



SOCIETY OF
MISSIONARY
CHILDREN

Advent Resource 2018



Journeying to Christmas
Together

Introduction for Teachers / Leaders

The season of Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas; a time of anticipation and hope when we remember when Jesus was born into the world and that he will come again. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas until Christmas Eve. This year it begins on Sunday, 2nd December. Traditionally the primary colour of Advent is purple, which reflects the fasting and waiting that forms part of the build-up to Christmas. On the third Sunday of Advent the colour changes to pink/rose in anticipation of the end of fasting and the start of rejoicing for the birth of the Saviour (this Sunday is celebrated as *Gaudete Sunday* meaning "rejoice.") The readings at Mass and symbols during Advent help us prepare for, and understand the significance of, God becoming one of us. The most recognisable symbol is the Advent wreath. Every element of the wreath communicates something special about a Christian's journey towards Christmas. Its circular shape represents God's never ending presence. The evergreen leaves, which do not fade in colour, signify God's constancy. The candles that we light as we progress through the Sundays in Advent represent **hope, peace, joy, and love**. The white candle in the centre is lit on Christmas day and represents **Christ**, the light of the world.

Liturgy Plan

These liturgies encourage children to think about the special journey we make together during Advent, as we draw closer to the birth of Jesus - God made man - at Christmas. To help us live out the themes of Advent each week more fully, this prayer resource focuses on refugee children from Iraq who are pupils in the Marka School for Refugees in Jordan.

Setting the Scene

Please refer to the *Grow in Love* religious education series. Theme 3 or Theme 4 in each class year covers the Advent Season and encourages you to place particular items in your prayer space including an Advent wreath.

Sign of the Cross, Lighting the Advent Wreath, and Opening Hymn

The number of candles lit should correspond to the particular Advent week each liturgy takes place. Our suggested opening hymn for each week of Advent is 'Come Lord Jesus' from the *Grow in Love* series.

Children's Reflections and Bible Readings

Our reflections were provided by our sister charity missio.org.uk and the Scriptures are taken from *The Catholic Children's Bible*, Saint Mary's Press.

Closing Prayer

The Society of Missionary Children's Mission Prayer.

Closing Hymn:

Our suggestions include 'O Come O Come Emmanuel,' 'Angels We Have Heard on High,' 'The First Noel,' and 'Silent Night,' which can all be found in *Grow in Love*.



SOCIETY OF
MISSIONARY
CHILDREN

Our Mission Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever,

Amen

64 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6
+353 (0)1 497 2035
missionarychildren@wmi.ie
www.wmi.ie

Advent Liturgy Week One: Light the first purple candle This candle represents 'Hope'

Leader:

Father in heaven, we need the warmth of your love in our hearts and the light of your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with HOPE when Jesus comes.



When we light the first candle on the Advent wreath we are encouraged to think about hope. To help us think about hope today, we are going to use the example of two groups of people. The first group we usually hear about on Christmas day. Let's see if you can guess who they are. This group had a very long journey to see Jesus. They travelled across the deserts of Jordan to Bethlehem so it was good they rode camels or they would struggle to get over the sand! Can you guess who this group of people is? It's the three wise men. Let's hear a Bible reading about the wise men now. Listen carefully to how they felt when the star they were following finally led them to the baby Jesus.

Reader:

On their way the three wise men saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were; what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshipped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him. (Matthew 2:9-10)

The Gospel of the Lord. **All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader:

There's another group of people who can teach us about hope. They have also made long, difficult and dangerous journeys, some over the deserts of Jordan too! This group of people are refugees. Like the wise men, refugees have great hope that eventually, after their long journeys, they will find peace. We can strengthen the hope of refugees by sharing what we have with them so they may feel safe, be cared for, and know that Jesus loves them. We can also help by asking God to guide and protect all child refugees. Let's do that now as we join our hands and get ready to pray.

Reader:

Dear Jesus, please guide and protect all refugee children. May they never lose hope as they journey onwards, knowing that you lead us always to love.

Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Dear Jesus, in Advent we remember the importance of hope. Help us to always have hope in you and to share this hope with others through our kindness and our joy.

Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Leader:

Let us all now say our Mission prayer.

Advent Liturgy Week Two: Light the first and second purple candle The second purple candle represents 'Peace'

Leader:

Father in heaven, very soon the birth of your Son, Jesus, will light up the world. May his quiet coming bring us true inner PEACE.



When we light the second candle on the Advent wreath we are encouraged to think about peace. To help us think about peace today, we are going to use the example of Bethlehem's shepherds. Shepherds in Jesus' day had very hard lives. They lived far up in the hillside with their sheep so they could care for their flock all the time. This meant shepherds rarely came down from the hills to visit towns. When they did, the townspeople saw the shepherds as strangers and not trustworthy. This made shepherds feel upset and afraid, and when people feel upset and afraid it is difficult to feel at peace and be happy. Let's hear a Bible reading about the shepherds now. Listen carefully to how the shepherds felt when they saw God's angel and what the angel said to help them.

Reader:

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord!" (Luke 2:8-11)
The Gospel of the Lord. **All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader:

The angel told the shepherds not to be afraid because Jesus was very close to them. Jesus is very close to us too and, just like the shepherds, this gives us a sense of peace when we feel afraid. Similarly, Jesus brings peace to refugee children. In the Marka School for Refugees in Jordan, pupils join together to pray. In their prayers they are reminded that God loves us so much that he came down from heaven to live among us. That is what we are waiting to celebrate at Christmas; the birth of Jesus who would show us how to love others just as God loves us. We can ask Jesus to guide and protect all refugee children. Let's do that now as we join our hands and get ready to pray.

Reader:

Dear Jesus, please guide and protect all refugee children. May their journey lead to peace and help them to know God's love for all His children.
Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Dear Jesus, in Advent we remember the importance of peace. When we feel afraid may we know you are close, giving us peace that we can share with others.
Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Leader: Let us all now say our Mission prayer.

Advent Liturgy Week Three: Light the first two purple candles and the rose candle. The rose candle represents 'Joy'

Leader:

Father in heaven, we know that you love all your people. Your love brings the gift of JOY to our hearts.



When we light the third candle on the Advent wreath we are encouraged to think about joy. To help us think about joy today, we are going to use the example of some heavenly angels. When we read or listen to the Bible we learn that God often gives angels an important job. Can anyone guess what that job is? God sends angels from heaven to deliver special messages to the world. In the Bible reading we will hear today, the message delivered by the angel is very special and joyful. Listen carefully to discover what that message is.

Reader:

"This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:11-14)
The Gospel of the Lord. **All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader:

Hands up if you like to sing when you feel joyful? The children at Marka School for Refugees like to sing too. They sing because at their school they feel safe, are able to learn, are surrounded by friends, and know that God is very close to them. For a long time the pupils lived in a country where there was much fighting. This was very dangerous and frightening so the children and their families had to leave their homes and find somewhere safe to live. They became refugees. Now, Marka pupils sing each day just as the angels did because they know that Jesus continues to bring his love and peace to the world by being close to us in prayer and through the kindness and mercy of others. We can also bring Jesus' love, peace and joy to the world by being kind, forgiving, sharing what we have and praying for children who need our help, like the pupils at Marka School for Refugees. Let's join our hands and pray for those children now.

Reader:

Dear Jesus, watch over the children at Marka School for Refugees. Help them to be healthy and happy and may their joyful songs tell of your love for all people.
Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Dear Jesus, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful! Help us to always remember that real joy is not found in presents but in the love you bring into our lives.
Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Leader: Let us all now say our Mission prayer.

Advent Liturgy Week Four: Light the three purple candles and the rose candle. The third purple candle represents 'Love'

Leader:

Father in heaven, bless our families and bring us a spirit of understanding and LOVE. May our homes be places of peace and laughter and may your love shine from each of us.



