

faith at home

Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

ADVENT





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Is there a danger in the rush of life that we miss out on important things?

The word Advent comes from the Latin word — “adventus” which means arrival.

“The most significant achievement of our age is not that man stood on the moon, but rather that God in Christ stood on the earth.” James Irwin.

A POSSIBLE BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

The people walking in darkness see a bright light, light shines
on those who live in a land of deep darkness....

...For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us.

He shoulders responsibility and is called Wonderful Adviser,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:2,6 New English Translation*

Gathering

Are you prepared?

Ask students -FOMO- Do you suffer from “Fear of missing out”? Is this making life over busy? Share this quote “*I wanted to figure out why I was so busy, but I couldn't find the time to do it.*” — Todd Stocker

Give an opportunity to reflect and pause from being busy, raising awareness that busyness can sometimes mean we miss things that are important.

Here is a YouTube link to some quiet music and some awesome views of nature:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OEL4PIRz04&t=4636s>

Or Listen

Some of the Natasha Bedingfield lyrics from “Wake up and smell the roses” could be used or listen to an extract from the song-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKWgdXF66T4>

“I've been livin' in a room without windows

Away from the sun, no oxygen I couldn't tell if it was day or night

Away from the sun, growing nowhere fast

Rushing along on the pavement

Don't even look at the people's faces, going places

When an old man said stop, You nearly stepped on a flower, Growing through the cracks

And you didn't even notice.

[Chorus:] Wake up smell the roses Life is happening and you don't know it Wake up, take a moment Grab it in your hands... and own it “

Engagement

What does the season of Advent challenge us to pause for? Read the Bible verses Isaiah 9:2,6 New English Translation

“The people walking in darkness see a bright light, light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness. For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called Wonderful Adviser, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Reflect/discuss –

- In what ways might the world today seem like it is in darkness?
- How might the story of Jesus’ birth bring hope and light to people today?

Explore other religious traditions at this time of year. Are there similar themes?

In 2020, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah falls on December 11th. Find out more about how this is celebrated.

Or explore the tradition of the Nativity Fast from Orthodox Christianity, which begins in 2020 on November 15th?



Response

Consider when you last paused and had an experience that made you feel a sense of awe and wonder?

PsychologyToday.com says that “Researchers describe awe as “that sense of wonder we feel in the presence of something vast that transcends our understanding of the world.” They point out that people commonly experience awe in nature, but also feel a sense of awe in response to religion, art, music, etc.

For many awesomeness is something they describe as wow! Moment – a way of describing a point that makes us stop and say wow!

The Greater Good Magazine says that “Research suggests that awe can make you happier, healthier, more humble, and more connected to the people around you.”

How could we increase the opportunities for more awe in our lives?

A series of pictures could be shared that inspire a sense of awe and wonder, or students may have their own suggestions to share. A picture showing the intricate and unique detail of a snowflake could be used.

Sending

Previously we have shared examples of ‘Random acts of kindness’ like this one from [Twinkl](#) or the image to the right:

These focus on small actions that may help bring some extra light and encouragement into the lives of others. Perhaps students could contribute ideas to design a class or year group one and then carry out their acts during the Advent season?

Random Acts of Christmas Kindness 2020						
"No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted." -Aesop						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

This [link](#) provides the basis for this four-part model of readings and prayers, that could be used during the time of Advent.

Theme 1: Expectancy Reading: Micah 5:2-5; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 7:14

Conversation Starters: Talk about a time when you've had to wait expectantly for something. What was it like to feel in your heart that you knew something big was going to happen and yet to also know that you needed to wait for it? How might the idea of waiting for God to provide the answers enable people to trust him more?

