# Mission Together

## Advent Liturgy: Week three

**Introduction for teachers / leaders:** The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and spans four weeks. It is a time of preparation, 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 signify God's constancy. The four candles are lit as we journey through the weeks of Advent; the central white candle is lit on Christmas day. All the candles represent Christ, light of the world.

### Liturgy Plan

The liturgy and activities focus on waiting with patience and hope for God's promised Saviour.

### Setting the scene

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

### Opening hymn or recorded music

Suggested Song: *We are Waiting* by Claud Fulwood. (See missiontogether.org.uk/sing-with-mission-together).

### Sign of the cross, Opening Prayer and lighting of the Advent wreath

Print the opening prayer on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

### Introduction

Print the introduction on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

### Bible reading (Year C): Zephaniah 3:14-18 adapted for children.

Print the reading on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

### Bible reflection

See page 3. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

### Prayers of intercession

Print the prayers of intercession on page 4 and ask pupils to read.

### Mission Together prayer

See to the right.

### Sign of the cross

### Closing hymn or recorded music

Suggested song: *Joy to the World*. (See missiontogether.org.uk/sing-with-mission-together).

### Follow up activities

A Gift for the World (KS1/2)

**Download these and other activities from our Advent Webpage.**

**Mission Together Prayer**

**M**ay all children
**I**n the world
**S**hare love
**S**hare friendship and live
**I**n the peace
**O**f God's love
**N**ow and forever. **Amen.**

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath & Opening Prayer

***Invite a pupil to light the candle***

**Reader:** God our Father, as we light our third Advent candle,
Help us to prepare joyfully for the birth of your Son, Jesus,
Show us ways we can share Christ's light during Advent,
So that the world might know the hope and love that your Son brings.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Introduction

**Reader:** Today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath. Each week we will light one more candle and watch as the light from the wreath grows brighter. The growing light is a sign of our growing expectation as we wait in hope for our Saviour, Jesus.

**Reader:** The third Sunday of Advent is called *Joyful Sunday,* because as Christmas Day draws closer, we are reminded of the joy that the birth of Jesus brings to the world.

**Reader:** Often we think that being joyful and being happy are the same, but in today's Bible reading from the prophet Zephaniah, we learn that joy is different.

**Reader:** Joy is something we feel deep in our hearts. It is a feeling we get when we know we are loved and cared for. We can feel joy even when life is difficult and even when we are sad.

**Reader:** The prophet Zephaniah lived 600 years before Jesus, at a time when people faced many difficulties. The people had been led by mean rulers who had turned away from God and his path of justice and mercy. As you listen to the reading, pay attention to why the Lord's people are joyful.

## Bible reading: From the prophet Zephaniah

**Reader:** Shout for joy, daughters of Jerusalem; Israel, rejoice with all your heart.
The Lord has taken away your injustices; He has driven your enemies away.
The Lord is in your midst, the powerful one will save you.
The Lord will be full of joy for you, He will renew you by his love;
He will dance and sing with joy for you, as on a festival day.

The Word of the Lord. **R/ Thanks be to God.**

## Bible Reflection (We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain)

At the start of our reading from the prophet Zephaniah, you were set a listening challenge. You were asked to pay attention to why the Lord's people were joyful.

Q. Can anyone remember why the Lord's people had reason to be joyful?

A. The Lord removed the unfairnesses they faced, he drove their enemies away, he saved them.

The Lord showed his love for the people, and they showed their love for the Lord, by being faithful even in difficult times. The Lord's love for the people was the source of their joy, and their love for the Lord was the source of His.

Q. Can anyone remember how the prophet said the Lord would express his joy?

A. 'He will dance and sing with joy for you, as on a festival day.'

This joyful feeling, of being loved and loving others, is much greater than the happy feeling we know when we get something; like a new toy. Let's think about this a bit more. I'm going to present you with some choices and I'd like you to tell me which you think brings happiness and which brings joy.

