

ADVENT RESOURCES



THE ADVENT WREATH

The candles of the Advent wreath each tell of part of the Christmas story. We light a new candle in each week of Advent as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. The growing light of the Advent wreath is a symbol of Christ who shatters the darkness of sin and death. Each week as the light grows stronger; we grow stronger too in our reverence for and commitment to Christ. The growing light helps us recognize Christ not only in the historical event we celebrate at Christmas but in our lives today and in the hope we carry as we prepare for the coming fullness of God's reign.

First candle - Hope Candle.

It is the birth of Jesus that brings hope to our hearts. Just as the people of over 2000 years ago waited with great hope for the gift of Jesus, so we too await his coming today. The birth of Jesus gives the world hope for peace, joy and fullness of life for all.

Second candle - Shepherds Candle

The shepherds were the most humble of people. They stayed out in the fields in all weather and tended the sheep and lambs. They were chosen by God to be among the first to know about the birth of Jesus.

Third candle - Angel Candle

The pink candle is sometimes known as the Angel candle. The heavens were filled with the songs of the Angels welcoming the baby Jesus to the world.

Fourth candle - Bethlehem Candle

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is the continuing promise of God to each of us. Jesus came to lead each of us to God by his Word and example. As followers of Jesus we are called to do the same. In the Bethlehem Candle we celebrate the birth of Jesus with Mary, Joseph and Christians all over the world.

<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv.html> - this site has prayers for lighting the Advent candles for young children.

<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/adx/adwreath.html> - this site has prayers for the Advent wreath for older students and adults.

ADVENT CALENDAR

An Australian and Indigenous Advent Calendar

Joe Fleming (from *Echoing the Word*)

Make an Advent wreath that is Australian rather than European, and reflects our nation's attempts to continue on the path to reconciliation with the Indigenous community. Use gum leaves and twigs from Australia trees to make the wreath. On the other hand you could go to your local nursery and ask about native plants and flowers in your part of Australia and incorporate them into your Advent display.

The candles used in the wreath can be decorated with words that reflect justice: justice, peace, integrity, community, sharing, and equity. As they are lit each day the class prayer can reflect some of these key words associated with justice.

The Australian Aborigines use a 'coolamon' (curved shaped bark or wooden bowl) to collect berries and other food. It can also used as a bed for small babies. (The connection with the manger or food trough is obvious). Purchase a coolamon from the local community or attempt to make one yourself. Have it as the centre of your Advent wreath and place the candles around.



Advent Chain

(From www.catholicparenting.com)



A change from the Advent calendar. Cut 21 strips of purple construction paper and 7 strips of pink for each chain. The colours match the colours of the candles in the Advent wreath. Staple them into a loop chain: 14 purple, 7 pink, then 7 more purple. You can put the dates on the loops which make it easier to keep track. Staple the last purple loop to the bottom of a square of paper on which you have drawn a star and written this poem (or one similar):

*Each evening after prayers are said
Take off one loop and hop in bed.
When only the star is left to shine
Then you will know it's CHRISTMAS time!*

Hang it on a wall and watch the days pass by. Christmas will be here before you know it! (Make sure to hang the chain with the smaller purple section at the top.)

Idea!! See http://www.catholicmom.com/2007_lesson_plans/12.07_advent_chain.pdf or <http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com.au/2011/10/2011-printable-advent-chain.html> for ideas for activities to promote good deeds and bible references for each link. A link is taken off each day and the activity on the link is completed.

CLASSROOM PRAYER

Classroom Prayer Ritual For Little Children – Advent Week 1

(adapted from liturgyplanning.com)

Scripture Focus: adapted from Matthew 24

Jesus said: " Be ready, stay awake because you do not know when I will come again
– be sure that you are ready."

Sacred Space:

Advent wreath

Bible open at text

An empty manger – animals

Shoe box – to use as a large, empty manger

Straw

Gathering: *Repeat bracketed section each week...*

Invite the children to quietly sit in a circle with the Sacred space in the centre (use quiet music whilst they settle). Light the first candle. Whilst the children watch the flame burning, explain simply the meaning of the wreath with pauses in between.

◊ *Our wreath is a circle and tells us that the circle is like God's love for us, it is never ending.*

◊ *Notice the greenery – these are leaves of evergreen trees, trees that remain green throughout the long winter months – everlasting, just like God's love for us.*

◊ *Purple is a 'getting ready' colour and we see lots of purple here in the candles and the ribbons. . Each week we light one more candle – as the light gets brighter we know that Christmas is getting closer.*

◊ *The large, white candle in the centre is lit on Christmas Day to mark the birth of Jesus.*

The message of the Advent wreath is the coming of light into the world. Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world', the light of the Advent wreath represents the truth and hope that Jesus brought.

