

BEFORE ADVENT BEGINS!

THE ADVENT WREATH HELPS US TO GET READY TO WELCOME JESUS

Long ago, before Jesus was born, during the dark days of December, the people of Eastern Europe gathered wreaths of evergreen branches and lit fires as a sign of hope and a reminder that spring was on its way. This tradition was adopted by the Christians and by the 1600s the Advent Wreath was used throughout Germany to mark the time spent waiting for the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. From Germany this tradition spread to the rest of the world.

WHAT DOES THE ADVENT WREATH MEAN?

Usually the Advent Wreath is made of four candles, three purple and one pink. They are lit in the following order; week 1 and 2 purple, week 3, pink and week 4 purple. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. The colour purple is used because long ago purple dye was very expensive and purple became a colour that was associated with royalty. Advent is the season of the coming of the King. The pink one is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent, *Gaudete Sunday*. Long ago Advent was a time of fasting like Lent. On the Third Sunday there was a break from this fast and the priests wore rose or pink coloured vestments. So that tradition became a part of the Advent Wreath. As we light the candles each week we are made aware of our journey through this season. Placing the candles in a circle is symbolic of God's love for us, a love that has no beginning or end. The use of the evergreen leaves around the candles reminds us that God's love is everlasting.

TO MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH

You will need

- An empty biscuit tin covered in green paper and filled with damp sand
- Evergreen branches
- Four candles: three purple and one pink.
- Purple Ribbon for decoration



Place the candles at intervals in the sand. Place evergreen branches between and around the candles to cover the sand. Use the purple ribbon to decorate.

BLESS THE ADVENT WREATH

You might like to invite the priest to bless the Advent Wreath - in the absence of a priest feel free to bless the wreath yourself with Holy Water. The following prayer may be used. Use Holy Water to sprinkle and bless the wreath.



Loving God, Bless these candles and make them a sign of your love for us and our hope in you.

May our Advent Wreath be a source of joy in our family (*school / classroom*).

As light comes from these candles, may it guide us and brighten our way as we wait for your coming. May you bring light into our schools, homes and communities as we wait and prepare this Advent season. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen



Colour the Advent Wreath

Remember to colour three candles purple and one pink

THE JESSE TREE

One of the great things about Christmas is that we usually get together with our families; on or after Christmas perhaps our grandparents, aunts and uncles come around and there are usually presents and more food. Our family is important and so was the family of Jesus. During Advent we can learn about Jesus' family and his ancestors.

St. Matthew in the beginning of his Gospel names all the ancestors of Jesus going right back to Abraham. *You can find this in the Gospel of Matthew; Chapter 1, verses 1-17. Why not do a bible search?* Some of the names will be familiar to you (*some of the names are very difficult to pronounce...even for grown-ups!*). One of those ancestors is Jesse, the father of King David. He gives his name to the Jesse tree, which is like Jesus' family tree. The reason is that the prophet Isaiah speaking to the people of the Old Testament, told them that their Messiah would come from Jesse's family: *"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots."* This comes from the Book of Isaiah; Chapter 11, verses 1-9. Look in your family/class bible and find these verses. It is one of the traditions of Christmas to make a type of tree and to decorate it with picture or symbols to represent some of the characters and some of the events from the Bible. The chart on the next page will help you to find some of these symbols:



MAKE YOUR OWN JESSE TREE



To make the tree, take a branch that has no leaves on it, something that has fallen on the ground. Choose a tree branch that is about a metre long with lots of smaller branches attached to it. Place the branch in a pot or bucket of dirt or gravel, to help it stand up, or you might have a spare Christmas tree stand that you could use.

Take some stiff card, and cut out 15 circular disks, about the size of a jam jar lid. On each circle you can draw one of the symbols from the next page. Decorate it by colouring it and add some glitter or with some wool. Punch a little hole in the top of the disk, and use some wool or string to tie it to one of the branches of the tree.

For each of the days (*you are in school*) during Advent, you can put one of the symbols on the tree, and perhaps read the passage in the bible to understand the significance of the symbol.

