



## Advent Assembly for Schools

Intro: Priest

*Welcome pupils: Introduce the priests, the reason for taking time to think about our faith and the Theme of Advent.*

- Waiting is part of life and in 2020 we have had to do a lot of waiting
- Waiting to hear if there is going to be a lockdown
- Waiting to hear if schools are going to stay open
- Waiting for Government to tell us if there is a Vaccine
- Waiting to know if we will be allowed to celebrate Christmas in the usual ways

But when we think of waiting for something we are really looking forward to (in more normal times), it is a very different kind of waiting. There is excitement, anticipation, there is a 'wondering *if* everything is going to work out' and '*how* it will work out'.

Just think of something you have looked forward to before . . .

Can you remember what it was like to wait for the day when:

- your next birthday would come
- you would be allowed to get your first phone
- you would be going to a concert
- you would be having a sleep over
- you would be going to something special or somewhere special
- (could add in something specific to year group? e.g. younger classes might remember what it was like waiting for Santa)

*I now invite Fr (name of priest) to speak to us.*

**Season of Advent: priest**

For our time together today, I am going to talk a little bit about how our Church family has always planned for and prepared for the celebration of Christmas.

Well – firstly, this planning and preparation has been so special and significant, that the Church has given the 4 weeks before Christmas a designated title: The Season of Advent.

Advent is the 4 weeks of preparation, anticipation, excitement as we wait and prepare to celebrate the great Feast of Christmas – which was and is the birth - day of Jesus in Bethlehem on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

I want you to listen for a moment to a reading from the Bible – This was written hundreds of years before the first Christmas.

Listen carefully to the way the person writing was trying to imagine what it was going to be like . . . the writer is excited . . . the writer is anticipating what it would be like when God would come into the world, when God would keep His promise to come as our Saviour.

**Pupil**           The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light;  
                  on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.  
                  You have made their gladness greater,  
                  you have made their joy increase;

                  For there is a child born for us, a son given to us  
                  and this is the name they give him:  
                  Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,  
                  Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

**(Priest)** In the Season of Advent, we as a church family of faith prepare as well as possible to celebrate Christmas by focusing on the ‘Great Light’ of God’s presence.

We prepare to celebrate the coming of the Light of Christ into the world – in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago.

**Pupil**           How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, for the LORD has comforted his people.

**Advent Wreath: (Priest)**

If you call into any chapel anywhere in the world during the 4 weeks of Advent, you will not see any flowers, or any major decorations of any kind. What you will see, somewhere towards the front of the altar is a wreath – a very special wreath - which is known as the ‘**Advent Wreath.**’

The wreath is a large ring.

It is decorated with evergreen leaves – the symbol that God’s love for us is evergreen – it never dies  
The ring is a circle without beginning or end because God existed before all time and beyond all time.

This wreath will have 5 candles – 3 purple: (Purple is a penitential colour of the Church and reminds us that Advent is a season of penance); one pink and 1 white.

The white candle will be at the centre of the wreath.

Each Sunday of Advent and throughout that week, a candle will be lit.  
On the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, the first of the purple candles will be lit.  
Then, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, both the first and second purple candles will be lit.

**Priest** But – as you can imagine – by the time we are getting to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, there is a sense of excitement and joy as we are getting closer to 25<sup>th</sup> December.

To mark this joy, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent - as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> purple candles being lit, the pink candle will also be lit. This is referred to as ‘Gaudete Sunday’ or ‘Rejoice Sunday’ as we anticipate the coming joy of the celebration of the birth of Jesus, light of the world at Christmas.

Then on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, the four candles on the wreath are lit - i.e. the 3 purple and 1 pink. The circle of preparation and waiting is nearly over. The Season of Advent is coming to an end for another year and we are nearly ready to celebrate Christmas – when, the white candle will be lit representing the coming of Christ into the world. This is a reminder that Advent is over, that “The people who walked in darkness has seen a great light.”

### **Closing Prayer: Priest**

Girls and boys, young women and men, you are the next generation of young members of our Catholic Church.

I ask you in the Season of Advent to remember to say a prayer for different people:

- For families who may be finding it financially difficult at this time
- For all the care workers who support people in their own homes, in residential homes or in the hospitals
- For those trying to find a vaccine for the Covid-19 Coronavirus
- Anyone who is feeling lonely at this time, anyone who is struggling a little
- For those who are sad because someone close to them has died during the year
- And I ask you in a special way to pray for your teachers, the staff of (name of school) and those who help you in your life at this time.

Thank you for your attention throughout these last number of minutes.

We might just take a quiet moment to think of our families – especially those we live with and we pray God’s blessing on them for Advent and for Christmas. (*Quiet moment*)

Can I ask you now to pray with me the prayer that Jesus gave us – the prayer that says we are all brothers and sisters in God’s family as we say:

Our Father . . .

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.