

## BEFORE ADVENT BEGINS!

### THE ADVENT WREATH HELPS US TO GET READY TO WELCOME JESUS

Long ago, before Jesus was born, during the dark days of December, the people of Eastern Europe gathered wreaths of evergreen branches and lit fires as a sign of hope and a reminder that spring was on its way. This tradition was adopted by the Christians and by the 1600s the Advent Wreath was used throughout Germany to mark the time spent waiting for the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. From Germany this tradition spread to the rest of the world.

### WHAT DOES THE ADVENT WREATH MEAN?

Usually the Advent Wreath is made of four candles, three purple and one pink. They are lit in the following order; **week 1 and 2 purple, week 3, pink and week 4 purple.** The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. The colour purple is used because long ago purple dye was very expensive and purple became a colour that was associated with royalty. Advent is the season of the coming of the King. The pink one is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent, *Gaudete Sunday*. Long ago Advent was a time of fasting like Lent. On the Third Sunday there was a break from this fast and the priests wore rose or pink coloured vestments. So that tradition became a part of the Advent Wreath. As we light the candles each week we are made aware of our journey through this season. Placing the candles in a circle is symbolic of God's love for us, a love that has no beginning or end. The use of the evergreen leaves around the candles reminds us that God's love is everlasting.

### TO MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH

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 for decoration



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.

### BLESS THE ADVENT WREATH

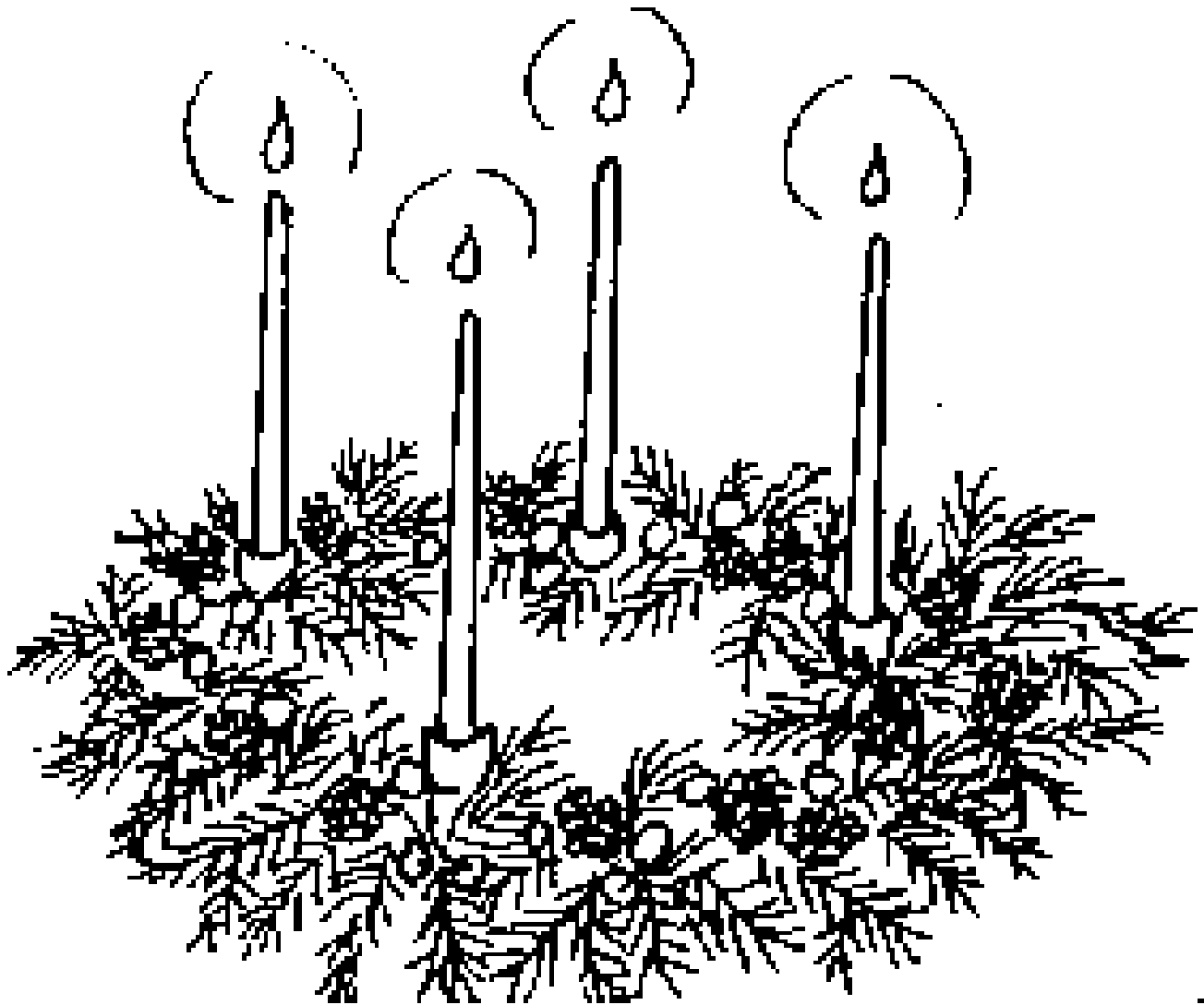
You might like to invite the priest or chaplain to bless the Advent Wreath. The following prayer may be used. Use Holy Water to sprinkle and bless the wreath.



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



## Colour the Advent Wreath

Remember to colour three candles purple and one pink

## THE JESSE TREE

One of the great things about Christmas is that we usually get together with our families; on or after Christmas perhaps our grandparents, aunts and uncles come around and there are usually presents and more food. Our family is important and so was the family of Jesus. During Advent we can learn about Jesus' family and his ancestors.

