

## Background Notes for Parents/Carers

### About the theme – Advent/Christmas

The Advent/Christmas – Loving theme considers Christians' preparation for the gift of God's love in Jesus which is celebrated by Christians at Christmas. It focuses on the witness of loving as a way of life.

### The season of Advent and the three-fold coming

Advent marks the beginning of the Church's year. The word ADVENT comes from the Latin word 'adventus' which means 'arrival', 'coming' or 'a drawing near'. During Advent, Christians focus on preparing for a three-fold coming.

- The coming of Christ in history (the birth of Jesus which we celebrate on December 25) and a remembrance of how the people of God waited expectantly for the Messiah;
- How Advent encourages believers to prepare to meet Jesus who comes every day in their lives;
- That believers wait in joyful expectation for Jesus to come again in glory at the end of time (the Second Coming).

Therefore Advent affirms that

- Christ has come
- He is present in the world today
- He will come again in power.

Advent is a time of waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus into the world. It is also a penitential season; one that prepares Christians for the Second Coming (hence the liturgical colour of the season is purple). Advent has a strong, positive message. Simply put it is – 'get ready!' Or as the Scriptures put it – 'prepare the way of the Lord'. For Catholics the call to work for charity and the common good are heightened during Advent. It is a time of renewal, personal growth and transformation.

The four Sundays before Christmas Day are known as the four Sundays of Advent. The themes for each week of Advent are: 'Wake up!', 'Prepare the way of the Lord', 'Rejoice' and 'Emmanuel is with us'. These are sometimes translated as hope, love, joy, and peace.

## Year 6 'Expectation'

During the topic 'Expectations', pupils have been learning about Advent as a time of joyful expectation of Christmas, the Word becoming a human person, Jesus.

### Waiting in expectation

Children look at the meaning of expectation. They learn that the Advent 'coming' reminds us of the anticipation and the strong, confident expectation over hundreds of years of the people of Israel for their Messiah and promised King, Emmanuel (God with us). They expected the Messiah to come and bring peace, justice and righteousness to the world. Isaiah tells us what the Messiah will be like and the expectations placed on God's people. In Advent Christians recall God's promise to send a Messiah. Christians wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, when they celebrate the birth of Jesus in history, just as the people of God were waiting for the Messiah. Christians are also anticipating the Second Coming of Jesus because at his second coming, he will put an end to all injustice, sin, evil, and suffering: he will finish the work he began with his first coming. Advent is a time to reflect on how God's people are waiting for his promises to come true. A Christian believes that in the end 'all shall be well'.

### *A life shaped by belief in the coming of Jesus*

Children describe situations in which there is a clear link between what a person believes and the way they live. They try to move beyond the individual specific actions of believers to draw wider conclusions about how belief shapes all of life.

## Overview

Key Vocabulary	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>YEAR 6</u></b> <b><u>Expectations</u></b> <b><u>ADVENT/CHRISTMAS THEME</u></b></p> </div>
expectation	<p>Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, given by God as a sign and expression of God’s love. Giving and receiving reflects the truth that all life is given by God and life is given meaning through the birth of Jesus. Advent is a time of joyful expectation, as we prepare to receive Jesus into our lives and to share this gift with others at Christmas and throughout the year.</p> <p><b>Children will know and understand:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meaning of expectation</li> <li>• Advent, a time of joyful expectation of Christmas, the Word becoming a human person, Jesus</li> </ul> <p><b>See Background Notes for Parents and Carers</b></p> <p><b>Week 1:</b> Children learn the difference between ‘wishing for’ and ‘expecting’. They learn that expecting is a strong possibility or even certainty. Advent is a time of expectation. Ask your child to read the words of <i>Maranatha</i> (see below) and explore the meaning and symbolism of the language within the hymn, annotating the text. Ask your child to use these annotations to create and develop their understanding of expectations in Advent.</p> <p><b>Week 2:</b> Look at the Scripture given and at the expectations of the characters we meet: Isaiah, Mary, John the Baptist and how the Word of God in scripture became a human in the person of Jesus Christ. Ask your child to use the words from John to design a set of guidelines which will help them to prepare for the coming of Jesus, as well as showing the expectations upon them as followers of Jesus.</p> <p><b>Week 3:</b> The children learn about the Second Advent or second coming of Christ that all Christians wait for. Think about some of the ways in which we ‘watch and wait expectantly’ during Advent. Using a range of religious sources ask your child to develop a set of signposts which can be used to help others realise and understand the expectations we have on Christ’s return at the end of time.</p> <p><b>Week 4:</b> Look back at all the work done and the key vocabulary to help remember what your child has learned in the topic ‘Expectations’. Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship (see below).</p>
Maranatha	
Messiah	
Isaiah	
certainty	
advent	
Christmas	
Emmanuel	
Angelus (some words from)	
incarnation – Word made flesh	
John the Baptist	
Second Advent of Christ	
‘all shall be well’	
Waiting in expectation	
‘..as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.’	
‘Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel’	
‘Stay awake, stand firm.’	

