6.8 Advent to Christmas: A Time for Longing & Fulfilment

This unit explores the liturgical season of Advent as a time of waiting, longing and preparation. The Jesse Tree is introduced and through it the story is told, of the people of faith in Scripture, who prepared and longed for the coming of the Saviour. The unit focuses on Christmas as the fulfilment of God’s promise of salvation and explores some ways the Catholic community celebrates Christmas. Students are invited to reflect on the birth of Jesus, when God became human and lived among us.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Values & Attitudes**  *Students will demonstrate that they are:* | **Knowledge & Understandings**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* | **Skills**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* |
| L3.2 able to value the importance of sign, symbol and ritual within the liturgical life of the Church | describe how the liturgical year uses signs, symbols and rituals to celebrate the presence of God | analyse the use of signs, symbols and rituals in celebrations of the liturgical seasons |

Syllabus Outcomes  
Liturgical Year – Stage 3

Classroom Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

* identify and describe people in the Scriptures who longed for the coming of the Saviour
* describe ways in which the Catholic Church celebrates Advent and Christmas
* explain the significance for Christians of the celebration of Christmas

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scripture | Doctrine |
| Luke 1:26-36 *The Annunciation*  Matthew 1:18-25 *The Birth of Jesus*  **Related Scripture**  Scripture listed in Unit Content 1  *Note: It is necessary to do ‘Related’ Scripture; however the Scripture is selected.* | * Jesus is the promised Saviour * Jesus is the Son of God * Jesus, the Son of God, became human * Mary is the Mother of Jesus |

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

Remember as a child you longed for the school holidays or Christmas or for your birthday when you could celebrate.

As a teacher you would still be longing for the school holidays and probably for Christmas celebrations with your family. Probably not longing too much for your 40th or 50th or 60th birthday!

* What do you long for these days that bring you fulfilment?
* How does God fit in to these longings?

We do not often discuss the longings, the waitings, the darkness we feel deep within ourselves. Perhaps we think that these feelings are uniquely our own or else not the kind of thing to be shared. Yet they are our common ground for celebrating Advent. Ultimately, all the longing and waiting in our lives leads toward the Lord. The challenge is to let our longings and waiting shape our prayer.

* What are some key words and images that capture for you the longing and waiting of Advent?

Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are included below as information for teachers. They present the Church’s teachings contained in this unit.**

1. The Word became flesh *so* *that thus we might know God’s love*: “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him”. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”.

**460** The Word became flesh to make us “partakers of the divine nature”: “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God”. “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God”. “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods”.

**673** Since the Ascension Christ’s coming in glory has been imminent, even though “it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority”. This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are ‘delayed’.

Scripture: Background Information

**Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation**

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Annunciation of Jesus’ birth is made to Joseph by an angel in a dream. In that account, Mary is not portrayed as a central character. However in Luke’s Gospel, Mary is portrayed as being much more involved. The two different accounts of the Annunciation of Jesus present different insights. The Lukan account focuses on Mary. The writer of Luke’s Gospel introduces Mary as a young girl just betrothed, probably aged about 12 or 13 years. She is presented as deeply disturbed, even afraid of the experience she is having, although with enough confidence to ponder within herself what it all could mean. The text suggests that, like us, Mary had to reflect on the events of her life to understand what was happening. Most of the text is about the child she will conceive. Only at the beginning and the end of the Annunciation narrative do we have some insight into Mary’s reaction. The very last verse indicates that she is willing to be part of the event even if she does not yet totally understand. She agrees, and calmly says – “yes, let it happen to me”. All of this is in keeping with the Jubilee theme of the Gospel of Luke, that God’s abundance is available to the least expected. A virgin from the obscure town of Nazareth will conceive and bear a son who will be great, the Son of God.

**Matthew 1:18-24 The Birth of Jesus**

Only two of the four Gospels tell of the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ birth and both are different. Luke focuses very much on Mary and has the Annunciation to her, while here in Matthew’s Gospel Mary is passive and the Annunciation is to Joseph in a dream. It would seem that both writers are in their own way making sense of the Church’s traditional belief that Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus; rather, Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit.

Mary’s pregnancy is presented as unexpected. Both Gospels agree that Mary and Joseph are betrothed at the time of her pregnancy. Betrothal means husband and wife in fact, although they had not come to live together. Betrothals were often made while the couple were very young, especially the woman. So their living together did not take place until the woman was sexually mature – generally about twelve years of age. So was Mary twelve? Possibly. According to the law Joseph could divorce her for her apparent infidelity to him. This was, of course, very hard for the woman who becomes virtually unmarriageable and thus has no hope of children or financial support. The pregnancy is explained to Joseph in a dream by an angel. Matthew quotes from the Hebrew bible and here he quotes the prophet Isaiah. What Matthew is doing is historicising the prophet. The eighth century prophet Isaiah and the people of his time were hoping for a king from the Davidic royal family to lead them to greatness as David had done. It must be remembered that the writers of these infancy narratives of Jesus in Matthew and Luke were certainly not eyewitnesses to the events and are relying heavily on the oral tradition as handed down to them. They also bring their own understanding of this oral tradition into their accounts.