Invite the children to share some moments when they were excitedly waiting for something to happen, like a birthday or going on holiday. It's a bit like taking part in a race when everyone is waiting for the starter to say 'ready, steady, go'. Advent is exciting, just like that, each week we are getting closer to the great feast of Christmas, each day trying to get ourselves ready to welcome Jesus.

Watch the flame flickering on the candle.

Look at the empty manger. The place where Jesus was born was cold, dark, and smelly from the animals – not a nice cosy place to be.Close your eyes, imagine you are there it is very dark and gloomy. Just through the open window the stars give a little light This is where the animals shelter

..... Look around it is so cold you can see steam rising up from the animals

breath. As you peer in the darkness around you, you can see animals of different shapes and sizes.... Listen to the soft grunting noise they make..... A hen flutters down from a high beam, squawking and rustling, making all the animals restless. They grunt and move around slowly. One of the cows moves slowly over to the manger. There is a box filled with straw that the animals feed on. The cow pulls the straw and quietly munches away.....All is quiet No human beings are in sight. The animals are quietly waiting There is a feeling of excitement and waiting in the air. Open your eyes.

Pass around the circle two or three animal figures for the children to touch and then place next to the manger. They are waiting, just like us.

Place the shoe box manger in the centre of the circle – explain briefly that a manger is a box which is filled with hay for the animals to eat. When Jesus is born, Mary will have no bed or cot to put him in, he will lie in the manger, filled with straw. We are going to get our 'manger' ready.....

Give each child a piece of straw. Invite them to close their eyes and think of something they could do to get ready to welcome Jesus Share their smile, being a good friend, listening carefully.

Play some quiet, peaceful music and invite the children, one at a time, to decide what they will try to do and then, when ready, place their straw in the manger to prepare for Jesus' coming.

Sit quietly for a moment or two, phase out the music.

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Classroom Prayer Ritual For Little Children ~ Advent Week 2

(adapted from liturgyplanning.com)

Scripture Focus: Matthew 3:1-12

Long ago the prophet Isaiah spoke of a voice crying in the desert. This is the voice of

John saying 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.'

Sacred Space: as Week 1

Gathering:

Light two candles.

Repeat bracketed section from Week 1, then...

Watch the flame flicker.

Invite the children to recall journeys they have made. Were they long? Did they feel tired? What did they do to make the journey go faster? Were they pleased when they got there?

Show the children the figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey. Explain that they had to make a long journey – no cars, planes, trains etc. they had to walk all the way. Mary was pregnant so she rode on the donkey. The roads were very stony and rough, no smooth surfaces like roads today. At night time it was very cold. Sometimes on their journey Mary and Joseph felt lonely and worried, it was such a long way and Mary's baby was soon to be born. When they reached Bethlehem everywhere was full – they had nowhere to stay – what will they do? One kind

Innkeeper told them he had no room in his Inn but they could stay with the animals. It was very cold there and the animals were sheltering too, but at least it was dry. That night Mary and Joseph were happy to share with the animals.

Pass the figures around and ask three children to place them with the manger.

They are all waitingsomething wonderful will soon happen in Bethlehem.

Pause for a few minutes.

Place the shoe box manger in the centre of the circle – explain briefly that a manger is a box which is filled with hay for the animals to eat. When Jesus is born, Mary will have no bed or cot to put him in, he will lie in the manger, filled with straw. We are going to get our 'manger' ready.....



Give each child a piece of straw. Invite them to close their eyes and think of something they could do to get ready to welcome Jesus Welcome newcomers or visitors to home or school, try to notice when someone at home is tired and needs some help, try to include others in our games and not turn them away.

Play some quiet, peaceful music and invite the children, one at a time, to decide what they will try to do and then, when ready, place their straw in the manger to prepare for Jesus' coming.

Sit quietly for a moment or two, phase out the music.

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Classroom Prayer Ritual For Little Children ~ Advent Week 3

(adapted from liturgyplanning.com)

Scripture Focus: Letter of St James 5:7-10(adapted)

Be patient, everyone, until the Lord's coming. Think of the farmer who waits through the autumn and spring for his seeds to grow. Do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon.

Sacred Space: as Week 1

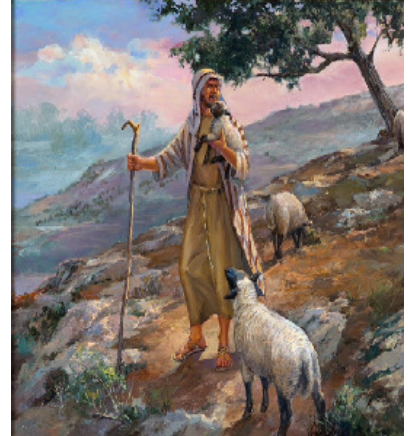
Gathering:

Light three candles.