## Year 6

In **Year 6**, the children learn that in Advent Christians recall God's promise to send a Messiah. Christians wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, when they celebrate the birth of Jesus in history, just as the people of God were waiting for the Messiah. Christians are also anticipating the Second Coming of Jesus because at his second coming, he will put an end to all injustice, sin, evil, and suffering: he will finish the work he began with his first coming. Advent is a time to reflect on how God's people are waiting for his promises to come true. A Christian believes that in the end 'all shall be well'.

**Week 1:** Think about the difference between 'I would like/wish for' and 'I expect'. What is the same and what is different? What is the difference between: '*I would like/wish for a bike for my birthday*'. And '*I expect to get a bike for my birthday*'.

There is a lot of difference between '*I would like/wish for*' and '*I expect*'. Suppose I am expecting visitors to arrive at my house for a party. I am not just wishing that they will come, I am expecting them to come and because of my expectation, I have made sure that there are enough food and party bags etc. To expect something means that there is a strong possibility, even a certainty, that it is going to happen. It is good to have high expectations of a person. It gives them confidence. However, expectations of yourself and others have to be realistic.

Read the story about Grandad (see below) Answer the key questions.

- Q What do you wish for?
- Q What do you expect of yourself?
- Q Why is it good to have high expectations of others?
- Q What kind of expectations do people have of you and why?
- Q Why is it good to trust and believe in one another?
- Q What do you think of Grandad's expectations of Harry and Emma?
- Q What happens if you let people down or others let you down?
- Q Which friend or adult never or rarely lets you down? Why do you think they can be relied on?
- Q Where do you think patience comes into expectations?

The word Advent means coming or arrival. It reminds us of the anticipation and expectation over hundreds of years by the people of Israel for their Messiah and Promised One – Emmanuel (God with us). We wait in expectation of the coming of Jesus, God made human, God with us, because God is always faithful and loving and keeps promises.

Read 1 Cor 16: 13-14,( see below) which outlines the expectations for Christians in Advent.

'Maranatha' is an Aramaic phrase meaning 'Lord, come!'

Think about the Advent wreath and Advent calendar and how they help Christians to prepare, in expectation, for coming of the Messiah, Jesus.

Answer the key questions:

- Q What are the expectations upon Christians during this season of Advent?
- Q How are we expected to prepare for the coming of Jesus?
- Q What are the key messages from the hymn *Maranatha*?
- Q How can we apply these key messages in our lives?

**Task - Read the words of *Maranatha*, (see below) Explore the meaning and symbolism of the language within the hymn (e.g. like a sea without a shore) annotating the text accordingly. Use these annotations to create and develop your understanding of expectations in Advent.**

**Week 2:** Advent is a time of expectation. The prophets help us to know this. Read the two passages from Isaiah and answer the key questions (see below)

On March 25th, the Church celebrates the special feast of the Annunciation. It is a time to stop and remember that God became a human being Jesus – the Incarnation – and that Mary was his mother. That event continues to be remembered every day by the prayer called ‘the Angelus’. Angelus is the first word in Latin of this traditional prayer, it means ‘angel’. The prayer begins with recalling the Angel Gabriel’s greeting to Mary, telling her she is to be the mother of Jesus.