*You may wish to expand on your pupils' responses.*

Q. Getting a new toy. *A. Happiness.*

Q. Playing with your friends. *A. Joy.*

Q. Winning a trophy. *A. Happiness.*

Q. Playing with your teammates. *A. Joy.*

Q. Receiving gifts at Christmas. *A. Happiness.*

Q. Spending Christmas with people who love you, and whom you love. *A. Joy.*

The happiness we feel when we open our Christmas gifts is a wonderful thing, but this happiness doesn't often last very long. Not like the feeling of joy which stays with us much longer. There are three things we can do to help the feeling of joy stay with us all the time. The first thing is to **be thankful** for all the gifts we receive. Not just the toys.

Q. What other gifts should we be thankful for at Christmas, and all year round?

A. Food and water. A home. Family and friends. The birth of Jesus, our love for him and His love for us.

The second thing is to **share** the love of God and the Good News of Jesus. Some ways we can do this are by being generous with what we have, caring for all God's children, and looking after the world God has given to us. The third way we can feel joy in our hearts all the time is through **prayer**. Prayer helps us to stay close to God and His Son, Jesus. By staying close we remember that we are loved by them, and that we love God and Jesus too. Prayer is also a way we show love for others, as we remember their needs and ask God to help us help them. Let's do that now through our **prayers of intercession.**

## Prayers of Intercession

**Reader:** The response to our prayer is: **Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful. Help us always to remember that the greatest joy is not found in presents but in the love you bring into our lives. Lord, in your mercy…

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful and thankful. Help us to always appreciate your love for us, the love of our families and friends, our home, the food we eat, the world we live in, and so much more. Lord in your mercy...

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful and generous. Help us to share what we have with others; our toys, our time, our faith, our friendship, so that nobody feels left out, unloved, or in need. Lord in your mercy...

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful and faithful. Help us to stay close to you as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus. Help us to share the Good News of His birth with our family and friends, through our words, our actions, and our prayers. Lord in your mercy...

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, in Advent and at Christmas we learn what it means to be joyful and to belong to your global family. Help us and all your children around the world, especially those who live in poverty and difficulty, to celebrate joyfully the birth of our saviour, Jesus.
Lord, in your mercy...

**Reader:** Let us now say the 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.**

# Fundraising Ideas

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio – the Catholic Church's official children's charity for overseas mission. Thanks to children in England and Wales, we can provide life-changing aid around the world in whatever form it's needed. That could be a new school, feeding programme, or a generator for a children's home. Mission Together helps all children, regardless of background or beliefs. That's how we show the all-embracing nature of the Catholic Church and the true meaning of 'mission'.

Fundraising is a brilliant way to involve everyone in raising money for Mission Together. Below are a few seasonal ideas but you can find other ways to get involved throughout the year by visiting our webpage https://missiontogether.org.uk/fundraising-ideas/

Please ***share your fundraising events*** with us @MissioUK, adding the hashtag #missiontogether

**Ideas for Autumn term**

**Rake-a-Thon:** With autumn leaves falling, children can ask family members or caregivers for suggested donations to clear up the garden, yard or driveway. Challenge pupils to clear as many of these spaces as possible. Make sure children have strong gloves and bags if they take up the Rake-a-Thon challenge.

**Torch-lit hikes:** get sponsored to brave the elements and hold a torch-lit hike or winter walk to raise money. Make sure you have plenty of adults to supervise and assist when organising outdoor events with children. Better still, get the whole family involved!

**Winter disco:** why not donate the proceeds from your school disco to Mission Together this year? Or if that's not possible, hold a sweetie stall or prize stall at the event to raise money for children around the world.

**Christmas crafts:** get the whole school involved in making and selling ornaments, wreaths, biscuits, and any other Christmassy gifts and treats you can think of. Donate the proceeds to Mission Together

**Helping angels:** encourage children to take on extra chores at home, for a donation to Mission Together or contribution to the Red Box.

**Manger on a Mission:** This is a great way to remind people of the true meaning of Christmas and a novel way to raise funds. Ask pupils to dress as characters from the nativity (remember that the scriptures don't mention just how many shepherds and magi were present). Aim to create a complete crib set. Then take your manger on a mission tour around your school grounds, town or city. Remember to take a Mission Together Red Box to collect donations on the way.

**N.B. To add a prayerful focus to this fundraising task, download our interactive Christmas Crib Liturgy & Blessing.**