

YEAR LEVEL	1 & 2
TITLE	Advent - Ready for Jesus
STRAND	CHURCH AND TRADITION
SUGGESTED DURATION	3 - 4 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	What does the Church look like in our community? How can I be like Jesus in our community?



Unit Focus

In this unit students will focus on Advent as a time of waiting and preparation, and build on the arrangements they and their families make in the lead up to Christmas.

Achievement Standards

By the end of **Year 2**, students should be able to:

Identify that the Church celebrates special times in the year.

Unit Outcomes

By the end of the unit students should be able to:

- 1. Recall and share experiences of getting ready for a special event.**
- 2. Describe ways they can prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.**

Key Understandings for Students

- Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas.
- God promised a Saviour.
- Mary and Joseph are Jesus' parents and they prepared for Jesus' birth.
- We prepare for Jesus to come into our lives in a special way during Advent.

Student Context

As students in Years 1 and 2 develop they learn to separate fantasy from reality and to understand the meaning behind symbols. In their intellectual development they are developing the ability to think symbolically and to use symbols, including words and images, in communicating ideas with others. Possessing a vivid imagination, students in Years 1 and 2 respond well to stories and re-enactments of exciting events, which gives rise to lifelong religious images and concepts.

Advent is traditionally known as a time of waiting – waiting for the birth of Jesus Christ that is celebrated at Christmas. Students at this age are aware that special occasions take place in their lives and that they have to wait

long periods of time for some of them to occur eg Christmas, birthday. They are aware that these events require preparation, e.g. celebrating a birthday includes planning the party, sending invitations, shopping for the event, preparing food, organising games, making a cake and welcoming guests. Some students may have experienced the joyful expectation of getting ready for the birth of a baby in their own or a close friend's family and the preparations leading up to this special event.

During Advent, students are surrounded by advertisements in the media and shopping centres that commercialise Christmas. While such advertisements emphasise the value of gift giving, they fail to acknowledge the religious nature of Christmas for Christians and can distort students' understanding and appreciation of the significance of Advent and Christmas.

Theological Background for Teachers

- The liturgical year invites us to celebrate the seasons of the Church year. Different colours and symbols express the mood of each of these seasons. The colour purple used during Advent symbolises the mood of waiting and preparation. The use of light and the colour white symbolises the joy of Christmas. The gradual increase in the number of lighted candles in the Advent wreath can speak powerfully of the hoped for coming of Jesus, the Light of the World at Christmas. A Christmas tree has the potential to be more than decoration i.e. symbolising the coming of Jesus, the Light.
- **God promised a Saviour**
 - In Advent we live out the hope of Christ coming and we look forward to the presence of "God with us" (Emmanuel) through the celebration of Christmas. The history of God's people and the promises made to Israel are brought to fulfilment in the person of Jesus.
- **Mary's preparation for the coming of Jesus**
 - God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. 'Mary responded to God as a member of the Jewish People of God, even before Jesus was conceived, by hearing God's word in the Hebrew scriptures and keeping it. Jesus' conception was possible only because Mary responded to God in this way at the annunciation.' (Education Committee of Australian Bishops' Conference, 1990, 3:100). Mary conceives Jesus through the creative and life giving presence of God, the Holy Spirit.
- **We prepare to celebrate Jesus' coming at Christmas**
 - The infancy narratives are interpreted as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. Through sharing the infancy narratives found in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, the story of the birth of Jesus is recalled and celebrated by Christians.

Scripture

Godly Play Getting Ready For Jesus (Sydney Script)

Godly Play: Mary the Mother of God (Part 2)

Major Assessment Task

Children make individual Advent wreaths to take home at the end of Advent. Each week every child is to create their own prayer and action/symbol to reflect the particular focus of Advent that week. They are to take home and share their prayer/action/symbol with their family and use it to pray with their family before adding it to their wreath back at school.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Read 'Brand New Baby' (Bob Graham) to the class. Draw a story map of the events of the story.

Discuss the concept of waiting in the story.

- Students share in small groups a time of "getting ready" and discuss in groups.
- Make a class Big Book about 'Getting Ready' for a particular event and invite each student to complete their own page.
- Write the word Advent on the board and recall that Advent is the time for Christians to prepare to celebrate Christmas.
- Set the Advent prayer table and explain the symbols and colours and identify the waiting component.
- Godly Play Mary the Mother of God: Part 2. Students respond to the story with personal wonderings.
- Introduce the Advent Wreath as part of the weekly prayer focus to be used in class prayer. Discuss the four candles and their relationship with the four weeks of Advent. Week 1 – watching and waiting; week 2 – preparing; week 3 – rejoicing and bringing joy to others; week 4 – living in hope. Play Andrew Chinn's song "I Light a Candle" each time.
- Each week, students create a symbol or decoration to represent the focus in connection with the advent wreath. Students share with a partner why they have chosen the symbol they have in connection with the weekly focus.
- Godly Play Getting Ready For Jesus. Allow time and resources for children to respond.
- In groups students complete a Lotus Diagram about ways they can get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.
- Brainstorm ways that we can prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas and welcome the Messiah, (e.g. nominate jobs that can be done at home without being asked, prayer, helping others, make a card for someone who may not otherwise get one etc.). Use the list to support students to create an individual prayer about preparing their hearts for Advent. These prayers could be displayed around the prayer space.
- Make and decorate an Advent Wreath to use during Advent.

Prayer Ritual

Arrange the students in a circle around the class Advent wreath.

Leader: Begin with the Sign of the cross.

Ask students to share ways they are preparing their hearts to welcome Jesus. Allow students to refer to previous lessons on this if needed.

Pray the following prayer, incorporating relevant actions where appropriate:

Jesus be in our eyes and in our looking,
Jesus be in our ears and in our listening,
Jesus be in our hands and in our making,
Jesus be in our minds and in our understanding,
Jesus be in our hearts and in our loving.

Leader: Amen.

Conclude with the Sign of the cross.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Godly Play - Getting Ready For Jesus

Appendix 2: Godly Play - Mary Mother of God Part 2.