The prayer originally consisted of three Hail Marys prayed three times a day. Gradually a little more was added to the prayer to make explicit what it meant. Traditionally, it is prayed at six in the morning, at noon and at six in the evening. It helps people to remember the presence of God in their lives. In some countries, the Angelus bell rings out from churches at these times to remind people to pray.

Traditionally, on Sundays and other special days, the Pope leads the Angelus from his study window for the pilgrims who gather in St Peter’s square.

Read the text of the Angelus below and answer the key questions.

At the beginning of John’s Gospel, he writes about Jesus as the Word who became a human person, the Incarnation. It is a mystery that God the Son became human and John tries to explain what it means. Read the Scripture (see below)

Mark begins his Gospel in a different way from John. He refers to the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, which he applies to John the Baptist. In Mark’s Gospel it is John the Baptist who announces the expectation of the coming of Jesus, referring to the prophecy of Isaiah. (see below)

The people's expectation began to rise. They wondered whether John was the Messiah, but he explained that he was not and that he was not even worthy enough to untie Jesus' sandals (that means in preparation to wash his feet).

- Q How do we 'get the road ready for the Lord' during this time of Advent?
- Q What was John's role? What did he do and say?
- Q What expectations did the people have?
- Q How were they to prepare for the Messiah?
- Q How might we prepare for the Lord's coming?

**Task - Using the words from John, '*Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!*' design a set of guidelines for which will help Christians prepare for the coming of Jesus, as well as demonstrating and explaining the expectations upon them as followers of Jesus.**

**Week 3:** Jesus Christ came to live among us in human form 2000 years ago. When he ascended into Heaven, he promised that he would come again, the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The early Christians thought that he would come quite soon.

That is why Paul tells people to be ready. (see below) We do not know when Jesus Christ will come again, but we know he will, as he always keeps his promises. The advice to be prepared for Jesus Christ's coming can also apply to our meeting with him in Heaven when we die. Advent is another opportunity to be ready and waiting in expectation of meeting Jesus.

Paul taught his followers to say, "Maranatha! O Lord, come!" (I Corinthians 16:22).