St. Matthew in the beginning of his Gospel names all the ancestors of Jesus going right back to Abraham. [You can find this in the Gospel of Matthew; Chapter 1, verses 1-17. Why not do a bible search?](#) Some of the names will be familiar to you (*some of the names are very difficult to pronounce...even for grown-ups!*). One of those ancestors is Jesse, the father of King David. He gives his name to the Jesse tree, which is like Jesus' family tree. The reason is that the prophet Isaiah speaking to the people of the Old Testament, told them that their Messiah would come from Jesse's family: ***"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots."*** This comes from the Book of Isaiah; Chapter 11, verses 1-9. [Look in your class bible and find these verses.](#)



It is one of the traditions of Christmas to make a type of tree and to decorate it with picture or symbols to represent some of the characters and some of the events from the Bible. The chart on the next page will help you to find some of these symbols:

## MAKE YOUR OWN JESSE TREE



To make the tree, take a branch that has no leaves on it, something that has fallen on the ground. Choose a tree branch that is about a metre long with lots of smaller branches attached to it. Place the branch in a pot or bucket of dirt or gravel, to help it stand up, or you might have a spare Christmas tree stand that you could use.

Take some stiff card, and cut out 15 circular disks, about the size of a jam jar lid. On each circle you can draw one of the symbols from the next page. Decorate it by colouring it and add some glitter or with some wool. Punch a little hole in the top of the disk, and use some wool or string to tie it to one of the branches of the tree.

For each of the days you are in school during Advent, you can put one of the symbols on the tree, and perhaps read the passage in the bible to understand the significance of the symbol.

## JESSE TREE SYMBOLS

<i>Person or Event</i>	<i>Bible Reference</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
Creation	Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-4	sun, moon, stars, animals, earth
Adam & Eve	Genesis 2:7-9, 18-24	tree, man, woman
Noah	Genesis 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22	ark, animals, dove, rainbow
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3	torch, sword, mountain
Isaac	Genesis 22:1-14	bundle of wood, altar, ram in bush
Jacob	Genesis 25:1-34; 28:10-15	kettle, ladder
Joseph	Genesis 37:23-28; 45:3-15	bucket, well, silver coins, tunic
Moses	Exodus 2:1-10	baby in basket, river and rushes
Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-18	lamp, temple
Jesse	1 Samuel 16:1-13	crimson robe, shepherd's staff
David	1 Samuel 17:12-51	slingshot, 6-pointed star
Solomon	1 Kings 3:5-14, 16-28	scales of justice, temple, two babies and sword
Joseph	Matthew 1:18-25	hammer, saw, chisel, angle
Mary	Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38	lily, crown of stars,
John the Baptist	Mark 1:1-8	shell with water, river

# JESSE TREE













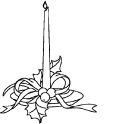















Find the symbols on the Jesse Tree

Connect the word and the symbol

Colour the picture

# Advent Activity Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b>  Light the first purple candle on the Advent Wreath	<b>1</b>  Do your school work cheerfully	<b>2</b> Pray for your granny and granddad today 	<b>3</b> <i>Feast of St. Francis Xavier</i> Pray for peace in the world 	<b>4</b>  Be patient at times when you have to wait	<b>5</b>  Do all your jobs without complaining	<b>6</b> <i>Feast of St. Nicholas.</i> Pray for children in the world for whom Christmas is not a time for presents
<b>7</b>  Light two purple candles on the Advent Wreath	<b>8</b> <i>Feast of the Immaculate Conception.</i> Say the 'Hail Mary' 	<b>9</b> Say a prayer for children who are sick 	<b>10</b>  Make a Christmas card for someone who helps in your school	<b>11</b> Say a prayer for our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI 	<b>12</b>  Invite someone who has been left out to play with you.	<b>13</b>  Visit a Church and ask for help to light a candle
<b>14</b>  Light two purple and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath	<b>15</b> Remember to say the Grace Before Meals today 	<b>16</b>  Recycle your Christmas card envelopes	<b>17</b> Give away one of your best smiles 	<b>18</b>  Forgive someone who has hurt your feelings	<b>19</b> Feed the birds 	<b>20</b> Tidy your room without being asked 
<b>21</b>  Light three purple candles and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath	<b>22</b>  Tell the Christmas story to your family	<b>23</b> Pick up any litter that you see around you 	<b>24</b> Help prepare a family meal 	<b>25</b>  Go to Mass and give thanks for the gift of Jesus		

Each day when you do the action on the page opposite colour the star. Begin at number 1



## ADVENT CALENDAR

## ADVENT WEEK 1

### A New Year for the Church



#### FACTS ABOUT THE CHURCH YEAR

- The Church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent and ends on the Feast of Christ the King.
- The Church year is divided into different seasons just like the calendar year.
- We can tell which season we are in by the different coloured vestments that the priest wears when celebrating Mass



In Advent the priest wears purple, the colour of royalty. This reminds us that we are waiting to welcome Christ, the King.

The same colour is worn during Lent.

White or gold vestments are worn for the seasons of Christmas and Easter, times of great joy in the Church Year. These colours are also worn for the feasts of Our Lord, such as the Baptism of The Lord and for feasts of Mary such as the Immaculate Conception, which we celebrate during Advent.



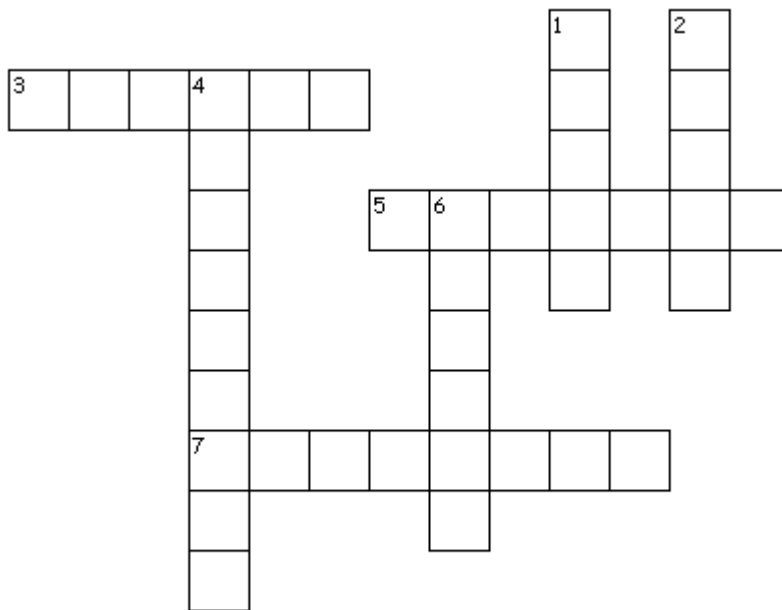
In Ordinary Time the priest wears green. Green is a symbol of life and hope.