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

**In Tradition: *To Know, Worship and Love*,Year 6, p181-182 Preface: Advent 1**

With the coming of Jesus at Christmas, Jesus shared in our human life so that we could share in the divine life of the Trinity. The birth of the Christ in Bethlehem was the beginning of a new dimension in the relationship between God and humankind. At Christmas we celebrate not only the unending love God has for us but the love we should have for others. We especially reach out to those who are ill, lonely, hungry, homeless or in need through prayer and service.

The emphasis of the Christian season is not so much on the Bethlehem event of 2000 years ago but on Christ present here among us today.

Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

**Celebration is a key part of Religious Education. The following suggestions provide opportunities throughout the unit for celebration in prayer and liturgy. Most of these suggestions are included as ‘teaching/learning’ activities in Unit Content sections.**

* Tell the story ‘Our Advent Prayer Place’ as you set the prayer place for the season of Advent. See Resource Sheet 1 for suggested script.
* During this unit, each day students pray together ‘Our Prayer’ (KWL, Year 6, p182).
* Students participate in prayer celebrations around the Jesse Tree. Throughout the unit, regular prayer sessions could include a focus on one or more of the people represented on the Jesse tree. Use Scripture reading about the focus person. Use students’ prayers from Unit Content 1 for Prayers of Intercession. Use an Advent hymn.
* During Advent time, in class prayer, use the following from the Mass.

Our Father … deliver us from evil.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil,

graciously grant peace in our days,

that, by the help of your mercy,

we may be always free from sin

and safe from all distress,

as we await the blessed hope

and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

* Use Luke 2:1-7 in a guided meditation, ‘One Starry Night in Bethlehem’, *Guided Meditations for Children,* Vol 1 or the re-published combined volume - *Guided Meditations for Children* (2002) by Jane Reehorst

Assessment

**Interim Assessment Statement 2014**

The identification of Teaching/Learning strategies as ‘suggested assessment’ has been removed from the 3-6 RE curriculum. The type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is gathered will vary, depending on such factors as; the outcomes being assessed, the evidence being gathered, the teaching and learning activity, context and students’ learning needs (NSW Board of Studies, <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/k-6-assessment-strategies/>) .

Assessment in Religious Education is based on the same principles as in other key learning areas. Please refer to the CEO Sydney site supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the context of the NSW BOS Syllabus. At this site <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/professional-learning-modules/home> professional learning modules are provided to support teachers as they engage with the NSW BOS Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum.

**Module 4, Assessment and Planning** explores the principles of effective assessment ***for***, ***as*** and ***of*** learning and considers a range of strategies and methods for assessing student learning. Activities focus on moving beyond assessment as an index of learning, towards assessment that motivates, enhances learning and achieves deeper understanding to meet the diverse learning needs of all as students. Participants are encouraged to reflect on assessment as a driver for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment**

In Year 3-6 Religious Education Curriculum, both Syllabus Outcomes and Classroom Outcomes are key reference points for decisions about students’ progress and achievement. Classroom outcomes are more specific to the unit content. Unit Content statement and *Students will learn* statements in each unit should also be taken into account in planning and developing learning and assessment opportunities. Outcomes and Unit Content Statements are derived from Syllabus objectives.

Effective Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith (Scripture, doctrine, traditions, prayer and sacraments) and nurturing the faith of the child. There is no attempt to assess the child’s faith. Assessment is concerned with skills, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith taught in the curriculum and supported in the religious life of the school.

Resources

***To Know Worship and Love* - Year 6, Chapter 19 (2003), James Goold House Publications, Melbourne, Victoria**

Fox M, (1992), *With Love at Christmas*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide SA

Kearney P, (1984), *Turn it All Around* CD, Crossover Music, Mittagong NSW

Mangan M, (1995), *Follow the Star*, Litmus Productions, Albany Creek

Reehorst J, (1986), *Guided Meditations for Children*, Brown Co Publishers, USA.

Reehorst J, (2002), *Guided Meditations for Children*, Harcourt Religion Publishers, USA

White D, O’Brien K and Todd S, (2003), *Into the Deep*, Rich Teaching Strategies for the Religious Education Classroom KD Publications, Marayong NSW

Wild M, (1991), *Let the Celebrations Begin*, Omnibus Books, Norwood SA

Wintour R, (2003), *Christmas Celebrations*, Mountjoy Enterprises Qld

[www.franciscanfriarstor.com](http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com) (for information about the Christmas crib)

Key to Symbol

✪ denotes higher order activity

Unit Content 1

In the Scriptures we learn about people who waited for the coming of the Saviour.

*Students will learn:*

* about people in the Scriptures who waited for the Saviour
* to identify the special qualities and deeds of people in Scripture who waited upon the promise of the Lord

Unit Content: Background Information

Students recognise their place in their own family and its history/ancestry. During Advent we are reminded of people who are part of Jesus’ family story, and the covenant that God made with God’s people. God’s faithfulness and their patience and hope are part of God’s message. Advent is a season of joyful expectation. Great figures who dominate the Advent Scripture readings are Isaiah, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary.