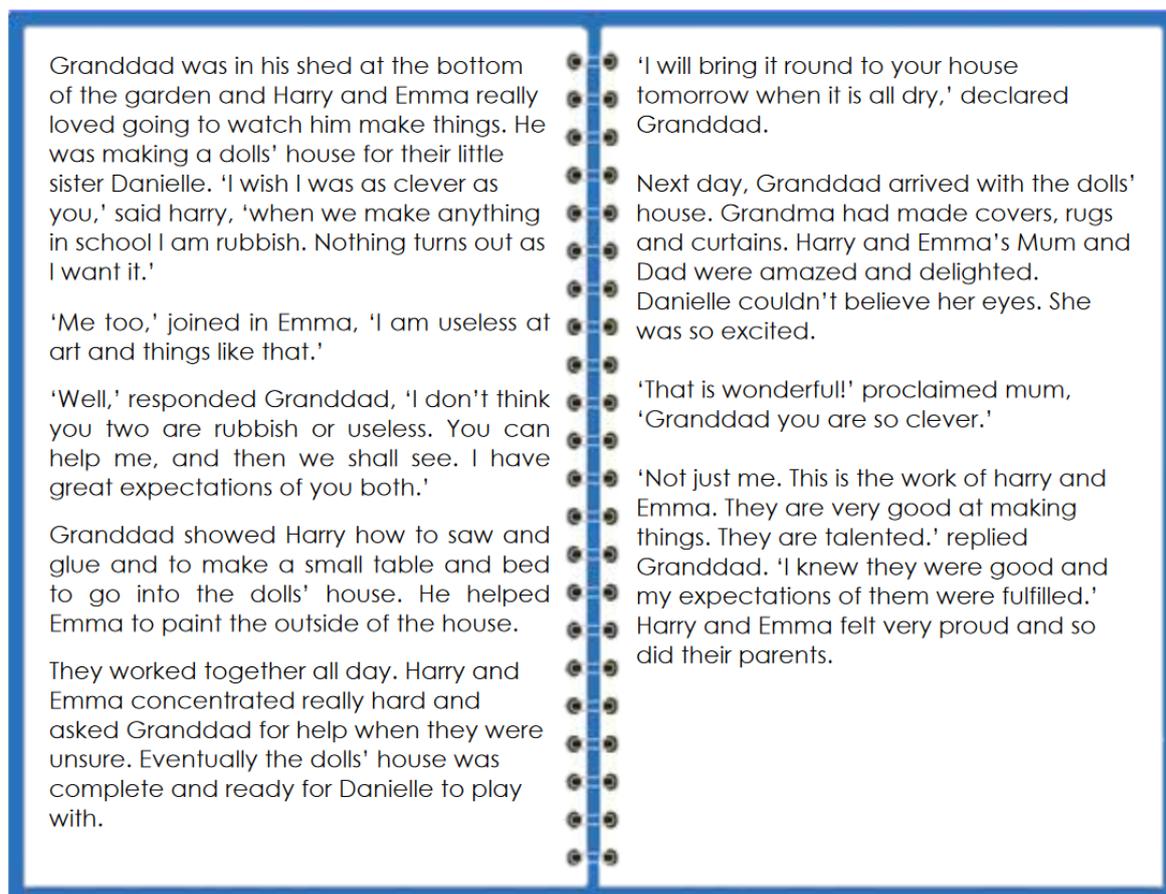
- Q Think about 1 Cor. 1: 8-9 – what do these words mean to you?
- Q What do you think being 'called into fellowship' means?
- Q What did Paul teach his followers? Why do you think he said this?
- Q What are we expecting of at this time during Advent?
- Q We are invited to 'watch and wait expectantly'. How might we do this in our daily lives?

**Task – Think about some of the ways in which we 'watch and wait expectantly' during Advent. Using a range of religious sources (readings studied and any known hymns) develop a set of signposts which can be used to help others realise and understand the expectations we have on Christ's return at the end of time.**

**Week 4:** Look back at all you have done and the key vocabulary to help remember what you have learned in the topic 'Expectations'

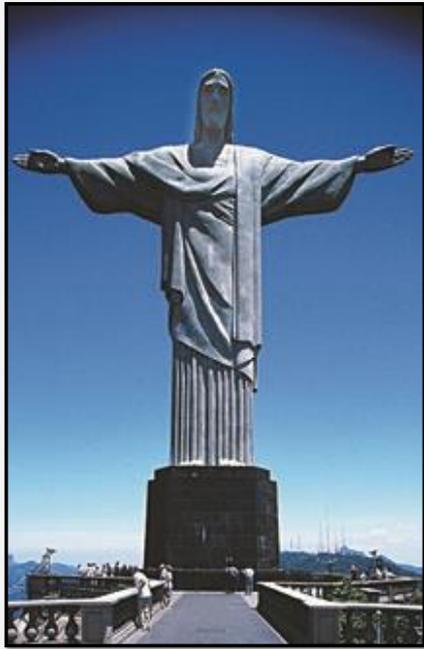
Celebrate with a simple Act of Worship

## Week 1



- Q What do you wish for?
- Q What do you expect of yourself?
- Q Why is it good to have high expectations of others?
- Q What kind of expectations do people have of you and why?
- Q Why is it good to trust and believe in one another?
- Q What do you think of Granddad's expectations of Harry and Emma?
- Q What happens if you let people down or others let you down?
- Q Which friend or adult never or rarely lets you down? Why do you think they can be relied on?
- Q Where do you think patience comes into expectations?