**Red**, colour of blood, is worn on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, those days when we celebrate the passion of Jesus. Red is also the colour of fire which reminds us of the Holy Spirit and is worn on the Feast of Pentecost and for the sacrament of Confirmation.



- The Church Year is also called the Liturgical Year.
- There are three Liturgical Years A, B, and C. In each of these three years we hear the story of Jesus', birth, life, death and resurrection told from the point of view of the different writers of the Gospel. In Year A most of the Gospels are from Matthew, in Year B from Mark and in Year C from Luke. John's Gospel can be heard in all three years mostly during the Easter Season.
- This year in Advent we begin Year B.

## THE CHURCH YEAR CROSSWORD



### Across

3. The priest wears this colour in Advent
5. In year A we read this Gospel
7. Green is worn in this time of the year

### Down

1. This colour is worn on special days
2. Number of Liturgical Years
4. Red is worn for this feast
6. The Church Year begins in this season



## ADVENT WEEK 1



It's the first week of Advent and it's time to light the first candle on your Advent Wreath. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.

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

The Gospel Reading for the First Sunday of Advent comes from the Gospel of St Mark! You might like to read this with your class. Encourage them to find the text in the class bible.

### MARK 13:33-37

Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad; he has gone from his home and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told his gatekeeper to stay awake. So they do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn, if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!

### SACRED SPACE

Make the Sacred Space in your classroom an Advent space this month. Use a purple cloth or purple paper to cover the table. Place the Advent Wreath in the space and if you have a Jesse Tree it might be put in or close to the Sacred Space. Open the class bible at the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 13; verses 33-37.



### OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



Last year nearly eight million children, in almost one hundred countries received a love-filled Operation Christmas Child shoebox, and 287,000 of these boxes came from Ireland! As you wait this Advent you might like to fill a shoebox for a child who may not receive any gifts this Christmas. **Operation Christmas Child** is more than a shoebox, it means so much to the boy or girl to know that someone, far away, whom they will never meet, is thinking of them. It brings joy, hope and a little of God's love into the life of children who live in some of the world's poorest countries. This gift helps us to focus on the real meaning of Christmas – Jesus Christ, God's greatest gift.

Find out more: [www.samaritanspurse.ie](http://www.samaritanspurse.ie)

## IT'S ADVENT! TIME TO WAKE UP!

This week the Gospel is telling us that we need to wake up! We need to be ready when Jesus comes. On the first day of Advent we begin a countdown to the most exciting time of the year, Christmas. Today we begin to wait for the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Most of don't like waiting. It doesn't matter what we are waiting for: a bus, a birthday party, our dinner or playtime. It's hard to wait! This gospel is telling that it's important to get ready while we wait for Jesus, to do our best during Advent so that we will be really ready to welcome the Christ child at Christmas. So while you're waiting for Christmas let's use the time well. Let's think of ways in which we can do something to show Jesus how much we love him as we wait in this first week of Advent.



### How will you wait for Jesus during Advent?

Day 1

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Day 2

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Day 3

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Day 4

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Day 5

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

Day 6

I will wait for Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> FEAST OF ST NICHOLAS



Colour the picture

## ADVENT WEEK 2



It's time to light the first and second candles on your Advent Wreath. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.

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 shepherds who  
Filled with wonder at the sight  
Of the child on Christmas night.

### SUNDAY GOSPEL ADVENT WEEK 2

In the Gospel this week, we hear about the preaching of John the Baptist. John's job was to help people to turn back to God, and to get ready for Jesus. You can read this week's Gospel below and look for it in the [Book of Mark; chapter 1, verses 1-8](#).

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the prophet Isaiah:

*"Look, I am going to send my messenger in front of you to prepare your way before you.*

*A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight"*

John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Unscramble the words below to see what message he had for them.

nTru    kabc    ot    dGo    nda    eb    sepitbda!  
-----

hneT    uryo    ssni    lwli    eb    egoifvrn!  
-----

How could you respond to John the Baptist's message to turn back to God this Advent? Think about the things you could do during the next few weeks as you colour the picture below.



### SACRED SPACE:

Add some holy water to your Sacred Space to remind you of your own baptism.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, later this week, you could add a statue or picture of Mary.

Remember to pray to Saint Lucy as you light your candle this week. Her Feast Day is on December 13<sup>th</sup> and her name means 'light'.



## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>



On December 8<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, when we remember that Mary was conceived without sin, and thus chosen from the very first moment of her life to be the mother of God. This feast has been celebrated for a very long time, but it was only on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1854 that the feast of the Immaculate Conception was officially declared by Pope Pius IX. On this day we are asked to go to Mass. It is one of the special days of the year that we call a **Holy Day of Obligation**.

The banner on the next page contains the words of the Hail Mary. Colour it, cut it out and keep it in your room to remind you to pray this special prayer often.

### THE MEDAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

#### THE STORY OF THE MEDAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Medal of the Immaculate Conception was revealed to St. Catherine Labouré. Catherine was a nun who lived in France. She spent her life helping the sick and the poor. One night, Catherine awoke when she heard someone calling her name. She went to the chapel and found all the candles lighting. She saw Our Lady, dressed in white, with a white veil on her head. All around her were the words, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Our Lady gave Catherine a special mission. She was to have a medal made with the design that she had just seen. On the back of the medal there was to be a large 'M' on a bar with a cross above it. Under the design there were two hearts, one for Mary with a sword, and the other for Jesus with a crown of thorns. Twelve stars would make a border around this side of the medal. The first medal was made in 1832, and so many great blessings followed for people who wore it that it became known as the Miraculous Medal.



#### To Do:

Draw a picture of a Miraculous Medal, using the picture above and the description on the left to help you.

