



Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: PRIMARY**

**THEME: Advent**



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*Advent – a time of waiting.*

*The Old Testament book of Isaiah has a special place in the heart of many Christians, as the prophecies in this book, more than any other, seem to point to the coming of Jesus. The words of Isaiah are the Old Testament scriptures most often quoted by the writers of the New Testament. The book contains many important promises for Christians and sections of its poetry have been turned into well-known songs and hymns.*

*Isaiah was a prophet in the eighth century BC, working in the south of Israel. Through his writings he brings a message of warning to the people of God, because they are not living in the way they should, but he then has a message of comfort for his readers as they go through difficult times. The third part of Isaiah looks forward to the distant future when there will be a new heaven and a new earth.*

*These different voices of the prophet correspond to three different sections of the book, but it is the message of hope that Christians turn to during the season of Advent, as they get ready for the mystery of Christmas.*

## BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

[Isaiah 9: verses 2,6&7](#)

*The Bible passage this week is a prophecy about the Messiah written by Isaiah. It includes some special names, that Christians now use to describe Jesus.*



## Gathering

### Some questions to think about:

What are you looking forward to today?

How did you feel when you were waiting for a special day, your birthday, or a wedding?

Show some pictures of familiar cartoon characters, famous people or even wild animals. With talk-partners, choose some **adjectives** that you would use to describe the character e.g. **gentle** dolphin; **fierce** tiger; **greedy** Homer; **brave** Florence [Nightingale] etc. If you have more than one adjective, choose which is the 'best'.

As you gather, you could use the Nick & Becky Drake song '[I am a city on a hill](#)' (learn the actions [here](#), from about 2:39 onwards) – or others that you know e.g. '[This little light of mine](#)' – making up your own actions instead of singing.

## Engagement



Show the picture, or better still, darken the room and bring in a lit birthday cake. You may have a class version that children are already familiar with.

Talk about the anticipation of those moments before the cake appears.

Is this an experience just for the person with the birthday, or something that everyone at the party shares?

### In Advent, Christians prepare for Jesus – who comes to bring light in the darkness.

Long before Jesus was born, some prophets brought messages from God about what the 'Messiah' would be like. Christians believe Jesus is the one they were talking about.

In this collective worship we will look at some of the names that the prophet Isaiah used to describe Jesus. You could read the text together and pick out the key names, talking about the adjectives.



### His name will be **Wonderful Counsellor**.

A counsellor gives advice, helps people to make choices.

Talk about the choices we make.

Not just what fruit at snack time, but more difficult choices.

What we say to people... If we will help someone....

Sensitively explore some of the more difficult choices the children have made. (Be aware, for example, that where parents live apart children may feel that they have to choose between parents)

**Many Christians believe that Jesus will help them to make good choices.**

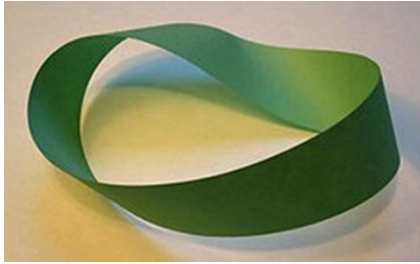


***His name will be ... Powerful God,***

Christians believe that God is a mighty, powerful God. He can do things that seem impossible to humans. He made the universe, including the stars millions of light years away.

How did Jesus show God's power?

What have you seen that might explain why Christians believe God is powerful? Are there times when you wish God would show his power more in our world?



***His name will be ... Father Who Lives Forever***

Christians believe that God is with them for ever; he loves like a good parent loves their child.

(You will need to be sensitive to the fact that not all children will have a father in their lives, and some may have negative experiences of fathers.)

This picture is a of mobius strip. If you run your finger round it, it never ends.

Take a long strip of paper, half twist it and stick the ends together with tape. Invite a child to come and run their finger around the strip showing that it never ends.

**How might it help Christians to know that God is 'everlasting'?**



***His name will be ... Prince of Peace***

There is so much war and conflict in our world. People find it difficult to make and keep peace.

Our own hearts are often not at peace, but anxious and worried.

**Christians believe that Jesus brings peace – for them, and for our world.**



***He will rule as king on David's throne and over David's kingdom.  
He will make it strong, by ruling with goodness and fair judgment.  
He will rule it forever and ever.***

Christians believe that in God's kingdom, everything is good and fair.

I wonder what that might look like?