Week 1



**‘Be alert, stand  
firm in the faith,  
be courageous,  
be strong.**

**Let love be in all.’**

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14  
(Come & See)**

## Week 1

Task - Read the words of *Maranatha*, (see below) Explore the meaning and symbolism of the language within the hymn (e.g. like a sea without a shore) annotating the text accordingly. Use these annotations to create and develop your understanding of expectations in Advent.

Like a sea without a shore  
love divine is boundless.  
Time is now and evermore  
and His love surrounds us.  
Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha!  
Come, Lord Jesus, come!  
So that we could all be free  
He appeared among us  
,blest are those who have not seen  
yet believe His promise  
.All our visions, all our dreams,  
are but ghostly shadows  
of the radiant clarity  
waiting at life's close..  
Death where is your victory?  
Death where is your sting?  
Closer than the air we breathe  
is our risen King.

## Week 2

### LET THE WHOLE WORLD BE GLAD!

(based on Isaiah 35:1-6, 9,10)

Let the desert and the dry lands be glad!  
Let the wasteland exult and rejoice!  
Like clusters of sweet-smelling flowers  
let the wilderness burst into bloom.  
Let it be happy and sing for joy!  
It will be as beautiful as the mountains of Lebanon.  
As green and fruitful as Carmel and Sharon.  
Everyone will recognise the glory of God.  
Everyone will see God's splendour and power.  
Give strength to hands that are weary.  
Steady knees that are trembling with weakness.  
Say to all those who are faint hearted,  
"Courage, be strong. Do not be afraid.  
Here is your God, coming to save you."  
Then the blind will be able to see  
and the deaf will be able to hear.  
Those who are lame will leap and dance.  
Those who are dumb will shout for joy.  
Everyone will sing and shout with gladness.  
Everlasting joy will be seen on their faces.  
They will be happy forever,  
free from all sorrow and sadness.