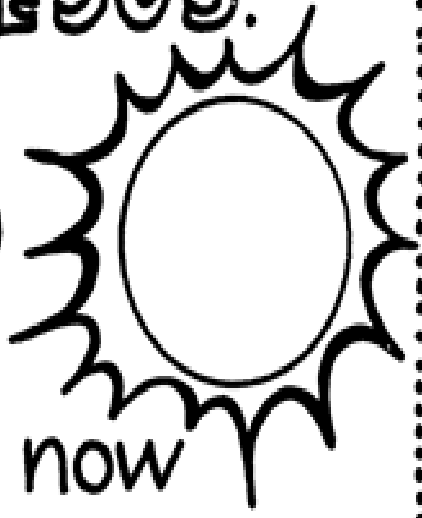
#### AT HOME:

Ask if anyone has a Medal of the Immaculate Conception that you can have. Wear it as a sign of your love for Our Lady.

HAIL MARY, full of grace  
the LORD is with you.

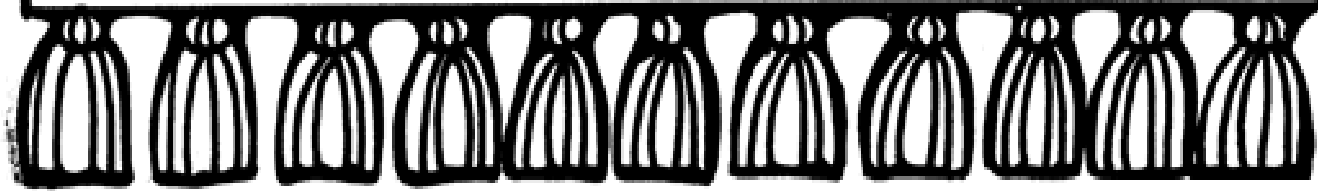
Blessed are you among women  
and blessed is the fruit  
of your womb, JESUS.

HOLY MARY,



mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now  
and at the hour of our death.

.....AMEN.....



## ADVENT WEEK 3



It's time to light the first, second and third candles on your Advent Wreath.  
Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.

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 shepherds 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.

### SUNDAY GOSPEL ADVENT WEEK 3

In this Sunday's scripture readings (**JOHN 1: 6-8,19-28**) we hear about the messenger sent by God to tell people about Jesus. "He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. In this case the light is another way of talking about Jesus. This messenger was called John the Baptist. He was called this because he baptised people in the river Jordan.

John was asked many times who he was. The people had been promised a messiah and they wondered whether John was this person. He never really gave a straight answer to those who asked but at the same time he left them in no doubt that someone was coming who was much greater than he was. John's feast day is June 24<sup>th</sup>.

### TO THINK ABOUT...

- In the reading John was asked "Who are you?"
- If someone was to ask you who you are what might you say? Would you be able to tell them what you stand for, what kind of person you are? What would you be able to tell them about Jesus?
- John was a special messenger for God. We too, are messengers for God. What kind of a messenger are you?
- Can you think of anybody famous who is a good messenger for God, either from history or the present day?
- People who go to other countries and tell people about God are called Missionaries. These people do wonderful work in cities, towns and villages all over the world. Find the name of three Missionary Societies.
- Say a prayer for Missionaries today.

Some of the other passages from scripture this week include Matthew's account of the history of the family of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17) and Luke tells us of the visit made by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. (Luke 1:26-38)

### COMPLETE THE WORD SEARCH

T O H G N N A U N L Y M  
E A A E M M A N U E L O  
B S T N A D N E C S E D  
A N C E S T O R S H T G  
Z A H A I R A H C E Z N  
I Z E L I Z A B E T H I  
L A B O B J A N N G T K  
E R J G O B B D G H U E  
Y E A Y Y G R N E E R C  
R T C L E A R S I I L N  
A H O A G E A M L O G Y  
M N B A A E C A A N B E

ANCESTORS

RUTH

EMMANUEL

GENEALOGY

ZECHARIAH

MARY ELIZABETH

ELIZABETH

ISRAEL

BABYLON

JOY

ANGEL

NAZARETH

DESCENDANTS

JACOB

KINGDOM





## ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE

### INTRODUCTION

Advent is a very special time of the Liturgical Year. It is the start of a new year for the Church. It is a time of waiting, a time of preparation; it is a time for us to think about our lives and who we are. It is a chance for us to put aside the rushing around as we look for presents, put up decorations and prepare for the Christmas dinner. It is a time to pray, a time to get to know Jesus and a time to make good resolutions to do with home, school and friends.

### OPENING PRAYER

God our Father, help us this Advent to prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus. Help us during this time of waiting to be people of friendship, hope and kindness. We ask you today for your forgiveness so that we can be the best that we can be through this Advent time. Give us a new heart this Advent so that we can love you and each other more each day.

**Amen**

### READING *Colossians 3:12-15*

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against the other, forgive each other just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called to one body. And be thankful.

The word of the Lord

### EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

**LEADER:** Now we take some time to be still and to think about how we live our lives and the things we do which may have hurt God or others.

- Do I take time each day for God; to pray or even just to say hello?
- Do I treat others with respect and as I would like them to treat me?
- Do I always tell the truth?
- Do I use bad language?
- Am I jealous of things that others have?
- Am I lazy and are there times when I don't do my very best?
- Do I love my family and do I try to make home a happy, peaceful place?
- Do I care for my environment and do I try not to be wasteful?
- Do I take care of my body and try to get enough sleep and exercise and to eat well?

**LEADER** We say sorry for the times that we have strayed away from God's love as we say our Act of Sorrow together,

*Oh my God I thank you for loving me...*

**TOGETHER WE SING:** *I'm sorry (Junior Classes)*

*Song of Repentance (Senior Classes)*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, today we ask you to see into our hearts and forgive us the times we have hurt you and others. May we also find the strength to forgive those who have hurt us just as Jesus forgave those he met. Grant us the wisdom to see you in everyone we see each day and in the beautiful world which you have created for us. Heal us and make us people of peace, love, joy and hope.

