

Advent Assembly

A time to prepare



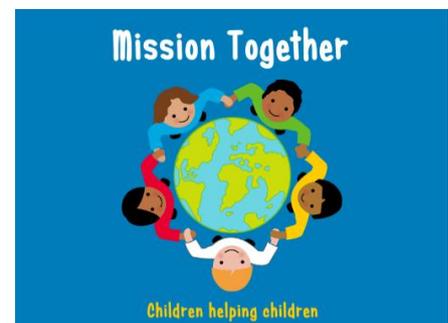
LEADER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to 20 minutes. We recommend you deliver the whole assembly **but please feel free to use the material as time and circumstances allow.**

This PowerPoint uses animations. It is advisable to run through the assembly before you present to your pupils.

This assembly has been prepared by **Mission Together**, the Pope's official children's charity for overseas mission. 97% of money donated to **Mission Together** by children goes directly towards children's projects overseas. Although all projects are Church-backed, **Mission Together** follows Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief.

HOLDING SLIDE



SLIDE TWO

You might like to open the assembly by singing or playing a recording of one of the following:

Maranatha [Like a sea without a shore] – Estelle White

Christ Be Our Light – Bernadette Farrell

Ask the children what special time of year it is and elicit the response 'Advent'.



Explain that Advent is a time of preparing for Christmas. Ask what we do to prepare. We might clean our homes, invite guests for the holidays, or buy presents.

One way we prepare for Christmas is with the Advent wreath. Each week we light one more candle on the wreath to help us get ready for the birth of Jesus and think how we can bring God's light and love into the world today.

The Advent wreath helps us to think about Jesus.

- Its circular shape reminds us that God's love never ends.
- The evergreen leaves show that God's love never fades.
- The lighted candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world; bringing hope and guidance.

If you have a school Advent wreath, you may like to light the candle(s) now. The children could sing 'The Advent Candles' http://www.msgr.ca/msgr-2/ADVENTwreath_01.htm

SLIDE THREE

In a minute we are going to hear a story from the Bible that tells us how Mary and her cousin Elizabeth prepared for the birth of their special baby boys.

Question – Hands up if you can tell us the name of Mary's baby boy.

Answer – Jesus.

Question – Hands up if you can tell us the name of Elizabeth's baby boy.

Answer – John the Baptist.

The Bible tells us that Mary visited Elizabeth when Elizabeth was preparing for the birth of John. She made the very long journey of around 100 miles from her home in Nazareth to Elizabeth's home in Judea. (Point out locations on map).

This was a very difficult journey across deserts and over mountains. If Mary walked all of the distance, which she may well have done, it would have taken her five full days!

Question – Why do you think Mary went to so much effort?

Possible responses – Because she is kind, caring, thoughtful.

Answer – Mary was very close to God and always did what God asks us all to do, which is to love and care for others. Mary made this long and difficult journey so that she could help Elizabeth.

Let's listen to the story now, paying attention to what the baby inside Elizabeth does when Mary enters the house.



SLIDE FOUR

Read the Gospel passage, or ask a pupil(s) to read.

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child inside her leapt and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?'

The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy.

The Gospel of the Lord Luke 1: 41 – 44 (Adapted from Jerusalem Bible)

Question – Why do you think the baby inside Elizabeth leapt for joy?

Answer – Elizabeth and her baby were happy that Mary had visited, but they felt an even greater joy because they knew that Jesus, the Son of God, was very near.

Question – Hands up if you are feeling joyful and excited about the visit of family or friends at Christmas.

We feel joyful when loved ones visit because we know they love us and want us to be safe and happy.

Before the first Christmas, people had waited hundreds of years for the birth of their saviour, Jesus, who would love them, keep them safe and want them to be happy too.



SLIDE FIVE

At the time when Jesus was born there were wars, fighting and unfairness. Rulers – kings, queens and emperors – were selfish and cruel. They did not set a good example. So the people felt sad, lonely and afraid. Their lives were gloomy.

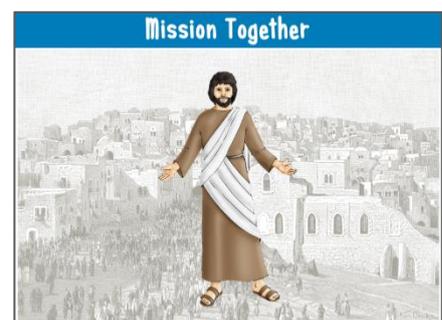
But even in their gloom and sadness they remembered that long ago God had made a promise to send into the world someone special who would show the people how to live together and make the world better.

Question – Who was this special person?

Answer – Jesus.

[Click to reveal image of Jesus.](#)

Knowing that Jesus was so close brought Elizabeth, John and the people, hope, peace, and joy.



SLIDE SIX

Jesus continues to bring hope, peace, joy to the world, by showing us how to love one another and live together – this is why we make special preparations to celebrate his birth on Christmas day.

In some parts of the world where there is poverty or fighting, the hope and peace that Jesus brings to children, like Sandra, is especially important.

Sandra is seven years old. She lives in Jordan which is near to where Jesus was born (show Jordan and Bethlehem on the map).

Sandra is a refugee. A refugee is someone who is forced to leave their home because it is too dangerous to stay. She used to live in a country called Iraq (show Iraq on the map) but the fighting there forced Sandra and her family to travel all the way to Jordan.

That's even further than the long journey Mary took to visit Elizabeth!

Question – 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 and Sandra could not go to school. A priest called Fr Khalil went to a great effort to help Sandra's family. He found the family somewhere safe to stay and made a place for Sandra at Marka School for Refugees.

[*Click to reveal image of Fr Khalil offering Sandra some food.*](#)



SLIDE SEVEN

Marka School is a very special and caring place; without it children like Sandra could not learn or make friends.

Question – How do you think it would feel not to continue learning or making friends?

Answer – Not making friends would make the children feel sad and lonely, whilst not being able to learn new things would be boring and make their life difficult in the future.

Thanks to the help of children like you, the charity Mission Together is able to provide Sandra and her fellow pupils with books and stationery to help them study and a daily snack and drink to keep them healthy.

These help Sandra and all the pupils to prepare for a better future.



There is another way that Sandra and her fellow pupils prepare for a better future too.

Question – What might that be? What are the children doing in one of the photos on screen?

Answer – They are praying.

Every day children at Marka School gather together like this to pray. They know that through prayer we come close to God and that God listens and helps us.

In our prayers we can also ask God to help others. Often God shows us how we can help others too.

For example, in this assembly God has shown us how we can help make that happen, by supporting Mission Together and sharing what we have so that children like Sandra and many other children who are living in poverty overseas, may be safe, happy and feel God's love.

SLIDE EIGHT

Today we have learned that Advent is a time when we prepare for the birth of Jesus.

We have learned that Mary helped Elizabeth prepare for the birth of her baby, John the Baptist.

And we have learned how the Marka School for Refugees helps children like Sandra prepare for a better life.

This Advent let us, like Mary, make a big effort to care for others by sharing what we have and by praying for their needs. Let's start by saying the **Mission Together** prayer together now:

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



Our Activity 'Advent Prayer Tree' encourages pupils to pray and prepare as a class during this holy season. Download instructions at <https://missiontogether.org.uk/advent/>

Our much loved Advent calendar provides even more ways to get ready for Jesus. Again download at <https://missiontogether.org.uk/advent/>

For more on our project 'Together in Jordan' visit <https://missiontogether.org.uk/our-work-overseas/jordan/> Photos:©Missio/TLouapre