Repeat bracketed section from Week 1, then...

Watch the flames flickering on the candles

Invite the children to tell you what a sheep looks like. Have they seen any in the fields or in a zoo? Who looks after them? Show a figure of the shepherd and explain how a shepherd looks after his sheep He knows them all and often gives them names he uses his crook to rescue them when they stray He puts them in a pen at night in the hills and sleeps across the entrance to guard them from wild animals. Watch the flames flickering.



Close your eyes and imagine you are with the shepherds in the hills. Look around you, you can see the sheep sleeping in the grass. A wind is blowing and you can feel the chilly wind pull your cloak around you to keep you warm. Look around again you can see the other shepherds sitting around the fire with you..... Some are sleeping, some are humming quietly to themselves. Watch the fire burning brightly hear it crackling and dancing in the breezerub your hands together to keep them warm watch the steam from your breath curling up into the dark sky. Look up into the sky, you can see millions of bright sparkly stars. There is a feeling in the air that something special will soon happen. Somehow everyone is waiting.....what can it be?

Pass the figures around and ask children to place them with the manger.

Place the shoe box manger in the centre of the circle – We are continuing to get our 'manger' ready.....

Give each child a piece of straw. Invite them to close their eyes and think of something they could do to get ready to welcome Jesus Look after others in the playground when they are hurt or have no one to play with, tell our friends they are special,

Play some quiet, peaceful music and invite the children, one at a time, to decide what they will try to do and then, when ready, place their straw in the manger to prepare for Jesus' coming.

Sit quietly for a moment or two, phase out the music.

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An Advent Prayer Service

by Clare Horan (from *Echoing the Word*)

Preparation:

For Activity 1 – an empty manger

For Activity 2 – a manger; strips of straw coloured paper on which are written Advent preparation actions or behaviours.

ACTIVITY 1 – Penitential Prayer Service

(NB: The introduction and reflection in this section should be read aloud by the teacher or other appropriate adult.)

This is the season of Advent; people in places all over the world are preparing for Christmas. There are many ways we can prepare for Christmas. For Christians, Advent is a time to get ready with joy and hope to celebrate the wonderful mystery of God's love at Christmas.

For our Church, penance has traditionally been part of Advent preparation. In penance, we engage with God's loving mercy and forgiveness, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ into our human world and we make ourselves ready to welcome him into our hearts and into our lives at Christmas and always.

We will begin our prayer service by listening to the Gospel from the first Sunday of Advent.

(It may be appropriate to read this Gospel from a children's Lectionary.)

Let us now, quietly, within ourselves, reflect on how ready we are to welcome Jesus, into our hearts and into our lives.

Do I love and honour God by

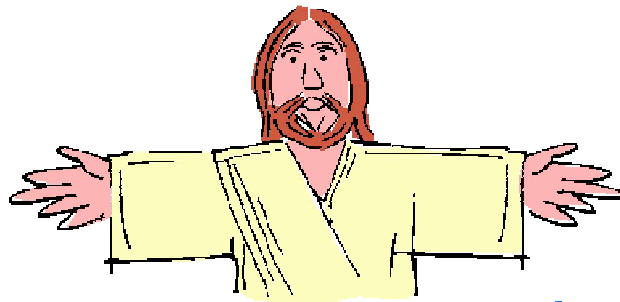
- being aware of God's goodness, love and blessings in my life and in my world;
- praying to God with love and trust, and taking part in community prayer and liturgy with reverence;
- learning all I can about Jesus, and having faith in him as the way to fullness of life now and forever;
- allowing to Holy Spirit to guide me to follow Jesus' teaching and example?

Am I ready to welcome Jesus?

Pause for a few moments.

Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*



WELCOME

Do I do what is good and life-giving for myself as a person, by

- valuing myself and being happy with who I am;
- making good, wise and healthy choices in the way I think, act and speak;
- being honest with myself and others;
- doing my best and enjoying what I do?

Am I ready to welcome Jesus?

Pause for a few moments.

Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

Do I live in love and friendship with my family and friends by

- being helpful and unselfish, and easy to get along with;
- recognising the good that others do for me, and being thankful;
- speaking in a good way to and about others;
- being ready to say sorry and make up after an argument?

I want to be ready to welcome Jesus.

Pause for a few moments.

Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

Do I live in right relationship with all God's people by

- showing respect for people who are different from me;
- caring about others who are suffering, and being prepared to help where I can;
- sharing with those who do not have a fair share of our world's resources;
- standing up for people who are being treated unjustly?

Am I ready to welcome Jesus?

Pause for a few moments.

Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

Do I live in right relationship with our earth, by

- doing whatever I can to protect the environment;
- taking care to avoid waste and damage of our earth's resources;
- using precious resources, such as water, responsibly;
- remembering that all creation, just like me, is a sign and expression of God's love?

Am I ready to welcome Jesus?

Pause for a few moments.

Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

May God's loving mercy bring healing and forgiveness to our unreadiness, so that our hearts may change, and we may be ready to welcome Jesus with love.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, who has come into our world.

All: *Amen.*

ACTIVITY 2 - Preparing to welcome Jesus

(Readers and partners come forward, one pair at a time, and stand on either side of the manger.)

Reader 1:

We make ourselves ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our lives in Advent when we:

- take time to reflect prayerfully on our day;
- help at home cheerfully;
- donate goods to Christmas hampers for people in need;
- accept responsibility for a mistake or wrong action;
- play fairly and have fun with our friends.



Let us prepare a place for Jesus.

(Partner 1 places the 'straw' on which these are written into the manger.)

Reader 2:

We make ourselves ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our lives in Advent when we:

- speak kindly and truthfully;
- do something to lessen our carbon footprint;
- are patient with a younger brother or sister;
- get over a disappointment graciously, and get on with life;
- work cooperatively with others.

Let us prepare a place for Jesus.

(Partner 2 places the 'straw' on which these are written into the manger.)

Reader 3:

We make ourselves ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our lives in Advent when we:

- prepare to take part in parish Advent and Christmas liturgies;
- invite someone who may be left out to join us in our games and activities;
-
- show our appreciation for something good that has been done for us;
- listen attentively to another person;
- give our best effort to something we are doing.

Let us prepare a place for Jesus.

(Partner 3 places the 'straw' on which these are written into the manger.)

Reader 4:

We make ourselves ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our lives in Advent when we:

- stand up for someone who is being treated unkindly or disrespectfully;
- are persistent, and keep on trying with something we find difficult;
- take a moment to give thanks to God for something good that happens;
- do what is needed to make things right after hurting another person's feelings;
- help to keep a community space in good condition.

Let us prepare a place for Jesus.

(Partner 4 places the 'straw' on which these are written into the manger.)

Complete the prayer service with an appropriate Advent song.

Follow-up

The second activity can be continued in daily class prayer, with students being invited to write a specific action or behaviour on their own piece of 'straw', and place it in the manger.

JESSE TREE

www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19971201/FRIDGE/FRIDGE1.HTM - Includes how to make a Jesse tree and the symbols and readings for each day.



MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

Good Deeds Manger

During Advent, have students write down their good deeds on yellow strips of paper. Put them in a shoebox that has been made to look like a manger (you can cover it in brown paper and draw on marks to make it look like it's made of wood). Each week during Advent, the manger gets filled with more and more straw (yellow strips). On the last day before Christmas, put the baby Jesus (a baby doll) in the manger. Tell the students that because of their good deeds, the baby Jesus has a soft place to lie.

A Gift for Baby Jesus

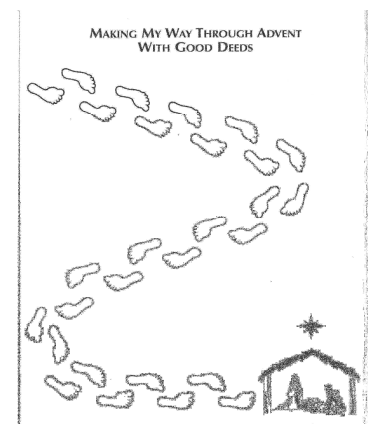
(From Advent in the Home: Activities for Families – Becker and Barnes)

Wrap a shoe box with paper and ribbon. Cut a slit in the top, large enough to allow a coin to fall through the hole. After talking about how Advent is the season for good deeds, ask children to bring in coins to put in the box for Baby Jesus. The money can then be donated to the local St Vincent De Paul group to help families in need at Christmas.

Making our Way through Advent with Good Deeds

(From Advent in the Home: Activities for Families – Becker and Barnes)

Create a visual journey to Bethlehem with the children's footprints. As children do a good deed for another in their class, their good deed is written on a footprint. The footprints can then trace around until close to the end of term, when they reach a picture of Bethlehem.