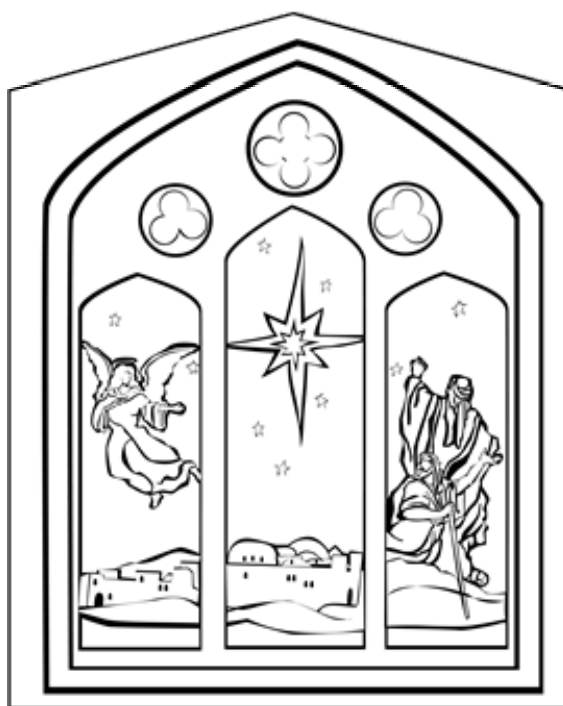
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**CLOSING HYMN :** *Advent Song (Alive-0 5, p.114)*

### **SUGGESTED USE**

*This prayer service might be used in assembly for the whole school or in the classroom before the children are taken to individual confession.*



## SACRED SPACE:



Add a cross to your Sacred Space as a sign that Jesus died for our sins.



## PRAYER AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE

**LEADER :** In the beginning God made the world and saw it was good. Long ago, God placed a tree in the garden of paradise as his gift to all human beings, a tree of wisdom and knowledge and laden with every good thing. Our Christmas Tree reminds us of that tree. Long ago too, God's kindness appeared in the coming of Jesus. Jesus, is our hope of eternal life. This tree is a sign of God's blessings.

### A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

This is the story  
of the heavens and the earth  
after their creation.

When the God made the earth and the heavens,  
there was neither shrub nor plants growing on the earth,  
because the Lord God had sent no rain;  
nor was there anyone to plant anything.

Until.....God made a human being  
from the dust of the ground  
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,  
so that he became a living creature.

Then God planted a garden in Eden away to the east,  
and in it he put the people he had formed...  
and in the middle of the garden he set the tree of life.

*Adapted from Genesis 2: 4-9*

**ALL** Lord you sent us your Son, Jesus. Stay with us always and show us your everlasting love. Let this tree, which is evergreen, remind us this Christmas time of this everlasting love. Watch over us and make this holiday one of peace and happiness.

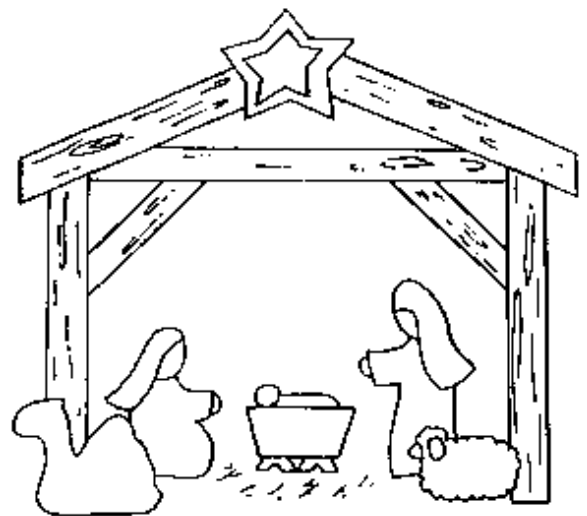
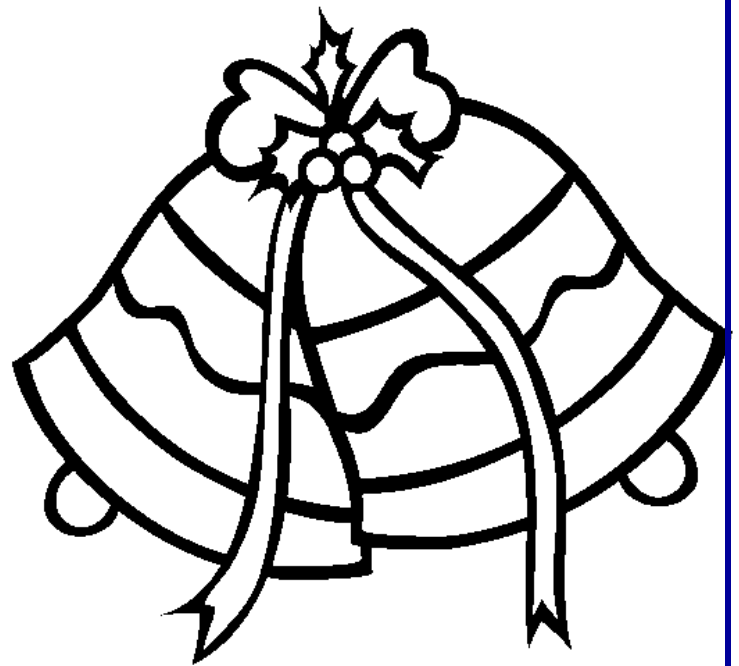
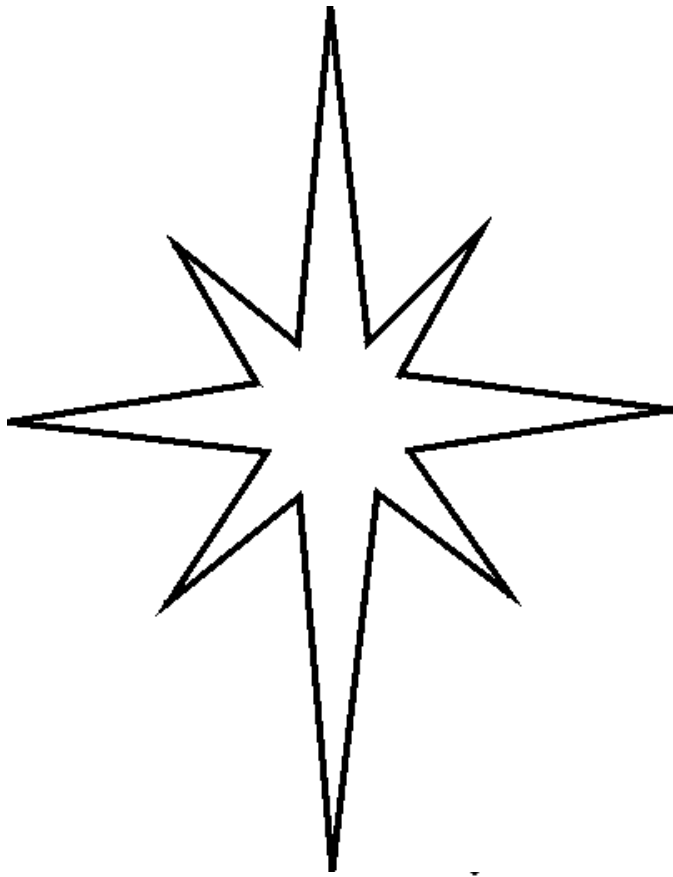
We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**Amen**