JESSE TREE SYMBOLS

<i>Person or Event</i>	<i>Bible Reference</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
Creation	Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-4	sun, moon, stars, animals, earth
Adam & Eve	Genesis 2:7-9, 18-24	tree, man, woman
Noah	Genesis 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22	ark, animals, dove, rainbow
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3	torch, sword, mountain
Isaac	Genesis 22:1-14	bundle of wood, altar, ram in bush
Jacob	Genesis 25:1-34; 28:10-15	kettle, ladder
Joseph	Genesis 37:23-28; 45:3-15	bucket, well, silver coins, tunic
Moses	Exodus 2:1-10	baby in basket, river and rushes
Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-18	lamp, temple
Jesse	1 Samuel 16:1-13	crimson robe, shepherd's staff
David	1 Samuel 17:12-51	slingshot, 6-pointed star
Solomon	1 Kings 3:5-14, 16-28	scales of justice, temple, two babies and sword
Joseph	Matthew 1:18-25	hammer, saw, chisel, angle
Mary	Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38	lily, crown of stars,
John the Baptist	Mark 1:1-8	shell with water, river

JESSE TREE





























Find the symbols on the Jesse Tree

Connect the word and the symbol

Colour the picture

Advent Activity Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30  Light the first purple candle on the Advent Wreath	1  Do your school work cheerfully	2 Pray for your granny and granddad today 	3 <i>Feast of St. Francis Xavier</i> Pray for peace in the world 	4  Be patient at times when you have to wait	5  Do all your jobs without complaining	6 <i>Feast of St. Nicholas.</i> Pray for children in the world for whom Christmas is not a time for presents
7  Light two purple candles on the Advent Wreath	8 <i>Feast of the Immaculate Conception.</i> Say the 'Hail Mary' 	9 Say a prayer for children who are sick 	10  Make a Christmas card for someone who helps in your school	11 Say a prayer for our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI 	12  Invite someone who has been left out to play with you.	13  Visit a Church and ask for help to light a candle
14  Light two purple and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath	15 Remember to say the Grace Before Meals today 	16  Recycle your Christmas card envelopes	17 Give away one of your best smiles 	18  Forgive someone who has hurt your feelings	19 Feed the birds 	20 Tidy your room without being asked 
21  Light three purple candles and one pink candle on the Advent Wreath	22  Tell the Christmas story to your family	23 Pick up any litter that you see around you 	24 Help prepare a family meal 	25  Go to Mass and give thanks for the gift of Jesus		

Each day when you do the action on the previous page colour the star. Begin at number 1



ADVENT WEEK 1

A New Year for the Church



FACTS ABOUT THE CHURCH YEAR

- The Church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent and ends on the Feast of Christ the King.
- The Church year is divided into different seasons just like the calendar year.
- We can tell which season we are in by the different coloured vestments that the priest wears when celebrating Mass



In Advent the priest wears purple, the colour of royalty. This reminds us that we are waiting to welcome Christ, the King.
The same colour is worn during Lent.

White or gold vestments are worn for the seasons of Christmas and Easter, times of great joy in the Church Year. These colours are also worn for the feasts of Our Lord, such as the Baptism of The Lord and for feasts of Mary such as the Immaculate Conception, which we celebrate during Advent.

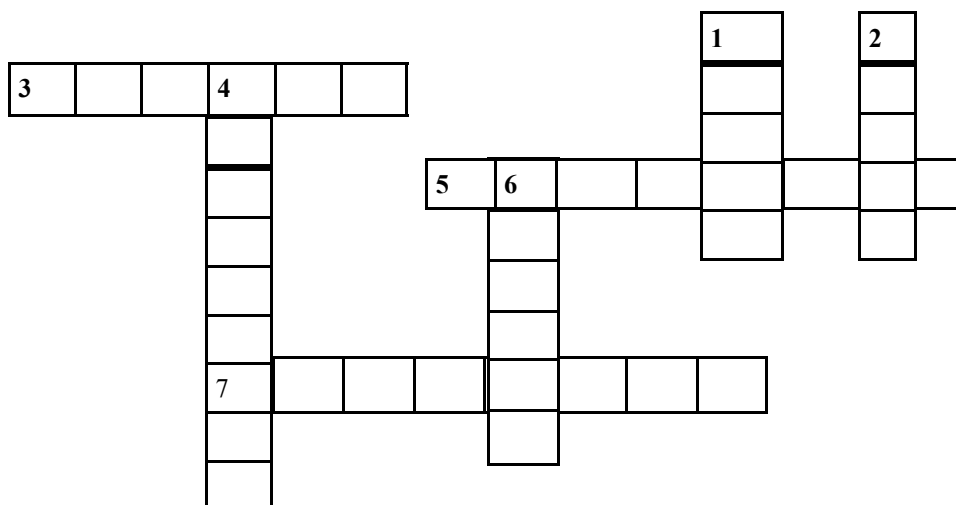


In Ordinary Time the priest wears green. Green is a symbol of life and hope.