The Real Meaning of Advent

(From Echoing the Word)



As a means of opening discussion on the theme of Advent and its significance provide students with a range of images associated with the Season. The woman shown here is a starting point. In a format of choice (drama, art, written) students compare their understanding of the religious meaning of Advent with that of the contemporary world of advertising and sales. Discuss their findings. The aim of this study is to consider how the meaning of Advent can touch our lives when we are surrounded by Christmas 'hype'.

Advent – A Journey to Christmas

Ann Maree Whenman (from Echoing the Word)

The use of the Advent Game (at the end of this booklet) is a way to introduce key features of the Christmas story through the use of a board game model. The game allows the educator to introduce parts of the Christmas story through storytelling and Scripture reference and include some craft activities that will give the children something to take into the family home during the Advent and Christmas season. The Advent Game "board" can also be copied for each student and used as an Advent Calendar.

To play the game, divide the class into small groups, with a maximum of four children in each group of four. Give each group a copy of the game (A4 or enlarged to A3), one coloured token per player (buttons or circles of coloured paper) and a die. After playing the game use a particular activity (some are listed below) from the game to teach the children about an aspect of Advent or the Christmas story.

Some class activities that can be used with the Advent Game:

- Telling the Christmas Story through the use of the scripture passages:
 - Students can look up the passages referred to in the game to discover more about the Christmas story
 - Ask students to draw the scenes described in these Scripture passages;
- On a map of the Holy Land in the time of Jesus, mark the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem;
- Make an Advent Wreath;
- Make a Christmas card. Use one of the scenes described in the scripture passages as the theme for a Christmas card;
- Make a star for the Christmas tree;
- Learn and sing a Christmas Carol that tells the Christmas story.

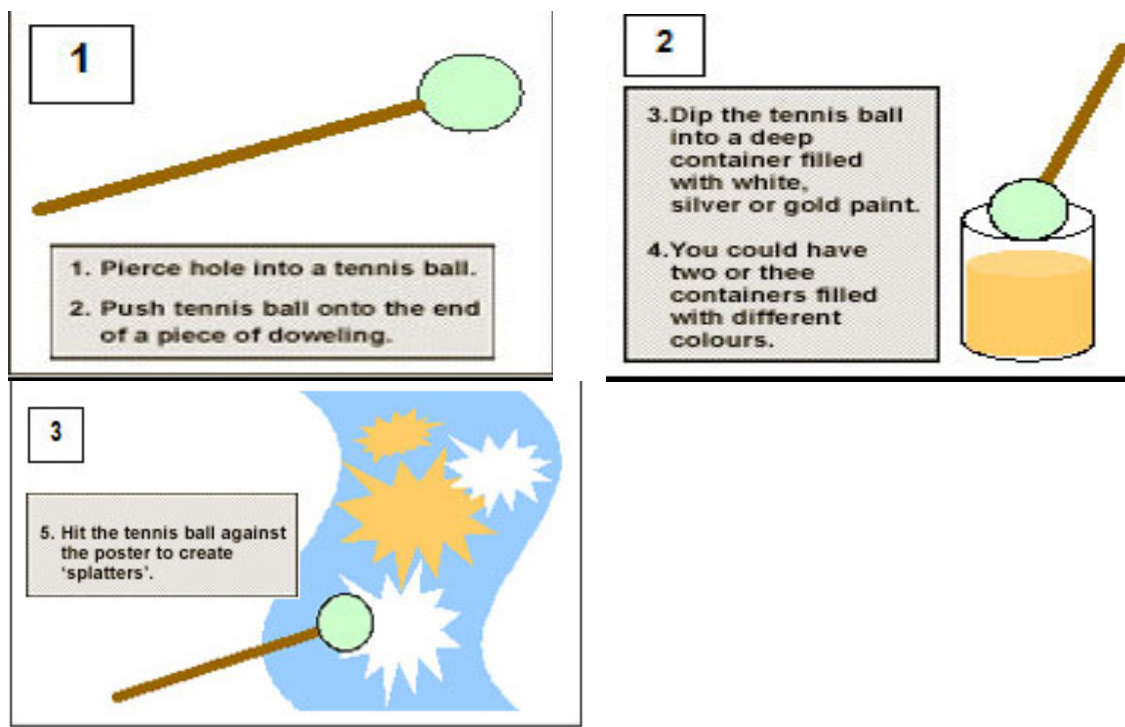
The game can be modified to suit different age levels and different activities and scripture references can be used. Play the Advent Game at the beginning or end of each lesson as a fun activity that will assist in creating a class focus - on their journey towards Christmas through Advent.