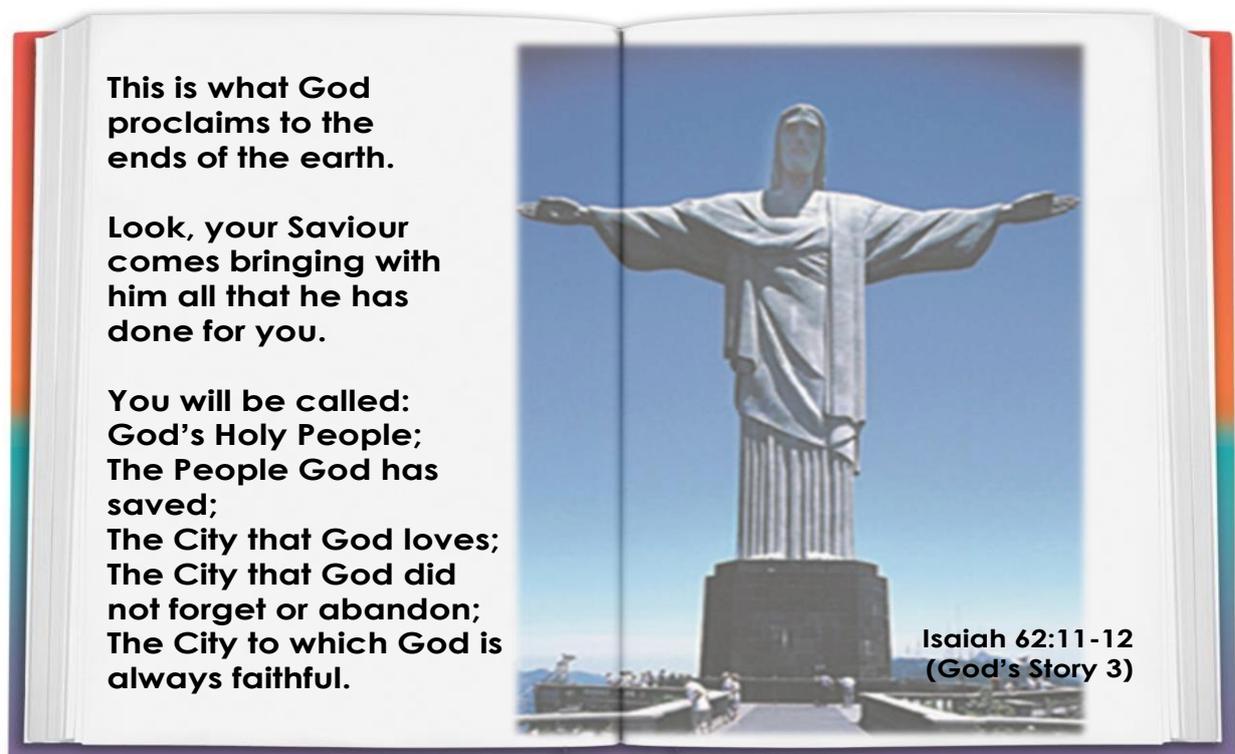


## *Prophets*

### Isaiah 35: 9-10

- Q How do the words of the prophet make you feel?
- Q What does the prophet say that people will be expected to feel, say and do?
- Q What advice are we given by the prophet?
- Q In what ways do you think we could 'live out' the words of the prophet in our own lives?

Week 2



Isaiah 62: 11-12

- Q** What does the prophet say that we will be called?
- Q** The prophet refers to us as being 'The City'. What do you think this means?
- Q** What expectations do you think are involved in being part of the 'People of God'?

## Week 2

### The Angelus

**Leader:** The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

**Response:** And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Hail Mary...

**Leader:** Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

**Response:** Be it done unto me according to your Word.