**Christians are called to bring God's Kingdom to earth here and now, in the way that they love and treat others. At Advent, they will continue to pray 'Your Kingdom come....'**

**If you haven't already done so, light a candle for children to see.**



In Isaiah 9: 2, it says:

*Now those people live in darkness.  
But they will see a great light.  
They live in a place that is very dark.  
But a light will shine on them.*

Look at this little candle. Even a little bit of light lights up the darkness.

Have you ever been in a dark place when someone has lit a candle or a torch?

How did it make you feel?

In John 1: 9-11, Christians read that this prophecy is about Jesus:

*The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word.*

**Christians believe that Jesus is the Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace and Fair King. Jesus came to be a light in the darkness – and His names bring light and hope into a dark world. But it doesn't stop there, because followers of Jesus can be a part of God's Kingdom on earth, and shine God's light wherever they go.**

## Response

Now think about the names of Jesus that we have looked at in this worship time.

Which name do you think is the most important?

Why?

Which do you think might be most important to Christians this Advent time?

Why?

Which one do you think our world needs most?

Why?

**Spend some time thinking in the stillness, watching the flame of the candle flicker – and considering places where light needs to shine.**

*Now, if you want to pray with me, use your hands to express this response:*

**Light a candle in our world, O God** (Thumbs-up symbol and wiggle thumb)

**let it brighten our faces** (Hands at side of the face and wiggle fingers)

**that we may tell this world** (Hands moving away from mouth)

**the time is arriving** (Point to watch on wrist)

**when you will put on flesh** (Mime putting on a coat)

**and walk among us.** (Draw a circle in front of you with both index fingers)

**Amen**

*Taken from Roots Prayer and Prayer Activities*



Read these words from Isaiah 9: 2

Read them with an emphasis on different words as you read them four times.

“But a **light** will shine on them.”

“But a light **will** shine on them.”

“But a light will **shine** on them.”

“But a light will shine on **them**.”

*As we go into our day, if you are feeling worried or anxious remember this promise of light.*

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)*

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

1. [Barnabas in Schools](#) have an idea for using percussion to explore the idea of waiting for Jesus, the light of the world. This could be a good idea for a performance that doesn't involve singing this year!



2. [Engage Worship](#) have created a set of 24 Tiny Advent Poems, written for adults; some will resonate with children. Free to download files of words and images that express the feeling of anticipation that goes with Advent. They can be used as an Advent calendar or individually. There are lots more engaging ideas, free to download from their website. You could also ask older children to create their own 'Tiny Advent Poems' like these.

3. [Advent Family Creative Journal](#): Also from Engage Worship, there are pages to download for free. These encourage children to reflect, write, draw and create on the themes of hope, peace, love and joy for their local community and the world.
4. [Create your own online Advent Calendar](#): On this website you can upload, text, a picture and a video for each day of Advent. Put the link onto your school website and everyone in your community can enjoy your work.
5. **Advent Books**: An idea from one primary school - the RE leader wraps up 4 of their special nativity books at the start of Advent. They open one each week during collective worship in Advent and read it together.
6. [Messy Church](#) There are 10 suggestions for Messy Church activities based on a wider portion of Isaiah than just the part included in this assembly.

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on light in the darkness. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the times when someone has been a 'light' for you.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the places in your life, or in our world, that need light.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about times when you have been a light for others.
4. SAY SORRY for the times that you have stopped someone else shining their light.
5. DECIDE how you will be a light for others today, this week or during the time of Advent.

Use an **Advent wreath** with your class during Advent, focusing on the traditional themes of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace – and encouraging each other to show and share hope, love, joy and peace during Advent.

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES**

**The Reverse Advent Calendar:** This is a simple idea that contrasts with the advent calendars that are full of goodies. You start with an empty box or basket and each day put in something to give to someone else. Many people fill them with items for their local foodbank, homeless shelter or refuge.

**Random Acts of Christmas Kindness:** This is like the 40 Acts of Kindness that many schools do in lent. There is no official website as such but there are various calendars online. Many are American and the ideas wouldn't work here. So how about getting your pupils to suggest the acts of kindness for each day during Advent?

**Advent angels:** This is an idea to cheer up your staff during these challenging last few weeks of term. Quite a few schools have done it and say that it has been good for morale!

The idea and a poster for your staff room are here:

<https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education/christian-distinctiveness/advent-and-christmas>

**Advent Window:** How about creating an advent calendar in your window for people walking past your school, changing the picture each day? You could use the themes of hope, peace, love and joy or the names of Jesus from Isaiah.

### **INVITATIONAL**

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### **INCLUSIVE**

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### **INSPIRING**

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?