Preparing for the Light of Christ

Jan Grajczonek (from Echoing the Word)

In Australia, we are about to enter our summer season as Advent begins. The days are not only becoming hotter but also they are getting longer and lighter, as the sun's intensity strengthens. The coming 'Light of Christ' has a sense of reality about it. As teachers, we can capture this through artwork. Students could be involved in making a series of banners that could be displayed in the classroom settings or even around the school or in the church throughout the four weeks of Advent. These banners could be as simple as big posters, which have been painted purple. Once this paint dries students then could 'splatter' white, gold or silver 'splats' using a tennis ball which has been secured onto a piece of doweling, dipped into the coloured paint and hit against the purple or blue posters. (Please see diagrams below.)



The same could be done directly onto purple material. In the first week only two or three splatters could be made; in the second week of Advent some more; the third still more again and finally in the fourth week of Advent there would be so many splatters that the purple background may barely be seen. The increasing number of bright splatters symbolises the growing lightness of the days leading into Christmas – the coming of the 'Light of Christ'. More splatters could be added to the same banners each week or new banners could be made each week with more splatters and placed or hung beside the previously made banner/s. This enjoyable activity could be something students would look forward to each week and so the atmosphere of expectancy and anticipation is increased.

Advent Adventure

☺ ALL

Take children on an Advent adventure. Discuss that during the Advent season we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Describe what an adventure the trip to Bethlehem must have been for Mary and Joseph. Include thoughts of anticipation and excitement. Using a suitcase will arouse excitement for this adventure.

You will need:

An old suitcase

To do:

Choose four Advent themes that will symbolize the four weeks of Advent, for example, "Jesus is coming." Make a bumper sticker (see bumper sticker) to display the theme on the suitcase. Each class session use the suitcase to reveal a different Advent activity, project, or storybook that relates to the week's Advent theme illustrated on a bumper sticker. Pack the suitcase each day with the needed materials to present the day's activity or project as you travel toward Christmas. Before you know it, the suitcase will be covered with Advent messages and the children will look forward to what's inside.

Weekly theme suggestions:

Waiting for Jesus, Thinking of others, Sharing my gifts, A wonderful journey, The star that leads, Watching for Jesus

Ideas that come out of a suitcase:

Nativity story to read, angel to hide, Christmas ornament to make, Advent countdown project, blank cards to make Christmas greetings, parent gift materials, Advent chains or bracelets, skits or game ideas.

More to do:

Keep the suitcase around the classroom even after the Advent season as a reminder that our journey with Christ does not end at Christmas.



Preparing for Christmas Two Gospel Accounts

The story of the birth of Jesus is told only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke each express the sacred mystery of the birth of Jesus differently, each for its own community. Each account includes different parts of the story we celebrate at Christmas.

Compare the accounts of Matthew and Luke on the birth of Jesus

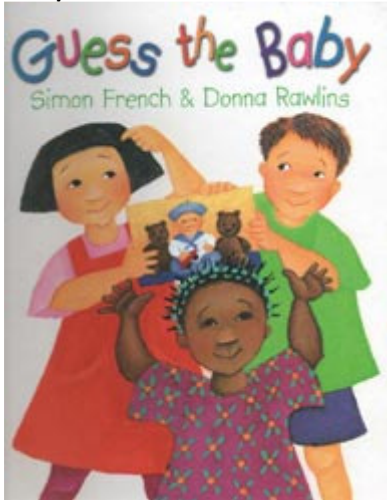
Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Matthew and Luke; identify the source/s of the parts of the Christmas story that are listed, and complete the table. Use Gospel references to show the verse or verses where this information is located, or just tick the 'neither' box. The first one is done for you.

The Christmas Story	Matthew	Luke	Neither
Jesus was born in Bethlehem	Mt 2:1	Lk 2:4-7	
Joseph's family tree included King David			
Mary was engaged to marry Joseph			
An angel told Mary her baby would be God's Son			
An angel told Joseph about Mary's baby in a dream			
The angel told Mary to name the baby Jesus			
The angel told Joseph to name the baby Jesus			
Mary went to visit her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth, and praised God for God's special blessings to her			
Joseph and Mary travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem			
Mary rode to Bethlehem on a donkey			
The newborn Jesus was wrapped up in special cloths and laid in a manger			
Jesus was born in Bethlehem – no other details given			
An angel announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds who then went to see Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus			
Wise Men from the East came to Jerusalem because they had learned from a star that a new king had been born			
There were 3 kings			
The Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the child Jesus, and knelt and honoured him			
An angel warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, to be safe from Herod			
Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee			

ADVENT LITERATURE

(From *Echoing the Word* – Jan Grajczonek)