When we light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath we are encouraged to think about love. To help us think about love today, we are going to use the example of God's love for us by becoming one of us. Let's hear a Bible reading about the family the shepherds found when they went to Bethlehem. Remember how the angel told the shepherds that the baby was their Saviour, Christ the Lord? Listen carefully to how the shepherds felt when they saw God's love made flesh in the baby Jesus.

Reader:

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord told us." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them. (Luke 2:15-20)

The Gospel of the Lord. **All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader:

Jesus continues to bring hope, peace, and joy to the world, by showing us how to love one another and to live together. In some parts of the world where there is poverty or fighting, the hope, peace, joy and love that Jesus brings to children is especially important. Sandra is seven years old. She lives in Jordan. She used to live in a country called Iraq but the fighting there forced Sandra and her family to travel all the way to Jordan. How do you think it would feel to have to leave your home, all your belongings and loved ones behind, because it was too dangerous to stay? When they arrived in Jordan, Sandra and her family felt afraid and alone. They had nowhere to live. Then, a priest called Fr Khalil showed great love for Sandra's family. He found the family somewhere safe to stay and a place for Sandra at School. Let's join our hands and pray for Sandra and all refugee children now.

Reader:

Dear Jesus, please guide and protect all refugee children.

Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Dear Jesus, in Advent we remember the importance of love. In everything we do and say, help us to show love to others.

Lord hear us. **All:** Lord graciously hear us.

Leader: Let us all now say our Mission prayer.

Christmas Eve

Encourage the children to read these prayers and poems at home

Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve my mother read
The story once again
Of how the little child was born
And of the Three Wise Men.

And how by following the Star
They found Him where He lay,
And brought Him gifts; and that is why
We keep our Christmas Day.

And when she read it all, I went
And looked across the snow
And thought of Jesus coming
As He did long ago.

I looked into the East, and saw
A great star blazing bright;
There were three men upon the road
All black against the light.

I thought I heard the angels sing
Away upon the hill...
I held my breath...it seemed as if
The whole great world stood still.

It seemed to me the little Child
Was being born again...
And very near...and THEN somehow
Was NOW...or NOW was THEN.
(Grow in Love, Fourth Class)

Advent

Advent is a time to wait -
It's not quite time to celebrate!
Count the days down one by one
Until the Advent time is done.
Christmas Day will soon be here!
Time for joy and time for cheer!
(Grow in Love, Junior Infants)

Prepare, Prepare!

Prepare, prepare,
get ready, get set!
Prepare, prepare,
and don't forget!
This is a special time of year,
Christmas is coming.
Advent is here!

Prepare, prepare,
Make ready! Make way!
To hear the story
of Christmas Day.
Prepare, prepare
the time has come
soon we will welcome
Mary's Son.
(Grow in Love, Second Class)



Most Loving Father, thank you for this
night and for all it represents.
Thank you for the hope you bestow, the
peace you bring, the love you pour out,
and the joy you give.
We praise you most of all for Jesus,
your Word made flesh.
May he light our way as the holy star
lit the way for the wise men.
Amen

Christmas Day: Light the three purple candles, the rose candle and the white candle. The white candle represents 'Jesus Christ'

Encourage the children to light this candle at home



Prayer:

Baby Jesus, bless us today, your special day. We light this white candle to welcome you as our Saviour. As we carry you to our family crib, we think about what you have taught us. You taught us to share with others, you taught us to help one another, you taught us to be friends and you taught us to pray. When we look at the light of the candle we remember these important lessons.



**What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: give him my heart.**

Christina Rossetti

Gospel Story:

Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem to register for the census ordered by Augustus. The time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger - there was no room for them to stay in the inn. There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord!" And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord told us." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them. (Luke 2:1-20)

64 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6

T:01-4972035

E:missionarychildren@wmi.ie

W:www.wmi.ie

Registered Charity No: CHY2318