**All:** Hail Mary...

**Leader:** And the Word was made flesh,

**Response:** And dwelt among us.

**All:** Hail Mary...

**Leader:** Let us pray...

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts: that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

- Q What were the expectations placed upon Mary?
- Q How did Mary respond to these expectations?
- Q Find and discuss words/phrases that are unfamiliar to the children.
- Q Discuss the meaning and significance of these.
- Q Why is the Hail Mary repeated throughout? What is it reminding us of?

**The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us.**

**We saw his glory which he received as the Father's only Son.**

**John spoke about him. He cried out, "This is the one I was talking about when I said**

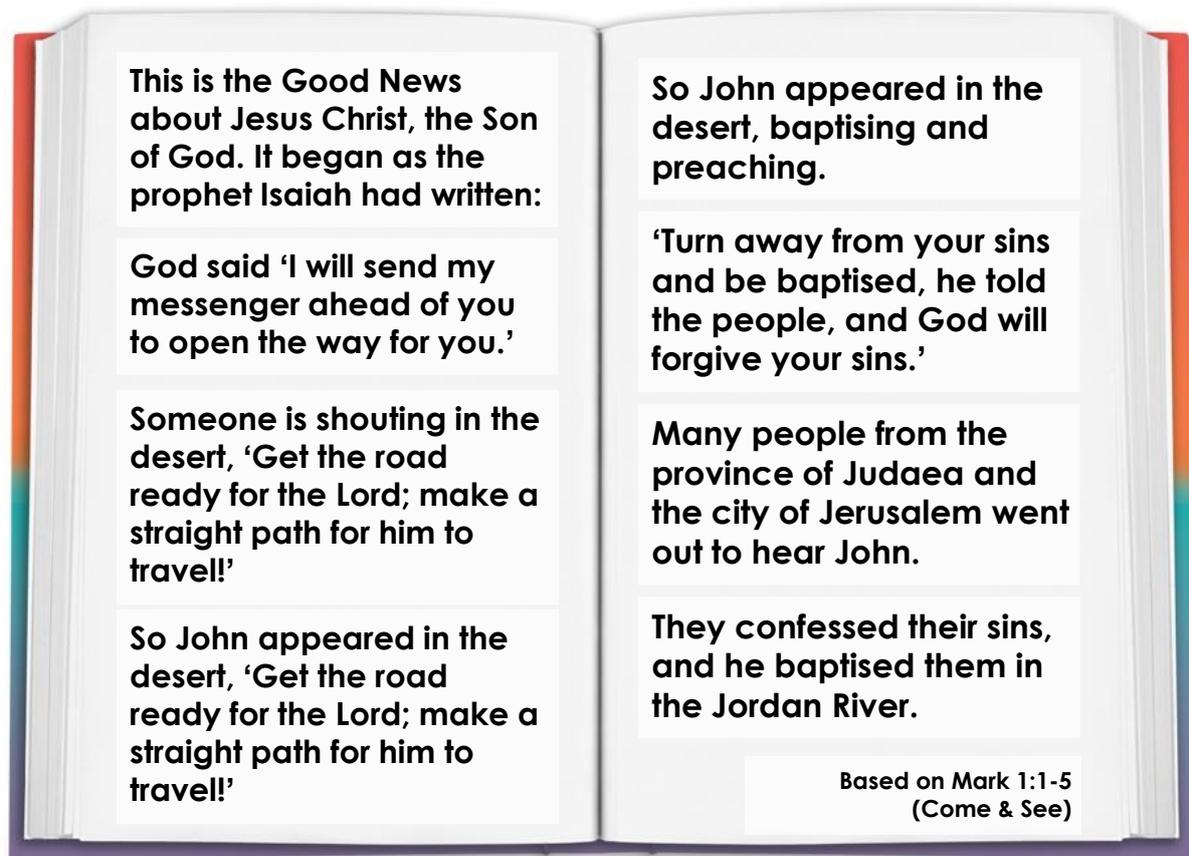
**'He comes after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born.'**