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, we start this Advent season waiting for you. Like the Israelites who wearily longed—hoping against hope—that you would bring your promised Messiah, we desperately wait for you to fill our hearts with your glorious presence this Advent season. Please allow us to see the beauty and refining that comes when we stop our striving and choose to boldly trust that your promises will prove true.*

Theme 2: Hope Reading: Luke 1:26-38; Luke 1:47-55

Conversation Starters: Discuss this together (there's no right or wrong answer): What do you think Mary was more surprised by—the appearance of the angel, or the angel's message itself? Would you want an angel to give you a message about something that was to happen in your life? This could be an opportunity to share a time when you believed God miraculously “showed up” in life to offer either physical or emotional provision in a way that you never could have imagined.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, for many of us, we admit that the story of the virgin birth has become so familiar that it's easy for us to lose sight of how utterly spectacular and astonishing this event was. After years of waiting, your promised Messiah was to be born in the most unlikely of places to the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely of ways. Only You can plan such awe-inspiring works! You are perfect in your ways, and your plans are magnificent! May we trust you with every aspect of our lives, remembering that Mary's story assures us that you are able to show up and do the miraculous.*

Theme 3: Joy Reading: Luke 2:8-20; Luke 2:25-32

Conversation Starters: How do you imagine the all-consuming celebration of joy that the shepherds witnessed? In terms of your life, how do you celebrate both the big and little victories? Even if you're going through something difficult in your life right now, what can you choose to consider with joy today? Christians believe, like Simeon in the Bible passage, that God will fulfil His promises.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, it's hard to imagine what it would have been like to see the armies of heaven lighting up the shepherd's fields as they praised your name! We praise you today that you chose to personally enter our world as the promised Messiah, humbling yourself to become human so that you could truly live among your people. With your birth, people can be made whole! You offer salvation to those that call out to you, and that makes our hearts sing with joy!*

Theme 4: Peace Reading: Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; Psalm 23:1-2

Conversation Starters: Describe the circumstances that Mary and Joseph found themselves in after Jesus' birth. Did the reality around them look like they had a reason for peace? How do you think the miracles surrounding Jesus' birth (prophecies fulfilled, angels' appearances, etc.) built up the faith of the young Mary and Joseph for their future life as the earthly parents of Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you were born into a restless world looking for answers and desperate for peace. Our world today may not look like that of ancient Bethlehem, but it can also be a broken place filled with anxious hearts eager to discover purpose and lasting hope. This Advent season may the world see your son's birth as an olive branch of peace. No matter what their circumstances, may they know that you can give us an incredible peace that cannot be shaken or taken away. Thank you for being the path to peace.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

For many Advent is a time of preparation. You could choose some of the activities below to carry out in Advent. What else could you add that is special to you or your family?

- Make Christmas cards
- Make shapes with the cookie cutters and playdough
- Make paper snowflakes
- Go or listen to a Carol Service
- Colour in some Christmas pictures
- Make some Christmas fairy cakes
- Make paper chains
- Read about the nativity
- String popcorn to go on the tree
- Make a bird feeder
- Sing and dance to Christmas songs
- Make some Christmas cookies
- Watch a Christmas movie
- Take a walk to look at the Christmas lights
- Make mince pies
- Make hot chocolate and marshmallows
- Make and put up a wreath
- Decorate a gingerbread house
- Sing Christmas carols
- Donate canned food to a food bank
- Make an angel for the top of the Christmas tree.
- Choose three of your toys and give them away to a charity shop.
- Make homemade wrapping paper
- Help wrap presents

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

What could you do this Advent that is more environmentally friendly? This link may give some ideas-

<https://www.everchange productions.co/25-eco-friendly-advent-calendar-activities/>



For example, try a reverse advent calendar- many local foodbanks are encouraging the idea this Christmas. Why don't you see if your family/ community can get involved?

Starting on December 1st, collect an item every day to donate to a shelter or a charity or some other non-profit organisation where it's needed.

				Please check with us to find out our opening times around Christmas and to check if there is anything in particular we're running short of. Email address: norwoodfoodbank@btinternet.com Telephone Number: 07722121108	
1 Tinned fruit	2 Cooking oil	3 Washing up liquid	4 Shower gel	5 Cereal	6 Rice pudding
7 Shampoo	8 Chocolates	9 Sponge pudding	10 Hand wash	11 Washing powder	12 Toothpaste
13 Themed cakes	14 Biscuits	15 Tinned fish	16 Pasta sauce	17 UHT milk	18 Coffee
19 Hot chocolate	20 Jam & peanut butter	21 Fruit juice	22 Rice pudding	23 UHT custard	24 Tinned Meat

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

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?