Early Years



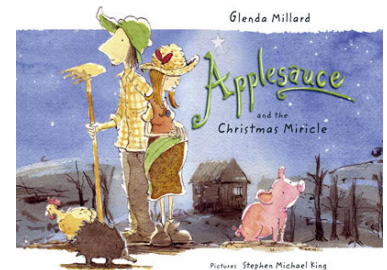
Guess the Baby by Simon French & Illustrated by Donna Rawlins
Publisher: ABCBooks ISBN: 0-7333-0614-4 Hard cover,
0-7333-1084-2 Paperback

Guess the Baby by Simon French is an ideal book to share about babies when introducing the Christmas theme. Young children will immediately identify with the story, as its setting is in the early years' classroom. When Sam brings his baby brother in for "Show and Tell" a *Guess the Baby* competition is launched wherein the students bring in their baby photos for others to guess who belongs to which. Much fun and laughter is experienced as the young students eventually sort all the photos except one and that is of their teacher, Mr Judd.

The children are enraptured by his antics as a baby scribbling on walls, playing with his food etc. This would be an ideal way to enter the world of the baby Jesus. Too often we leave Jesus lying in the manger, not to meet him again until he is lost as a twelve year old in the temple. Having students imagine what his home may have offered in the way of some mischief, or the types of food he may have thrown around, or even how he ate, as they did not have high chairs, or what he played with in Joseph's workshop, would provide much stimulus for some art work. Your own "*Guess the Baby Jesus*" competition could follow as students present the baby Jesus in a particular snapshot of some mischievous act. Have all students guess which student drew which picture and display these in the school library or use them to make a *Baby Album* for Jesus.

Early Years/Middle Primary

Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle by Glenda Millard and illustrated by Stephen Michael King. (2008). Publisher: Lothian Books. ISBN-13: 9780733322495



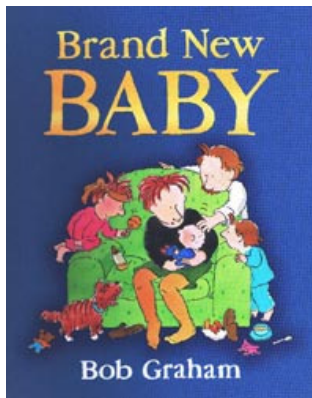
With strong links to the Infancy narratives, *Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle* is an ideal story to share with students during Advent. Set in an Australian rural landscape where drought and bush fires have made their impact on the land and its people, a miracle unfolds. Applesauce is very much affected by the impact of the drought and fires, particularly on how they have affected the lives of Joe and Marigold. Applesauce has no heart for Christmas:

"It was Christmas Eve but tomorrow there would be no celebrations; no special dinner, not even one small gift for Joe and Marigold. It would be a miracle if Christmas came at all."

Owl watched over Applesauce and called out, "Christmas comes from the heart, Pig, from the heart." Up in the hills, the Shepherd family finishing their work for the day noticed something wondrous over Joe and Marigold's place and decided to pay them a visit on their way home. It was then that something miraculous began to unfold and "Applesauce felt something strange happening inside her..."

After sharing the story ask students to list all of the things that happened that brought Christmas to this bush scene. It has nothing to do with Santa and Christmas trees but rather, it is about relationships and sharing of self. Applesauce is very much affected by these many wondrous things.

Middle Primary



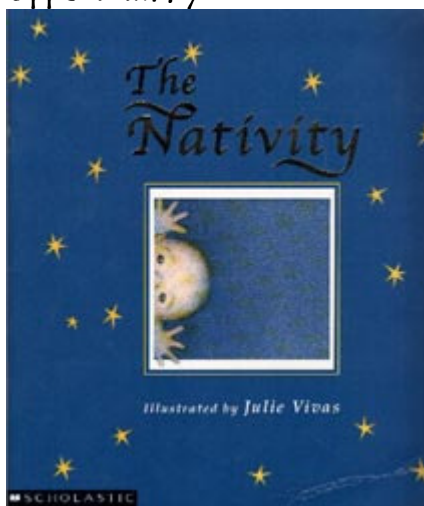
Brand New Baby by Bob Graham

Publisher: Walker Books ISBN: 0-7445-6141-8

Brand New Baby by Bob Graham is a great book to share with middle primary students at the beginning of Advent as it follows a mother's journey of her later months of pregnancy. The text is humorous and real, and the illustrations charming in capturing the many expressions of the varying perspectives of all the characters. Mum has two other children whose endless energy is in sharp contrast to her own increasing tiredness. Dad too, features as he has to take up more household duties which mum can no longer sustain. The journey is an ideal one of expectancy, waiting, preparing – all very real themes of Advent. At this age the students could parallel Mary and Joseph's journey not only of waiting but of travelling, with this family and the

students could imagine some of the feelings Mary is experiencing, her frustrations and growing tiredness and how Joseph could be trying to assist her. A parallel story could be written by the class in Big Book form, illustrated and shared with a young class or shared at a whole school assembly during Advent.