**Out of the fullness of his grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another.**

**God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

**No one has ever seen God.**

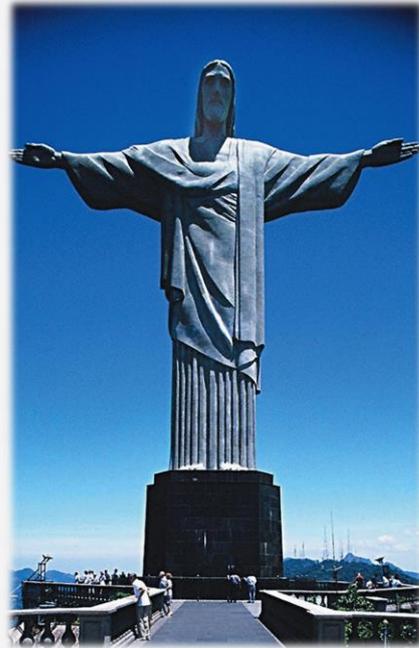
**John 1:14-18  
(Come & See)**



Week 3

**He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**



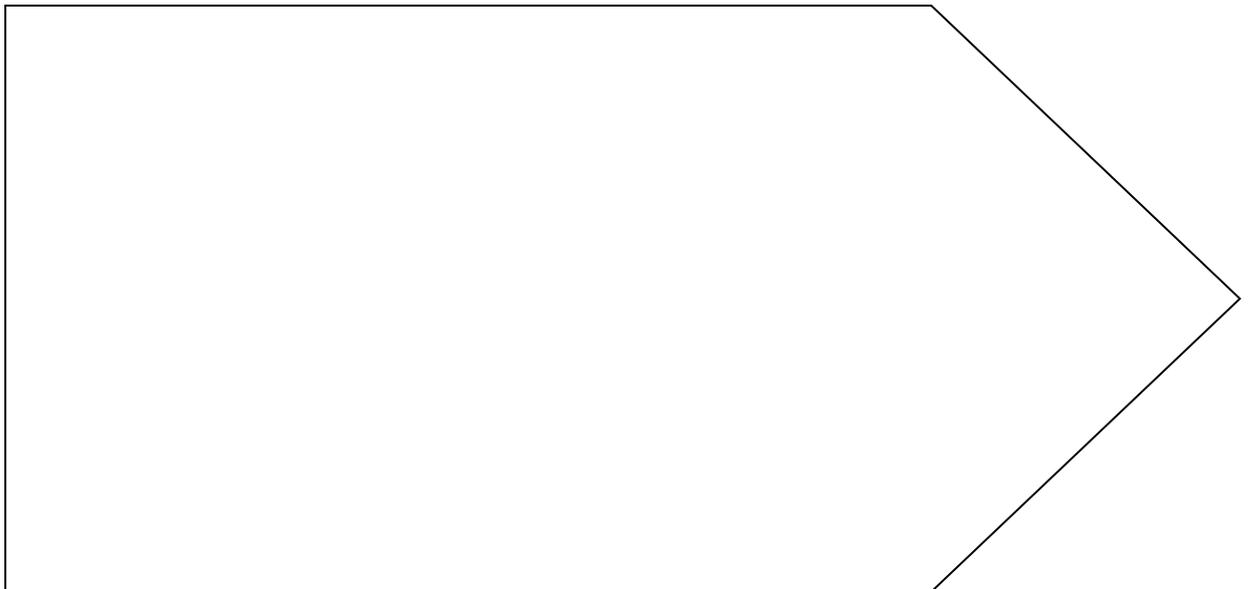
**1 Corinthians 1:8-9  
(Come & See)**

**Let anyone be  
accursed who  
has no love for  
the Lord.**

**Our Lord,  
come!**



**1 Corinthians 16:22  
(New Revised Standard Version)**



## Week 4

### Act of Worship "EXPECTATIONS"

**'Advent, a time of joyful expectation of Christmas,  
the Word becoming a human person, Jesus.'**

Create a sacred space with some of the following: Advent wreath or candle, wrapped presents, Bible opened at Mark 1: 1-5, Picture of the Annunciation



#### Gathering Together

Let's begin our prayer **In the name of the Father...**

Advent is a time of joyful expectation, as we prepare to receive Jesus into our lives and to share this gift with others at Christmas and throughout the year. The progressive lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming in glory at the end of time.

The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival". It reminds us of the anticipation and expectation over hundreds of years by the people of Israel for their Messiah and promised King – Emmanuel (God with us). We wait in expectation of the coming of Jesus, God made human, God with us, because God is always faithful and loving and keeps promises.

#### The Word of God

Mark begins his Gospel by referring to the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, which he applies to John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus. In Mark's Gospel it is John the Baptist who announces the expectation of the coming of Jesus, referring to the prophecy of Isaiah made hundreds of years earlier.

**Reader:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.  
**All:** **Glory to you Lord.**

*{The 'Sign of the Cross' is made on the head, lips and heart that we may think like Jesus, speak like Jesus and love like Jesus}*

This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.'

Someone is shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!'

So John appeared in the desert, baptising and preaching. 'Turn away from your sins and be baptised, he told the people, and God will forgive your sins.'

Many people from the province of Judaea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ**

**Response to the Word**

Let's just pause for a moment in silence to reflect on how we can 'get the road ready for the Lord' during what's left of our time of Advent? How can we prepare our hearts so that Jesus can expect to find a home in our hearts this Christmas?

Repeat the following prayer 3 times:

'Come into my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for you' (x3)

**Going Forth**

On March 25th, the Church celebrates the special feast of the Annunciation. It is a time to stop and remember that God became a human being, Jesus – the Incarnation – and that Mary was his mother. That event continues to be remembered every day by the prayer called 'the Angelus'. Angelus is the first word in Latin of this traditional prayer, it means 'angel'. The prayer begins with recalling the Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary, telling her that she can expect to become the mother of Jesus.

Let us pray the Angelus:

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary  
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit  
Hail Mary...  
Behold the handmaid of the Lord  
Be it done unto me according to your word  
Hail Mary...  
And the word was made flesh  
And dwelt among us  
Hail Mary...

Let us pray

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts: that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. **Amen.**

Between now and Christmas day our hearts are full of expectation as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus. Let us continue trying to prepare our hearts for his coming by saying either our 'Come into my heart' prayer or the Angelus.

Let us end our prayer as we began – **In the name of the Father...**