

ADVENT - THE RATIONALE

YEAR ONE

This unit is designed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the season of Advent further. It looks at getting ready for the Birth of Jesus through the eyes of Mary and Joseph. The main focus is to identify their response to God and the qualities they demonstrated by responding to him in that way. There is also a focus on the joy of the Advent season.



YEAR TWO

This unit is designed to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the season of Advent. It looks at getting ready for the Birth of Jesus by helping us remember that God promised to send us His Son and that Jesus is the fulfilment of that promise. It introduces the idea of what a prophet does and what angels do.

It helps us understand that people such as John the Baptist help us understand the nature of this promise and provide example and inspiration of how we should respond to it. Further reinforcement is provided on the symbolism of Advent. It also develops the idea that we get ready as a parish community, as the family of God.

YEAR THREE

This unit is designed to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the season of Advent. The story of the Annunciation details the response of Mary to the news that she is to be the mother of Jesus. This unit will focus on Mary's acceptance of her vocation. When she declares; "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: let it be to me according to your word"

In the light of this acceptance of her vocation, we explore what we are required to do to get ready for the presence of Jesus. The parable of the sheep and goats provides a challenge to us to respond to the presence of Jesus.

YEAR FOUR

This unit is designed to deepen understanding of what God promised when He promised to send His Son. It details how Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of this promise. The ancestry of Jesus is explored to enable a deeper understanding of the nature of the Messiah. This will link this work to what we celebrate and prepare for in Advent. The meaning behind some of the titles and names given to Jesus are explored. Titles such as Messiah and Emmanuel will provide insight into the nature of Jesus, as well as the role of the prophets, who help prepare us for the presence of Jesus.

YEAR FIVE

This unit is designed to deepen understanding of what God promised when he promised to send his Son. It details how Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of this promise. The ancestry of Jesus is explored to enable a deeper understanding of the nature of the Messiah. This will link this work to what we celebrate and prepare for in Advent. The meaning behind some of the titles and names given to Jesus are explored. Titles such as Messiah and Emmanuel will provide insight into the nature of Jesus as well as the role of the prophets who help prepare us for the presence of Jesus.

YEAR SIX

This unit builds on work done in previous years in Advent. It provides further detail on the nature of the Messiah who is to come, but provides a deeper opportunity to explore the response demanded of Christ's followers. The teachings of Christ, through his parables, provide us detailed teaching on watching and being prepared for the coming of God's Kingdom. The time of Advent is when we also prepare for the Second Coming of Christ through our prayers and by following Christ.

ADVENT - EXPLAINING THE THEOLOGY

The name Advent comes from the Latin words, *advenire* (to come to) and *adventus* (an arrival), and refers to Christ's coming into this world. It is that period of the year during which the Church requires the faithful to prepare for the celebration of the feast of Christmas, the anniversary of the Birth and coming of Jesus Christ. The mystery of Christmas requires that we prepare by works of penance and prayer. Each Sunday in Advent has a theme to be pondered on during the season. The four themes (traditionally) are: God's people - the Advent hope; the Old Testament prophets; John the Baptist and Mary the mother of Jesus.

(The Gospel gives no indication of how Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem, although it is not unlikely that a pregnant woman would have been unable to make the journey on foot. There is no direct reference to a donkey.)

We remember his coming at Christmas. We can get ready for Jesus by following Mary's example and trusting in God. Advent is a time of rejoicing.

God prepared for the coming of His Son over the centuries. He awakened expectation in those who did not believe and he prepared for it specifically through the Old Testament culminating with John the Baptist, who was the last and the greatest of the prophets. We relive this expectancy in the season of Advent.

In Advent we can respond to the example of the prophets and especially John the Baptist by preparing a way for Jesus to be a full part of our lives.

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The theme of Mary is extended by a focus on her response to the message that she is to be the Mother of Jesus. In the story of the Annunciation we see Mary as a model believer. If we had had a similar experience to Mary, would we have reacted as favourably to God's revelation? St Luke presents many different examples of people, who would not be expected to respond to God's revelation, doing so positively.

Mary accepted her vocation and responded in a positive way to the presence of Jesus. We can respond to the presence of Jesus by showing care and concern for others.

The prophets proclaimed a radical redemption of the people and a salvation which would include all nations in a new and everlasting covenant. From the people of Israel and the House of King David, would be born the Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise of redemption. Advent is a time when we celebrate the coming of Jesus and our redemption

The term 'prophets' means those, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak in the name of God. The Spirit brings the prophecies of the Old Testament to their complete fulfillment in Christ whose mystery he reveals in the New Testament. The Spirit filled John the Baptist who was the last prophet of the Old Testament. Under his inspiration, John was sent to 'make ready for the Lord a people prepared.' (Luke 1:17)

There are two parts to Advent, first to celebrate the first coming of Jesus and second through the inspiration of the Spirit to prepare for Jesus to come. Jesus was given many different titles to tell us something of his qualities and attributes.

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'Christ' in Greek, 'Messiah' in Hebrew, mean the 'anointed one'. Jesus is the Christ because he is consecrated by God and anointed by the Holy Spirit for his redeeming mission.

All of us are invited by Jesus to enter the Kingdom of Heaven and prepare for his coming.

Advent is a time to prepare for the Second Coming of Christ and that this season demands preparation from his followers.