## DESIGN YOUR OWN DECORATIONS!

Below are some Christmas tree decorations that you can design as presents for family and friends. Copy the decorations onto card, 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 to hang the decorations on the Christmas tree.



## An Máinséar

A Thiarna Dhia,

Go mbeannaí gach uile duine a sheasann ag an máinséar seo inniu.

Go meabhraí an máinséar muid go ngránn Tú muid go huile is go hiomlán.

Cosúil leis an Maighdean Mhuire a saolaíodh a leanbh dhil sa dorchadas ciúin an bhotháin, go raibh tráthanna de shuaimhneas is de shíochán againn um an Nollag seo.

Tabhair aire dár gclainne agus coinnigh slán iad i gcónaí agus treoraigh muid mar a theoraigh Tú an Chlann Bheannaithe leis an leanbh naofa.



## ADVENT WEEK 4



This week we can light all four candles on the Advent Wreath. Christmas is nearly here. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.

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 shepherds 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 forevermore  
Christ Child in a stable born  
Gift of love that Christmas morn.

One of this week's readings continues the story of the visit of Mary to Elizabeth.

There is a verse of poetry in which Mary praises God. This verse is now the prayer and hymn that we call The Magnificat. It is a prayer of great joy and promise. You can read it now:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God  
my Saviour;  
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed;  
the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm  
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,  
Casting down the mighty from their thrones  
and lifting up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,  
to remember his promise of mercy,  
The promise made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children for ever. Amen

## The Magnificat

## To Do...

- Read this prayer with your class.
- Sing the song The Magnificat in Alive-0
- Read the accounts of the Birth of Jesus in your Bible in Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-12.
- The accounts of the birth are quite different. Why do you think this is?  
List these differences
- Are there any similarities between the accounts? List them too.



## WORD SEARCH

M P R R D A S N A L  
A E A W O R S H I P  
N A L F R T E S P N  
G M I E R E I A R J  
E E I N S A F S A I  
R L H M D U I R I I  
S H E P H E R D S V  
H T R I B V O E E O  
B E O O N U L T J O  
B B D S I N G I N G

BETHLEHEM  
HEROD  
GLORIFIES  
PRAISE  
JERUSELEM  
VISITORS  
WORSHIP

INN  
MANGER  
SHEPHERDS  
ANGELS  
SINGING  
AFRAID  
BIRTH

## THE 'O' ANTIPHONS

An antiphon is very like the response to the psalm we say or sing at Mass. Many hundreds of years ago, monks in monasteries set these responses to music and they were sung during Mass and at the various times during the day when the monks went to pray. In the last days of Advent, the monks had a special set of antiphons that they sang at Mass and during their prayers in the evening. They are called the '*O' antiphons*. Each '*O' Antiphon* is a title for Jesus, the Messiah.



The '*O' Antiphons* are prayed from December 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Here are all the titles for Jesus and where you can find them in the bible!

### **DECEMBER 17**      *O Wisdom*

"The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:2-3)

### **DECEMBER 18:**      *O Adonai*

"...but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins." (Isaiah 11:4-5).

### **DECEMBER 19:**      *O Root of Jesse*

"A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isaiah 11:1)

### **DECEMBER 20:**      *O Key of David*

"I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open." (Isaiah 22:22)

### **DECEMBER 21:**      *O Morning Star*

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

### **DECEMBER 22:**      *O King of the Nations*

"For a child has been born for us, a son given us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

### **DECEMBER 23:**      *O Emmanuel*

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel, " (Isaiah 7:14) The word Emmanuel means 'God with us'

## O ANTIPHONS WORD SEARCH



o	a	o	f	i	i	o	a	e	e	t	g	y	m	n	w	r	r	o	b
k	c	n	o	m	o	r	n	i	n	g	s	t	a	r	o	g	a	o	k
e	o	p	d	t	t	t	i	t	r	t	y	c	g	t	a	d	s	f	h
y	l	e	e	s	s	e	j	f	o	t	o	o	r	o	o	t	v	s	e
o	o	e	m	i	o	m	e	p	n	y	e	s	e	n	a	p	s	s	i
f	a	m	m	m	r	a	e	a	a	a	s	e	a	m	t	f	i	p	t
d	l	h	m	l	a	l	r	t	o	i	a	i	n	r	f	n	y	s	a
a	f	r	t	d	e	n	t	e	v	a	r	f	s	t	e	e	e	n	o
v	o	t	h	h	l	t	u	m	o	d	s	i	w	o	o	t	f	e	i
i	m	t	t	n	n	h	o	e	f	e	v	a	h	d	m	c	f	e	l
d	r	e	h	a	o	e	l	r	l	l	d	r	w	f	a	a	e	f	i
t	s	f	t	g	w	i	d	e	w	u	f	s	h	m	n	e	d	i	a
e	e	i	s	i	a	h	a	o	o	m	b	a	r	a	r	a	e	e	o
i	a	c	m	t	t	r	s	t	i	e	g	r	u	a	o	o	y	c	d
e	d	t	o	s	i	m	i	l	o	v	v	i	e	i	o	n	t	r	y
s	d	o	s	t	s	n	v	s	d	h	u	v	n	n	f	l	g	o	n
o	b	r	e	r	r	o	e	t	e	r	h	l	t	n	b	s	n	h	t
m	w	v	c	s	t	u	e	r	t	a	t	n	m	t	r	s	e	m	d
s	n	o	i	t	a	n	e	h	t	f	o	g	n	i	k	o	s	u	a
a	i	t	r	t	m	g	o	i	f	t	o	f	t	w	e	l	a	k	o