Red, colour of blood, is worn on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, those days when we celebrate the passion of Jesus. Red is also the colour of fire which reminds us of the Holy Spirit and is worn on the Feast of Pentecost and for the sacrament of Confirmation.



- The Church Year is also called the Liturgical Year.
- There are three Liturgical Years A, B, and C. In each of these three years we hear the story of Jesus', birth, life, death and resurrection told from the point of view of the different writers of the Gospel. In Year A most of the Gospels are from Matthew, in Year B from Mark and in Year C from Luke. John's Gospel can be heard in all three years mostly during the Easter Season.
- This year in Advent we begin Year B.



Across

- 3. The priest wears this colour in Advent
- 5. In year A we read this Gospel
- 7. Green is worn in this time of the year

Down

- 1. This colour is worn on special days
- 2. Number of Liturgical Years
- 4. Red is worn for this feast
- 6. The Church Year begins in this season



2014

ADVENTWEEK 1

It's the first week of Advent and it's time to light the first candle on your Advent Wreath. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.



Light the Advent candle one.
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas Day.

The Gospel Reading for the First Sunday of Advent comes from the Gospel of St Mark! You might like to read this with your family. Encourage them to find the text in the class bible.

MARK 13:33-37

Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad; he has gone from his home and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told his gatekeeper to stay awake. So they do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn, if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!



SACRED SPACE

Make the Sacred Space in your home an Advent space this month. Use a purple cloth or purple paper to cover the table. Place the Advent Wreath in the space and if you have a Jesse Tree it might be put in or close to the Sacred Space. Open the family bible at the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 13; verses 33-37.

It's ADVENT! TIME TO WAKE UP!

This week the Gospel is telling us that we need to wake up! We need to be ready when Jesus comes. On the first day of Advent we begin a countdown to the most exciting time of the year, Christmas. Today we begin to wait for the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Most of us don't like waiting. It doesn't matter what we are waiting for: a bus, a birthday party, our dinner or playtime. It's hard to wait! This gospel is telling that it's important to get ready while we wait for Jesus, to do our best during Advent so that we will be really ready to welcome the Christ child at Christmas. So while you're waiting for Christmas let's use the time well. Let's think of ways in which we can do something to show Jesus how much we love him as we wait in this first week of Advent.



How will you wait for Jesus during Advent?

Day 1

I will wait for Jesus _____

Day 2

I will wait for Jesus _____

Day 3

I will wait for Jesus _____

Day 4

I will wait for Jesus _____

Day 5

I will wait for Jesus _____

Day 6

I will wait for Jesus _____

DECEMBER 6TH FEAST OF ST NICHOLAS



Colour the picture

ADVENT WEEK 2

It's time to light the first and second candles on your Advent Wreath. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.



Light the Advent candle one.
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas Day.

Light the Advent candle two
Think of humble shepherds
who Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child on Christmas night.

SUNDAY GOSPEL ADVENT WEEK 2

In the Gospel this week, we hear about the preaching of John the Baptist. John's job was to help people to turn back to God, and to get ready for Jesus. You can read this week's Gospel below and look for it in the Book of Mark; chapter 1, verses 1-8.

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the prophet Isaiah: "Look, I am going to send my messenger in front of you to prepare your way before you. A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight" John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Unscramble the words below to see what message he had for them.