Upper Primary



The Nativity by Julie Vivas

Publisher: Scholastic Australia ISBN: 1-8629-1052-9

A book for older students could be *The Nativity* illustrated by Julie Vivas. This book is a combination of both Matthew and Luke's infancy narratives and this could be part of the exploration into the book. Have students identify those parts belonging to Luke and those to Matthew. The gems in this story are the illustrations. In typical Julie Vivas fashion, the characters express their feelings in comical ways presenting another window into the Christmas story. Compare some of the more classic art works of the Annunciation (many are

available on the web) with that presented in this book. Focus on the angel, his 'elegance' of arrival, his stance, his expression, his attire – very different from the classical interpretations. This story could launch a whole investigation into the ways angels have been presented in art throughout time. Have students focus on physical features, whether the angels are children or adults, male or female. Compare these with Julie Vivas' interpretations and ask students to choose their favourite representation and to justify their choice. You could also have them create their own interpretations of angels and display these in the weekly school newsletter throughout Advent.




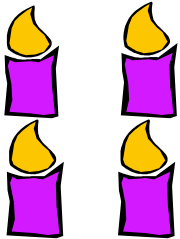
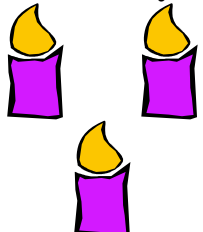

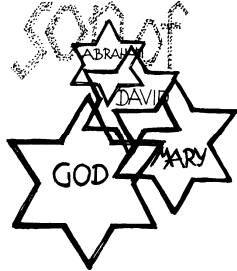

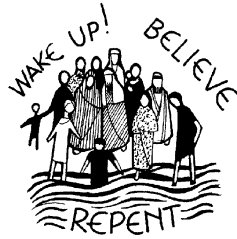
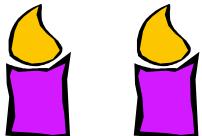



WEBSITES

<http://www.thereligionteacher.com/advent-activities/>

A good webpage to subscribe to. It has some good ideas and they contain Catholic content.

http://www.catholicmom.com/advent_kids.htm

Another good website with ideas that feature Catholic content.

 <p>Matthew 2: 1-12</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS DAY</p>  <p>25 December</p>	 <p>Luke 2: 7 - 20</p>	<p>A place is found – a manger prepared for the baby Jesus Luke 2 : 7 <i>Go to CHRISTMAS DAY</i></p> <p>24 December</p>	<p>There is no room in the Inn Luke 2 : 7 <i>Go Back 3 Spaces</i></p> <p>23 December</p>	<p>PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD</p> <p>22 December</p>	<p>4th Sunday</p>  <p>21 December</p>
<p>3rd Sunday</p>  <p>14 December</p>	<p>You have made a star to place on your Christmas Tree <i>Go forward 3 Spaces</i></p> <p>15 December</p>	 <p>16 December</p>	<p>Mary must travel to Bethlehem on a Donkey <i>Go back 3 Spaces</i></p> <p>17 December</p>	<p>PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD</p> <p>18 December</p>	<p>You have made a Christmas Card that tells part of the Christmas Story <i>Go Forward 2 Spaces</i></p> <p>19 December</p>	<p>20 December</p>
<p>Joseph must go to Bethlehem for the Census Luke 2: 1 - 3 <i>Go back 2 Spaces</i></p> <p>13 December</p>	 <p>12 December</p>	<p>PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD</p> <p>11 December</p>	 <p>10 December</p>	<p>Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth Luke 1: 39 - 45 <i>Go forward 2 Spaces</i></p> <p>9 December</p>	 <p>8 December</p>	<p>2nd Sunday</p>  <p>7 December</p>
<p>1st Sunday</p>  <p>START HERE</p> <p>30 November</p>	<p>You have made an Advent Wreath <i>Go Forward 2 Spaces</i></p> <p>1 December</p>	 <p>2 December</p>	<p>PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD</p> <p>3 December</p>	<p>Mary says “Yes” to God’s Message from the Angel Luke 1: 26 - 38 <i>Go Forward 3 Spaces</i></p> <p>4 December</p>	<p>You know a Christmas Carol that tells part of the Christmas Story <i>Go forward 2 Spaces</i></p> <p>5 December</p>	 <p>6 December</p>