O King of the-nations  
 O Root of Jesse  
 O Morning Star  
 O Key of David

O Emmanuel  
 O Adonai  
 O Wisdom

Colour the Angel



# True or False

Answers on page 29



1. Advent started as a custom in Eastern Europe
2. Lent is the name for the special time of the year just before Christmas.
3. Advent means Christmas.
4. The first Sunday of Advent begins a new Church year.
5. An Advent calendar counts down the days until Christmas.
6. Advent lasts six weeks.
7. There are four candles in the Advent wreath.
8. Each candle on the Advent wreath represents two weeks.
9. Three candles are rose coloured on the Advent wreath.
10. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world
11. Advent is a time of waiting and preparing.
12. The first candle lit is purple in colour.
13. The second candle lit is purple in colour.
14. The third candle lit is rose coloured.
15. The fourth candle lit is white.
16. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Easter.
17. Emmanuel means *God with us*.
18. Advent means coming.
19. On the first Sunday of Advent we begin a period of prayer, fasting, and penance.
20. Advent is the name for the special time of the year just before Christmas.
21. Advent lasts four weeks.
22. Each candle on the Advent wreath represents one week.
23. Three candles are purple coloured.
24. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

### HUNGARY

On the feast of St. Nicholas, December 6<sup>th</sup>, Hungarian children receive a visit from 'Mikulas' or St Nicholas.

He arrives wearing the robes of a bishop, with a red miter on his head, a staff in one hand and a sack full of small presents in the other. Each child receives a small gift, usually a toy or sweets, from Mikulas.

*Kellemes Karácsonyt!*

### 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*'.

*(shèngdàn kuàilè xīnnián kuàilè)*

Do any children in your class have a Christmas tradition from the country that 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 language.

## THE CHRISTMAS STORY



About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the \_\_\_\_\_ of all the people to be listed in record books. Everyone had to go to their own \_\_\_\_\_ to be registered. \_\_\_\_\_ had to leave Nazareth and go to Bethlehem. Long ago \_\_\_\_\_ had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

\_\_\_\_\_ was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a \_\_\_\_\_, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of \_\_\_\_\_, because there was no room for them in the \_\_\_\_\_.

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some \_\_\_\_\_ were minding their sheep. All at once an \_\_\_\_\_ came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were \_\_\_\_\_. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good \_\_\_\_\_ for you, which will make everyone \_\_\_\_\_. This very day in King David's hometown a \_\_\_\_\_ was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."



Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in \_\_\_\_\_ God. They said: "\_\_\_\_\_ in the highest! Peace on earth to all God's people."

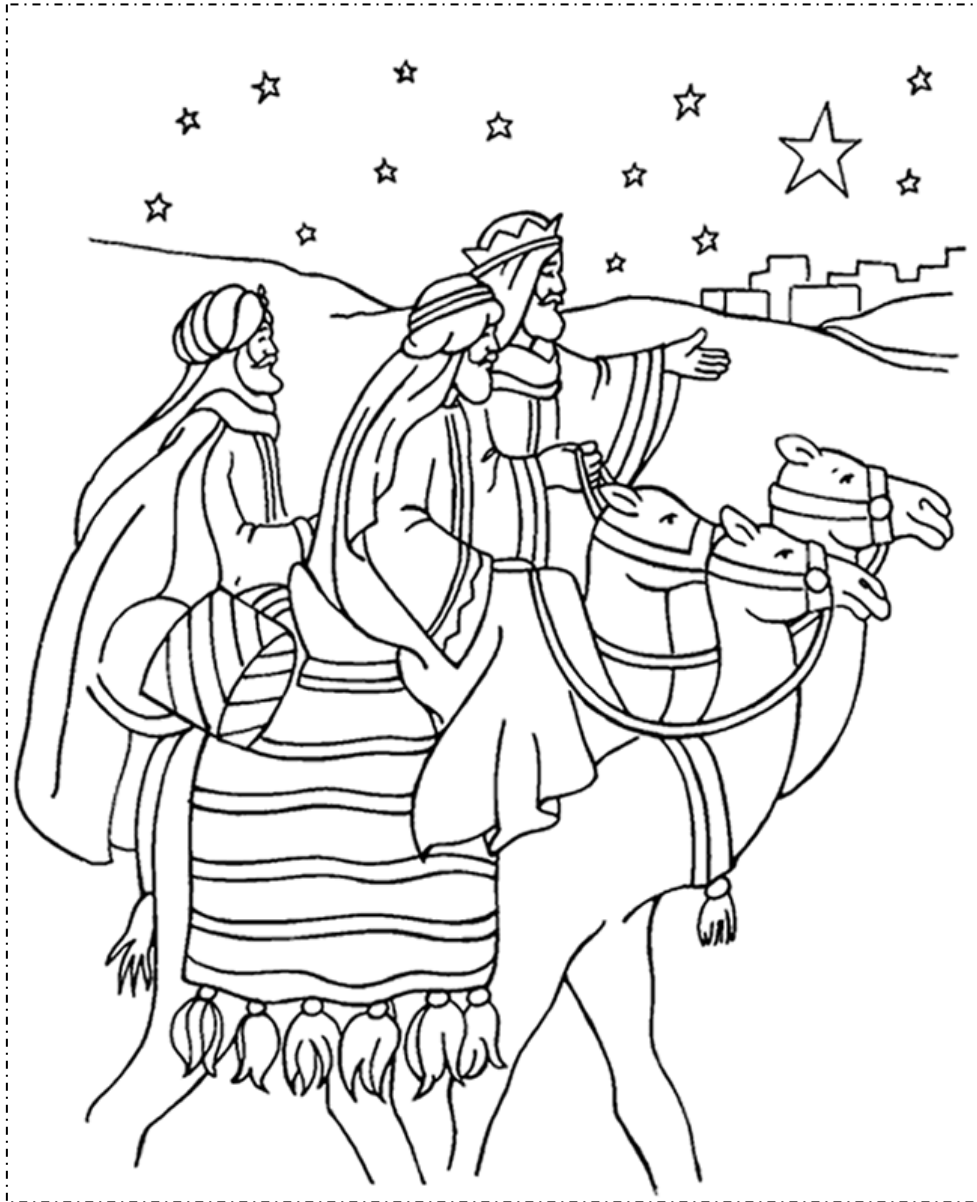
After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and \_\_\_\_\_ what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying in a \_\_\_\_\_.

### FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THESE WORDS:

baby; manger; shepherds; Saviour; Joseph; Bethlehem; hay; Mary; praising; inn; angel; happy; frightened; news; Hosanna; see; names; hometown



**'A Saviour has been born. He is Christ the Lord'**



Lean na trí ríthe ón Domhain Thoir an réalt sa spéir agus tháinig said ar an stábla ina raibh Íosa. Cén t-ainm a bhí ar na dtrí ríthe?

raCpsa

oieMhrcl

azalahBtr

-----

Thug siad bronntanais leo: Cad iad?

rÓ

Tsiu

rMroir

-----

**Sa Bhaile:** Cuir na trí ríthe istigh sa mháinséir ar Lá Nollag Beag - 6ú Eanair.

## BOOKS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

These are just a number of popular books for Advent and Christmas. Many others are available in religious bookshops and the Veritas Shops and can be viewed at [www.veritas.ie](http://www.veritas.ie)

## RESOURCES

The Jesse Tree: Stories and Symbols of Advent	Raymond and Georgene Anderson <i>Augsburg Fortress, 1991</i>
The Oxford Book of Christmas Poems	Michael Harrison/Christopher Stuart-Clark <i>Oxford University Press, 1999</i>
The Oxford Book of Christmas Stories	Denis Pepper <i>Oxford University Press, 1999</i>
The Faber Book of Christmas	Simon Rae (ed.) <i>Faber &amp; Faber, 1996</i>
Joy to the World: Two Thousand Years of Christmas	Francis G. James & Miriam G. Hill (eds.) <i>Four Courts Press, 2000</i>
The Macmillan Book of Christmas	Diz Wallis <i>Ted Smart, 1999</i>
The Origins of Christmas	Joseph F. Kelly <i>Liturgical Press, 2004</i>
Praying in Advent	Donal Neary SJ <i>Columba, 1989</i>
An Advent Sourcebook	Thomas J. O’Gorman (ed.) <i>Liturgy Training Publications, 1986</i>
A Christmas Sourcebook	Mary Ann Simcoe (ed.) <i>Liturgy Training Publications, 1984</i>
Usborne Big Book of Christmas Things to Make and Do	Fiona Watt <i>Usborne, 2005</i>
Christmas Around the World	Anna Claybourne <i>Usborne, 2005</i>

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 26

**True; False; False; True; True; False; True; False; False; True; True; True; True;  
True; False; False; True; True; False; True; True; True; True; True;**

## POETRY AND FICTION

The Jesse Tree	Geraldine McCaughrean <i>Lion Publishing 2003</i>
The Christmas Mystery	Jostein Gaarder <i>Phoenix Press, 2004</i>
Christmas Poems	U.A. Fanthorpe <i>Enitharmon Press, 2002</i>
One Little Angel	Ruth Brown <i>Anderson Press, 1998</i>
The Crippled Lamb	Max Lucado <i>Thomas Nelson Press, 1999</i>
Irish Christmas Stories Vols. I & II	David Marcus (ed.) <i>Bloomsbury 1995, 1997</i>
The Cat Did Not Know	Margaret McCarthy <i>Veritas 2006</i>
12 Days of Christmas	Kathleen Darragh <i>Veritas 2006</i>
Christmas with Auntie Mary	Eleanor Gormally <i>Veritas 2007</i>
Christmas in the Barn	Margaret Wise Brown <i>Harper, 2004</i>
The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey	Susan Wojciechowski <i>Walker Books, 1997</i>
The Best Christmas Present in the World	Michael Morpurgo <i>Egmont Books, 2004</i>
Letters from Father Christmas	J.R.R. Tolkien <i>Harper Collins 2006</i>
The Christmas Candle	Richard Paul Evans <i>Simon &amp; Schuster, 1998</i>
A Christmas Carol	Charles Dickens <i>Multiple Editions</i>
The Nativity Story	Geraldine McCaughrean and Sophy Williams <i>Lion Hudson 2007</i>

## 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](http://www.dltk-holidays.com/xmas/index.html)

A site full with lots of Christmas activities for children including colouring pages, crafts, games, puzzles, poems, prayers, songs, worksheets and more!



Printable Jesse Tree symbols are available from: [www.osv.com/Portals/0/images/pdf/JesseTree.pdf](http://www.osv.com/Portals/0/images/pdf/JesseTree.pdf)

You can also find Jesse Tree symbols, and a commentary to take you through the symbols if you Google 'Jesse Tree RCA'

Word Searches & Crossword puzzles for middle and senior classes:

[www.puzzle-club.com/christmas-word-search-carols.html](http://www.puzzle-club.com/christmas-word-search-carols.html)

Christmas carols word search

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

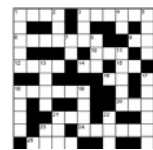
Advent word search

[www.culham.ac.uk/advent2000/xword/w4\\_cword\\_fs.html](http://www.culham.ac.uk/advent2000/xword/w4_cword_fs.html)

An interactive, on-line Advent crossword

<http://www.dltk-holidays.com/Xmas/m-wordsearch.htm>

Four Christmas word searches, different levels of difficulty



[www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/nativity/index.htm](http://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, and perfect for use either on interactive whiteboards or individual computers.



For teacher:

Check out [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) for a daily prayer for Advent

