacred space, and open it to this week's Gospel. Each week, you can add items which reflect the theme of that week's Gospel message and any feast days that occur. You can also add your class's work to the sacred space.

PRAYER SERVICE TO BEGIN ADVENT

Let's begin by blessing ourselves in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



Light the first candle on the Advent Wreath and pray the following prayer

Light the Advent candle one,
Now the waiting has begun.
We have started on our way,
Time to think of Christmas Day

SING: The Advent Hymn (*Alive-O 5, p. 114*)

LEADER: Today we will honour the One who is coming.
We will remember the story of what happened long, long ago.
We will remember some of the people who are part of that story.

CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: The Angel Gabriel came to Mary. She would be a mother soon. Jesus would be her son. Let us remember the One who is coming.



CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: Joseph has a dream. The angel told him not to be afraid to marry Mary. Let us remember the One who is coming.



CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: The Roman soldiers told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem. Everyone had to be counted. Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn. Let us remember the One who is coming.

CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth. The angels welcomed the Lord Jesus. Let us remember the One who is coming.

CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: The shepherds minded the sheep. Nobody thought that they would be the first people to know that Jesus had been born. Let us remember the One who is coming.



CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: The Magi saw the star in the sky. They followed that star until it led them to the baby Jesus. Let us remember the One who is coming.

CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: The Christmas story tells us how the shepherds and the Magi met Jesus long ago. We are reminded in these days of Advent that Jesus is our friend. He is the One who is coming.



CHILD: Come Lord Jesus

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

SING: Carol of the Journey (*Alive-O 1*, p. 108; *Alive-O 2*, p. 124; *Alive-O 3*, p. 162)



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

THEME: WATCH!



During the first week of Advent we celebrate the feast St Francis Xavier.
His feast is celebrated on December 3rd.

FACT FILE: SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER:

Francis Xavier was born in Spain in 1506

He went to study in Paris in 1525 and there he met Ignatius of Loyola

In 1534 he was one of the seven men who, with Ignatius, founded the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits

He was ordained in Venice in 1538

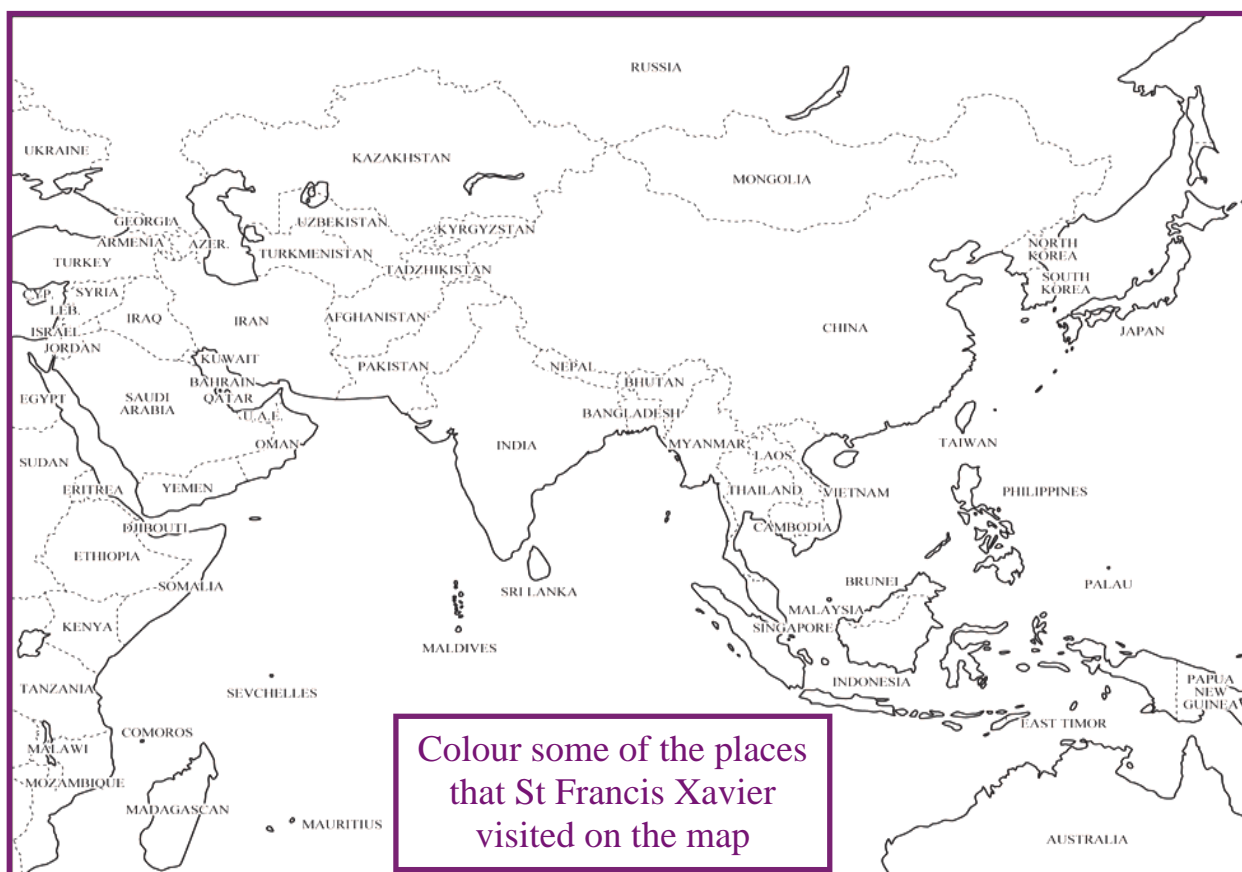
The Pope recognised the Society of Jesus in 1540

He was a great missionary and travelled far and wide to countries such as Mozambique, India, China and Japan telling people about Jesus and preaching the Gospel

He was canonised a Saint in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV

He is Patron Saint of all Foreign Missions

His feast day is December 3rd



St Francis Xavier Word Search

X U I R S P D D Z Y P N Y Z D
 G V D S M U Z L K A N I H C T
 I E T N I A S T B S L R N T S
 T J L O S N Q E K O A O D Z T
 P J F I V L D J J T R R Y M R
 S L E S N D S I E T I G R O N
 A G O S P E L I A C X P O V L
 B U V I U N S P A I N S G Y F
 X L K M R I M R K A L A E O M
 V D H U R A T E P W N N R T U
 C O U A H D W A Q S O E G G D
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CHINA

FOREIGN

GOSPEL

GREGORY

IGNATIUS

INDIA

JAPAN

JESUIT

JESUS

LOYOLA

MISSIONER

MISSIONS

ORDAINED

PARIS

PATRON

PREACHED

ROME

SAINT

SEVEN

SPAIN