Mission Together

Advent Liturgy Week Three: Joy

Introduction for teachers / leaders

The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and spans four weeks. It is a time of preparation for Christmas when we recall the Israelites' long wait for the Messiah's birth and remember that Jesus was born into the world and will come again. Advent symbols help us prepare for, and understand, the significance of God becoming one of us. The most recognisable of these symbols is the **Advent wreath.** Its circular shape represents God's never-ending presence. The evergreen leaves, which do not fade in colour, signify God's constancy. The four candles lit as we progress through the weeks of Advent and the central white candle lit on Christmas day all represent Christ, the light of the world.

Liturgy plan

This liturgy encourages children to think about the Advent theme of Joy. Please note that the liturgy uses scripture from Christmastide rather than Advent. This gives pupils the opportunity to discover key figures from the Christmas story and their significance to us today.

Setting the scene

Please refer to our guide 'How to Pray with Children' https://missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/

Entrance hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: 'Maranatha' by Estelle White.

Sign of the cross and lighting of the Advent wreath

The number of candles lit should correspond to the particular Advent week each liturgy takes place in.
Suggested accompanying song: 'Advent Candles' http://www.msgr.ca/msgr-2/ADVENTwreath_01.htm

Bible reading and Children's reflection

As an alternative to the scripture reading overleaf, and for a more in - depth study of scripture, you may wish to use the interactive interpretation of the reading in Appendix 1: An Interactive Retelling.

Closing prayer: prayers of intercession and the Mission Together prayer

Copy and paste the prayers of intercession and ask two pupils to read.

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music

Our suggestions for week three: 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' or 'Joy to the World'.

Follow up craft activity: Joyful Angels, find at *missiontogether.org.uk/advent/*

Follow up scripture exploration:
See Appendix 2: Scripture Exploration Ideas for older children.

Mission Together Prayer

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

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23 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1NU 020 7821 9755 missiontogether.org.uk missiontogether@missio.org.uk
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Luke 2: 9-14 (adapted from NJB)

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 will 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. God sends angels from heaven to deliver messages to the world.

Let's hear a reading about angels now. **Listen** carefully to **discover** why this message is very special one and how it makes the angels react. **Imagine** you were present when the angels delivered their special message.

'The angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around them. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said "Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy! A joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And all at once with the angel there was a host of heavenly angels praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours."

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

Question: What was the message the angel delivered to the shepherds?

Answer: The angel announced the birth of Jesus, saviour of the world.

Question: How did the host of angels react when this message was shared with the shepherds?

Answer: They gathered together joyfully, praising God and singing 'Glory to God and peace on earth!'

The angels were very happy to deliver the message of Jesus' birth because they knew this event would bring much joy! Jesus' birth would help the world to see that God loves us all so much that he came to live with us, so that we might learn from Jesus how to love one another and how to find joy in our hearts.

Hands up if the birth of Jesus makes you feel joyful. Hands up if the birth of Jesus makes you feel loved. Hands up if you would like to share this joy and love with others! It is wonderful that so many of you raised your hands because it's not just angels that God asks to be messengers. God also asks us to share his joy and love.

Question: How can we share the message that Jesus was born on Christmas day?

Possible answers: By making nativity Christmas cards. By singing carols. By going to church.

Question: How can we let other people know that God loves everyone, everywhere?

Possible answers: By being kind to everyone, by including others, by forgiving, by sharing what we have and praying for children who need our help. By supporting *Mission Together.*

Let's join our hands and pray together now, remembering children who need our help and asking to be messengers of God's love and joy.

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

Dear Jesus, watch over children whose live in poverty and hardship. Strengthen our mission to work together to help them live happier and healthier lives, so that all the world's children live in the peace of your love. Lord hear us…

Let us all now say out loud our Mission Together prayer…

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Appendix 1:
An interactive retelling

Advent 2019 begins ***The Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks***, an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. As scripture is foundational to the life of the Catholic Church, *The Year of the Word's* vision is to celebrate, share and live out our faith through deeper scriptural engagement. This resource is designed to support schools as they journey through Advent and *The Year of the Word*.

The retelling below of Luke 2:9-14 provides context to help children explore the scripture and encourages pupils to engage with the reading through imagination and interaction.

Reader 1:
Soon after Jesus had been born, in the countryside close by, there were shepherds who lived in the fields. It wasn't easy being a shepherd. They worked very hard and it was a dirty and lonely job. Few people visited the shepherds. In fact many avoided them. Shepherds were seen as grubby and rough.

Ask the children what it might have been like being a shepherd.

Would they have liked to have been a shepherd?

Reader 2:
It was night and they were taking it in turns to look after the sheep. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the angel of the Lord stood near to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around them. The shepherds hadn't seen an angel before, but they'd heard that angels could be very scary! The shepherds were terrified!

Ask the children to imagine the scene, then ask if they could describe it.

Ask the children why the shepherds were so afraid.

Reader 3:
The angel said to the shepherds: 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today, in Bethlehem, a saviour has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped snuggly in bands of cloth and laying in a manger.'

Ask the children why God chose to share the news of Jesus' birth with the shepherds first, before anyone else!

How might they have felt if they'd been one of the shepherds?

Reader 4:
Then suddenly there wasn't just one angel! A great crowd of angels appeared. They were all praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.'

Ask the children why the angels sang.

Invite all the children to sing about Jesus' birth too. A suggestion is the line:

'Gloria Hosanna in excelsis!' (from Ding Dong Merrily on High)

Appendix 2:
Scripture exploration ideas

Advent 2019 begins ***The Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks***, an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. As scripture is foundational to the life of the Catholic Church, *The Year of the Word's* vision is to celebrate, share and live out our faith through deeper scriptural engagement. This resource is designed to support schools as they journey through Advent and *The Year of the Word*.

- Provide older pupils with the scripture reference Luke 2:1-14 and, working in small groups, ask them to locate the passage in a Bible.

  Pupils are to read the text together then answer the following questions:

  1 Who issued a decree for a census of the whole world? **Caesar Augustus.**

  2 Which town did Joseph set off from to get to Bethlehem? **Nazareth.**

  3 Whose house and line did Joseph belong to? **David's.**

  4 How many angels did the shepherds see first? **One, the rest appeared soon after.**

- Copy and paste this scripture (Luke 2: 1-14) and ask pupils to annotate the text. Looking out for words that help: picture the scene, capture emotion and feelings, relay important messages.

- Invite the pupils to retell the scripture as a story, using their own words, and as vividly as they can.

- For younger pupils, read the shorter scripture below, then invite the children to retell the story in their own words. Provide crib figures or paper puppets as props.

  'The angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around them. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said "Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy! A joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of Bethlehem a Saviour has been born for you; he is Jesus the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped snugly in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

  And all at once with the angel there was a host of heavenly angels praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours."

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

- During class prayer time, invite pupils to listen carefully as you reread the scripture used in the liturgy.

  After the reading, remind the children that God speaks to us through the words of scripture.

  Ask if any words stood out from the scripture today.

  What might God be saying to us through these words?

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