

Mission Together

Advent Liturgy & Activity: Week Three



This liturgy focuses on the Gospel reading for the third Sunday of Advent, when we hear how John's message was welcomed by the people.

N.B. For this liturgy we recommend you print a copy of the Mission Together Advent calendar

LITURGY PLAN

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 hymn: Taize - *The Lord is my light* or *Christ be our light*

Sign of the cross, lighting of the Advent wreath and opening prayer

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

Bible reading / drama *adapted for children from NJB*

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

Bible Reflection

See page 2. 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

Our suggestions: *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's Cry* or
O Come, O come, Emmanuel

Follow up activity

The Good News Paper. See Appendix 1.

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.**

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission.

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Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Opening Prayer

Whilst the candle is lit we suggest you play or sing *Light the Advent Candle* or something similar. After the first purple candle of the Advent wreath is lit the reader explains:

Reader: The Advent wreath helps us prepare for Christmas. The circular shape has no beginning and no end – it reminds us that life with Jesus is everlasting. The evergreen leaves show God’s love for us never ends. The lights remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

Reader: Let us pray. God our Father, you sent Jesus to be the light of the world.
The rose candle symbolises joy.
May we always be joyful witnesses of Jesus’ love, even when we are sad or lonely.
May we bring the light of Christ to the world this Advent.
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen

Bible reading: **From the Gospel of John 1: 6-8 and 19-28**

Narrator: A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness so that everyone might believe in Jesus through him. And this is what John said when the Jewish priests and leaders came to see him on the banks of the River Jordan. They asked:

Priests: Who are you?

John: (*firmly*) I am not the Christ.

Priests: Then are you the prophet Elijah?

John: I am not.

Priests: Are you the Prophet?

John: No.

Narrator: They said to him again:

Priests: (*angrily*) Who are you then? What do you have to say for yourself?

John: I am the one the prophet Isaiah wrote about:

Isaiah: (*loudly and firmly*) A voice cries out in the desert: Prepare the way for the Lord.

Narrator: The Gospel of the Lord **R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Reflection

When Jesus was born many people had turned away from God. Some leaders were cruel and did not set a good example. Some people were so selfish and greedy that the most vulnerable people, those who were sick or poor, were neglected and treated badly.

The people of Israel longed for God to help them and remembered how the prophets from long ago had told them that God would send a Saviour who would reveal God's mercy, teach us how to act fairly and help us not to be afraid. Isaiah and Elijah were two of those prophets.

John was another prophet whom Isaiah had foretold. When the Jewish leaders heard that people were going to hear John preach, they were concerned, so they sent their priests to find out more.

John's message was one of great joy and comfort: **'Get ready, for the Saviour is coming.'**

People trusted John and gladly did what he told them to do; they asked for forgiveness for their sins, changed their bad ways and were baptised.

Can you think of a time when you received good news?

Perhaps it was the news of the birth of a baby?

Or perhaps you heard that you had won a prize?

Maybe your team won the game?

How did you feel when you heard this good news? *Pause for answers.*

Today we are the messengers of good news. We have the good news that God loves us all so much that he sent his son, Jesus, into the world. And Jesus is our friend; he never leaves us.

That is wonderful news of joy and comfort in a world where people are sad, scared or lonely.

Let's think about how we can be joyful messengers for Jesus this Advent. What can we do to bring the love of God into the world? *Pause for answers.*

We can use the Mission Together calendar to give us even more ideas. *Hold up the Mission Together Advent calendar.*

We can also pray for ourselves and for one another during Advent.

Let's start now with our prayers of intercession.



Prayers of Intercession

Reader: The response is: **Lord, hear us.**

Reader: We pray that we may stay close to you as we prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas. May we always be witnesses of your joy and love. We pray to the Lord.

R/ Lord, hear us.

Reader: We pray for children around the world who are sad, scared, upset or lonely. May they always know that you are their friend. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: We pray for children around the world who can't go to school, are homeless, sick, or who are refugees. May we always find ways to help them and be joyful witnesses to your love for them. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

Reader: We pray for the children, families and staff in our school. May we always be joyful witnesses of our trust in you as we bring the light of Christ into the world. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

We end our prayers by saying together 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.**

We finish our time in prayer with the sign of the cross.

Closing hymn or recorded music.

Appendix 1: The Good News Paper



John the Baptist, and the prophets Isaiah and Elijah before him, were messengers for God. The messages they shared guided people and spoke of a better future when God would send a Saviour to show us how to live well together. The prophets did their best to share these messages from God far and wide, so that as many people as possible would know how much God cares for them.

Today there are many ways to share messages. Are there any you can think of? *Pause for answers.*

For many years, newspapers have been a popular way to share messages with lots of people. Often the messages shared in newspapers aren't good ones. So your mission today is to design an eye-catching front page of *The World News*. And the story you are to cover is the Good News story of Jesus' birth!

For this activity pupils will need:

- A copy of the Good News Paper template (on page 6 of this PDF document)
- Pencils/pens
- Examples of newspaper front pages (optional)

How pupils can achieve their mission.

1. Provide each pupil with a photocopy of page 6 of this PDF.
2. In the text box below the masthead, pupils write a headline. Headlines should be short and snappy to catch the readers attention. They summarise the story in a few words. Headlines that use rhyming words can be very effective, e.g. *Baby boy brings global joy!* Alliteration – repeating the same sounds at the beginning of words – is also a good tool, e.g. *Baby boy brings brilliant beams.*
3. Under the headline, in the box to the left, pupils draw an image of the story.
4. To the right of the picture are lines to write the 'good news' story. The main story in a news article is called the 'body'. The 'body' includes the details: the what, when, who, where, how. The story should be split into paragraphs. Each paragraph tells one part of the story, e.g. Paragraph 1: A special baby has been born. Paragraph 2: Prophets had long spoken about the birth of a Saviour to lead us. Paragraph 3: What will this baby grow up to do? The last paragraph should sum up the story.
5. It's good to include quotations. The pupils quotes could come from scripture, e.g. Isaiah says 'There is a child born for us, a son given to us... and he will be called prince of peace'. Or they could try to imagine what it would feel like to be Joseph or Mary, and what they might say if they were interviewed by a reporter.
6. Once finished, display your 'good news' front pages around school, or maybe in your parish church.
7. Don't forget to share pupils efforts with us! Tweet your photos to @Missio_UK

The World Press

Delivering Good News to the world since the start of time!



A large, empty rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for a drawing or illustration.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box, intended for a drawing or illustration.

Seven horizontal lines for writing, positioned to the right of the large rounded rectangular box.

Two horizontal lines for writing, positioned at the bottom of the page.