

# Mission Together

## Advent Liturgy & Activity: Week Two



This liturgy focuses on the Gospel reading for the second Sunday of Advent, when we hear how John the Baptist helped people to prepare for the arrival of Jesus.

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 / Gospel drama *adapted for children from NJB*

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

#### Reflection

See page 2. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

#### Prayers of intercession

Print the prayers of intercession on page 3 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

#### 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 candlelight reminds 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.

Our second candle symbolises peace.

May we always find rest in the peace Jesus gives, 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 Mark 1:1-8

**Narrator:** This is the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it was written by the prophet Isaiah:

**Isaiah:** Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries out in the desert: “Prepare the way of the Lord.”

**Narrator:** John the Baptist appeared in the desert. He proclaimed that everyone must give up their old ways and ask God to forgive their sins. People from all over Judea and from Jerusalem flocked to him. They asked for God’s forgiveness and were baptised by John in the River Jordan. John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He lived on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed:

**John the Baptist:** Someone more powerful than me is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

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



## Bible Reflection

Isaiah was a prophet who lived over 700 years before Jesus.

Prophets were messengers of God who sometimes warned the people of Israel when they forgot to follow God's ways. At other times, they gave them hope that God would never leave them. Isaiah was one of the prophets who said that God would send a Saviour to reveal God's mercy, teach us how to act fairly, and help us not to be afraid.

Another one of these prophets was John the Baptist. John was so important that Isaiah not only foretold that Jesus would be born but also that John would help the people to prepare for Jesus.

Think about a favourite film or play you have seen. Maybe you have been to the pantomime at this time of year? Did you notice that the central character very often does not appear in the first scene?

Usually, we must wait for them until later. Sometimes other characters talk about them and 'set the scene' so that we get ready and excited when we meet the main character.

That was how the people of Israel felt when they heard John proclaim that Jesus was coming. They had been waiting a long time for God to send a Saviour so they wanted to be ready for him when he arrived. Can you remember what they did? We heard about it in today's reading. *Pause for answers.*

They made the long journey into the desert to listen to John's message, ask for forgiveness, change for the better and to be baptised in the River Jordan.

How are you preparing for Jesus this Advent? *Pause for answers.*

Getting ready is not just about putting up decorations in our homes and school or buying presents. Jesus wants us to prepare our hearts, so we can love God and other people more. Are you doing any of the things you thought of last week? *Remind pupils that if they haven't started to pray or do acts of kindness yet it is not too late.*

We can use our Mission Together calendar to help with 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 to our prayer 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 live in the peace of your love. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** We pray for children around the world who are scared, upset or lonely. May they find peace and rest in your warm embrace. 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 they find comfort in you and may we always find ways to help 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 find our peace in you as we bring the light of Christ into the world. We pray to the Lord. **R/ Lord, hear us.**

**Reader:** 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.**

**Reader:** Let us finish our time in prayer with the sign of the cross.

**Closing hymn or recorded music.**

# Appendix 1: Special Message Cards



Like the prophets before him, John the Baptist was a messenger for God. The messages shared by the prophets guided people and gave them hope. We can send messages that do the same.

At this time of year we often send Christmas cards that let people know that we are thinking of them and wish them well. Christmas cards that have pictures of the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, share another message that can give hope. What might this be? *Pause for answers.*

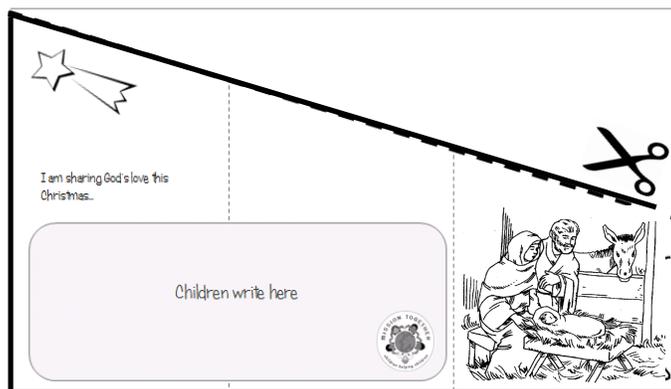
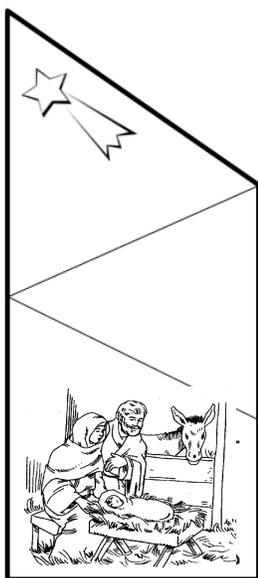
These Christmas cards remind people that Jesus is the reason we have Christmas! That's why it's called Christ-Mass!

At Christmas we remember that God loves us all so much that he wanted to be close to us; to live alongside us. God's love for all his children reminds us that everyone is special and this gives the world hope. That message of hope is worth sharing. So let's prepare our hearts for Christmas by making some *Special Message Christmas Cards*.

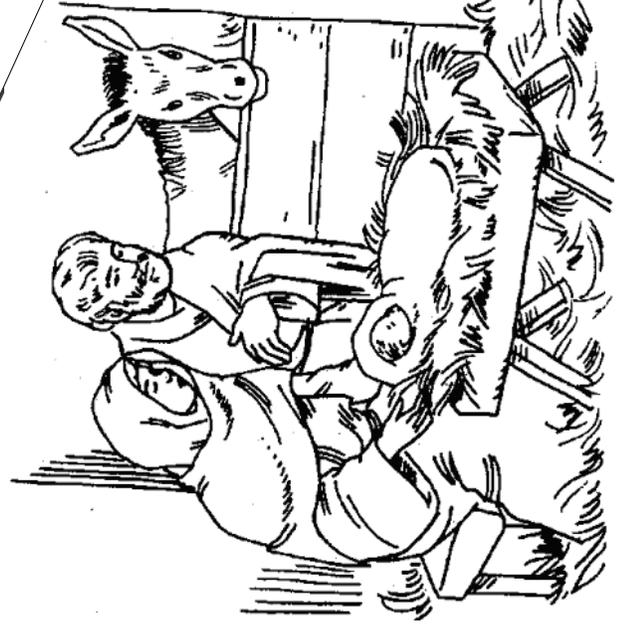
1. Makes copies of Appendix 2. One for each child. We advise you copy onto thin white A4 card.
2. Cut around the solid line. This should leave pupils with a trapezoid shape.
3. The shape should be folded along the dotted line, from right to left. This should leave children with a narrow folded card (see bottom left).
4. Children can colour the front of their card.
5. Inside the folds will be the text 'I am sharing God's love this Christmas.'
6. Ask children to write a Christmas message for someone special, including ways they will share God's love with that special person e.g. by listening to them, by visiting them (when they can), by helping them with jobs, by sharing with them, by praying for them. Children are encouraged to post their Christmas card to their special someone.
7. Maybe children could write cards to household members of your parish. The card could contain a promise of prayer. Speak to your Parish Priest and ask if parishioners could help post the cards by hand. In the absence of school/parish Masses and carol services, this is a great way to bring the school and parish community together.

## For this activity children will need:

- One copy each of Appendix 2.
- Coloured pens / pencils
- Scissors



# Appendix 2



I am sharing God's love this Christmas...