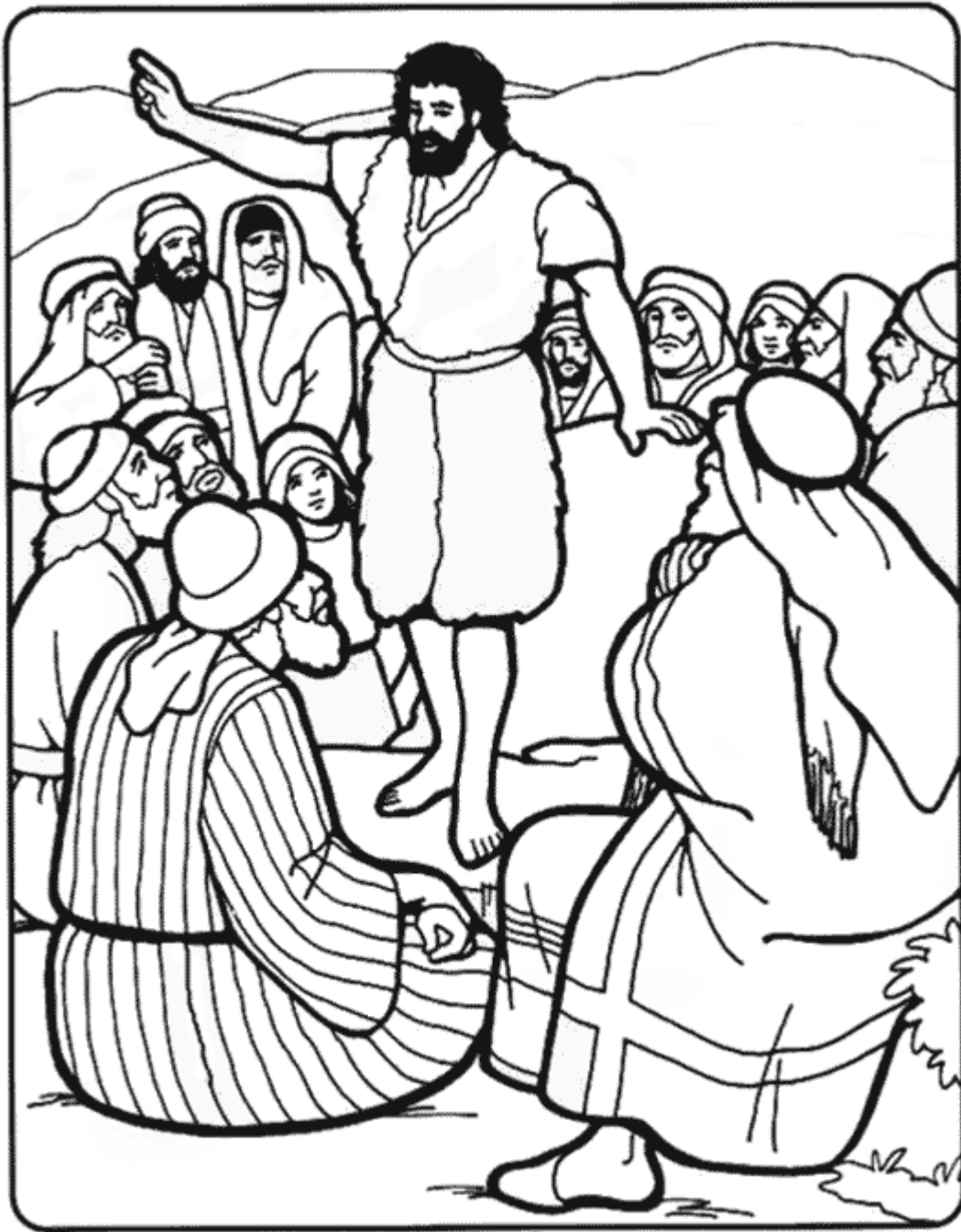
nTru kabc ot dGo nda eb sepitbda!

-----!

hneT uryo ssni lwli eb egoifvrn!

-----!

How could you respond to John the Baptist's message to turn back to God this Advent? Think about the things you could do during the next few weeks as you colour the picture below.



SACRED SPACE:

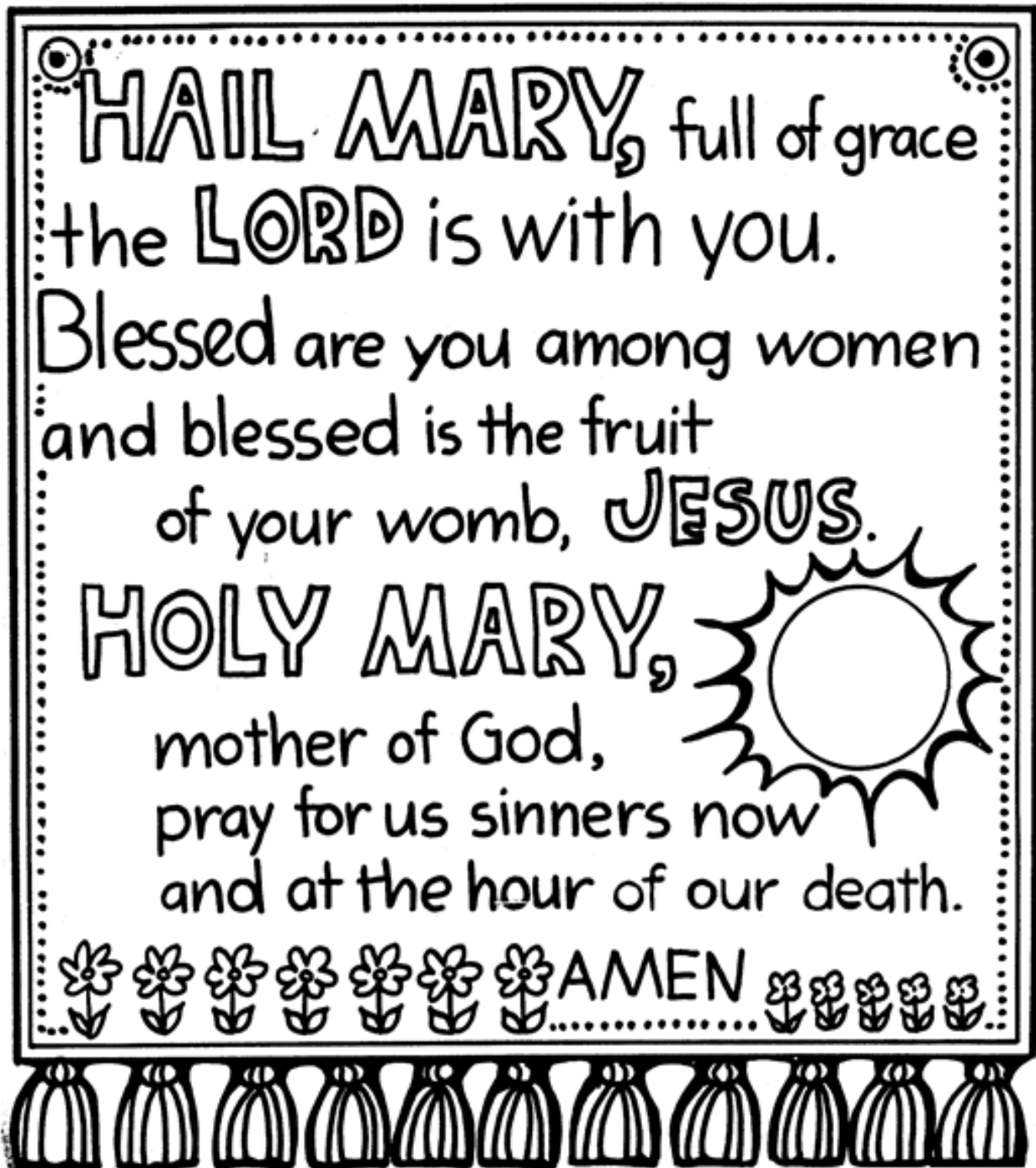
Add some holy water to your Sacred Space to remind you of your own baptism.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, later this week, you could add a statue or picture of Mary.

Remember to pray to Saint Lucy as you light your candle this week. Her Feast Day is on December 13th and her name means 'light'.



The words of the Hail Mary. Colour it, cut it out and keep it in your room to remind you to pray this special prayer often, especially on Mary's Feast day on December 8th.



ADVENTWEEK 3

It's time to light the first, second and third candles on your Advent Wreath.
Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.



Light the Advent candle one.
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas Day.

Light the Advent candle three
Think of heavenly harmony
Angels singing "Peace on Earth"
At the Blessed Saviour's birth.

Light the Advent candle two
Think of humble shepherds who
Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child on Christmas night.

SUNDAY GOSPEL ADVENT WEEK 3

In this Sunday's scripture readings ([JOHN 1: 6-8,19-28](#)) we hear about the messenger sent by God to tell people about Jesus. "He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. In this case the light is another way of talking about Jesus. This messenger was called John the Baptist. He was called this because he baptised people in the river Jordan. John was asked many times who he was. The people had been promised a messiah and they wondered whether John was this person. He never really gave a straight answer to those who asked but at the same time he left them in no doubt that someone was coming who was much greater than he was. John's feast day is June 24th.

TO THINK ABOUT...

- In the reading John was asked "Who are you?"
- If someone was to ask you who you are what might you say? Would you be able to tell them what you stand for, what kind of person you are? What would you be able to tell them about Jesus?
- John was a special messenger for God. We too, are messengers for God. What kind of a messenger are you?
- Can you think of anybody famous who is a good messenger for God, either from history or the present day?
- People who go to other countries and tell people about God are called Missionaries. These people do wonderful work in cities, towns and villages all over the world. Find the name of three Missionary Societies.
- Say a prayer for Missionaries today.

Complete the Word Search

T	O	H	G	N	N	A	U	N	L	Y	M
E	A	A	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	O
B	S	T	N	A	D	N	E	C	S	E	D
A	N	C	E	S	T	O	R	S	H	T	G
Z	A	H	A	I	R	A	H	C	E	Z	N
I	Z	E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	I
L	A	B	O	B	J	A	N	N	G	T	K
E	R	J	G	O	B	B	D	G	H	U	E
Y	E	A	Y	Y	G	R	N	E	E	R	C
R	T	C	L	E	A	R	S	I	I	L	N
A	H	O	A	G	E	A	M	L	O	G	Y
M	N	B	A	N	E	C	A	A	N	B	E

ANCESTORS

RUTH

EMMANUEL

GENEALOGY

ZECHARIAH

MARY ELIZABETH

ELIZABETH

ISRAEL

BABYLON

JOY

ANGEL

NAZARETH

DESCENDANTS

JACOB

KINGDOM



ADVENTWEEK 4



This week we can light all four candles on the Advent Wreath. Christmas is nearly here. Say the following prayer together as the candle is lit.

Light the Advent candle one.
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas Day.

Light the Advent candle three
Think of heavenly harmony
Angels singing "Peace on Earth"
At the Blessed Saviour's birth.

Light the Advent candle two
Think of humble shepherds who
Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child on Christmas night.

Light the Advent candle four
Think of joy forevermore
Christ Child in a stable born
Gift of love that Christmas morn.

One of this week's readings continues the story of the visit of Mary to Elizabeth. There is a verse of poetry in which Mary praises God. This verse is now the prayer and hymn that we call The Magnificat. It is a prayer of great joy and promise. You can read it now:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed;
the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. He has mercy on
those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,
The promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever. Amen

True or False - *Answers on the next page*



1. Advent started as a custom in Eastern Europe
2. Lent is the name for the special time of the year just before Christmas.
3. Advent means Christmas.
4. The first Sunday of Advent begins a new Church year.
5. An Advent calendar counts down the days until Christmas.
6. Advent lasts six weeks.
7. There are four candles in the Advent wreath.
8. Each candle on the Advent wreath represents two weeks.
9. Three candles are rose coloured on the Advent wreath.
10. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world
11. Advent is a time of waiting and preparing.
12. The first candle lit is purple in colour.
13. The second candle lit is purple in colour.
14. The third candle lit is rose coloured.
15. The fourth candle lit is white.
16. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Easter.
17. Emmanuel means God with us.
18. Advent means coming.
19. On the first Sunday of Advent we begin a period of prayer, fasting, and penance.
20. Advent is the name for the special time of the year just before Christmas.
21. Advent lasts four weeks.
22. Each candle on the Advent wreath represents one week.
23. Three candles are purple coloured.
24. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

ANSWERS TO TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ

True; False; False; True; True; False; True; False; False; True; True; True; True; True; False;
False; True; True; False; True; True; True; True; True;

THE CHRISTMAS STORY



About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the _____ of all the people to be listed in record books. Everyone had to go to their own _____ to be registered. _____ had to leave Nazareth and go to Bethlehem. Long ago _____ had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

_____ was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a _____, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of _____ because there was no room for them in the _____.

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some _____ were minding their sheep. All at once an _____ came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were _____. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good _____ for you, which will make everyone _____." This very day in King David's hometown a _____ was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."



Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in _____ God. They said: "_____ in the highest! Peace on earth to all God's people." After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and _____ what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying in a _____.

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THESE WORDS:

baby; manger; shepherds; Saviour; Joseph; Bethlehem; hay; Mary; praising; inn; angel; happy; frightened; news; Hosanna; see; names; hometown



'A Saviour has been born. He is Christ the Lord'