The Jesse Tree is a symbol from the Middle Ages. It comes from the words “A shoot shall come up from the stump of Jesse, and from its roots a branch will bear fruit” (Isaiah 11:1). Jesse was the father of King David and the Bible tells us that Jesus will be born “of the house of David”. By going back to David’s father, Jesse, and his ancestors, the Jesse Tree can be thought of as Jesus’ family tree. Each symbol used on the Jesse tree depicts a story or person of faith from the Old Testament leading towards the fulfilment of the prophecy of the coming of a Saviour. The Scripture stories tell us of the preparation of the people of God throughout history for the coming of Jesus. The Jesse Tree story is a main focus in this unit. As it revisits a number of scripture stories K-2, it is suggested that teachers borrow the Big Books from K-2 that are about the people in the Jesse tree story and make these available for the students during the unit .

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Tell the story ‘Our Advent Prayer Place’ as you set the prayer place for the season of Advent. See Resource Sheet 1 for suggested script.
* Tell the story of the Jesse Tree using Resource Sheet 2 and suggested materials. This story will need to be told in a number of sessions over a period of time. Teachers will need to decide the timing that best suits their class and school context. Generally wondering would be included after each character is presented. See suggested wondering throughout script (Resource Sheet 2).
* Activities which allow the students time to explore the Jesse Tree story could be done after one or a number of parts of the story or at the end of the whole story. These opportunities should include a choice for students and where possible follow their interests. Some suggestions are:
* Artwork representing some part of, or theme in a character’s story
* Drama. Students in groups or individually decide on a character’s story and represent it through acting, miming etc.
* Big Book reading for students who would like to revisit stories.
* Using the Scripture passages listed below and Big Books borrowed from K-2, students work in threes to:

- identify the main character/s.

* + retell the key events of the story. (Some will need assistance – resources e.g. Big books)
  + write a prayer related to the character and what he or she is known for, eg “Like Moses who first brought God’s commandments to us, may we ….”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Noah (Big Book in K) | Genesis 7:1-5, 17-23, 8-17 |
| Abraham & Sarah (Big Book in K) | Genesis 12: 1-7 & Hebrews 11:8 |
| Joseph (the dreamer) (Big Book in Yr 1) | Genesis 37:2-36; 39:1-46:34 |
| Moses – Birth (Big Book, K-2) | Exodus 2:1-10 |
| Moses - Burning Bush (Big Book, K-2) | Exodus 3:1-12 |
| Moses - The Exodus (Big Book, K-2) | Exodus 14-15 |
| Moses - Ten Commandments | Exodus 20:1-17 |
| Ruth | Ruth 1:16-18, 22 |
| Jesse | Isaiah 11:1-2 |
| David anointed as King (Big Book in K) | 1 Sam 16: 1-13 |
| David and Goliath (Big Book in K) | 1 Sam 17 |
| Isaiah | Isaiah 7:14-15; 9:5-6 |
| Jonah (Big Book in K) | Jonah 1-4, (4 short chapters) |
| John the Baptist | Matthew 3:1-11 |
| Mary | Luke1:26-38 |
| Joseph of Nazareth | Matthew 1: 18-24 |
| Jesus | Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-24 |

* Construct a ‘living’ Jesse Tree where students act out in character the person from the Scripture they have chosen and tell his/her story and how the person believed in God: “Hello! My name is Abraham…” OR
* In a peer teaching context, each group presents their character’s story in drama, PowerPoint, art, etc.
* Students use ‘Think Pad’ strategy from *Into the Deep,* p83 to express their understanding of these Scripture passages using words, symbols, pictures and connections to life.
* Each group writes three “Did you know?” questions about their Scripture character to share with other groups.
* Students participate in prayer celebrations around the Jesse Tree. Throughout the unit regular prayer sessions could include a focus on one or more of the people represented on the Jesse tree. Use Scripture reading about the focus person. Use students’ prayers from earlier activity in this secion for Prayers of Intercession. Use an Advent hymn.
* Discuss the word ‘longing’. Name an experience of longing. What did it feel like? What did you do? What were your expectations? Relate to the stories from Scripture used for the Jesse Tree. Think about: How does the Church show its longing for Jesus during Advent.
* Name people who waited for the coming of the Saviour. Retell their stories. What do their stories tell us about their belief in God?
* Record ways in which our Church celebrates Advent/Christmas in sign, symbol and ritual and explain their significance for Christians.

Unit Content 2

**During the Advent season we continue to long for the coming of Jesus Christ:**

* + **in our lives**
  + **in the celebration of Christmas**
  + **at the time “when Christ will come again in his glory”.**

*Students will learn:*

* about the ‘Reign of God’ as the fulfillment of God’s love, peace and justice
* to identify ways they can be signs of God’s presence in our world, bringing God’s love, peace and justice

Unit Content: Background Information

The feast of Christmas is about the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when God took on human nature and became man in the person of Jesus Christ. The writers of the Gospel accounts looked back to the birth of Jesus from the perspective of his life, death and Resurrection (the Paschal Mystery).

We live now with the presence of Jesus among us through the Holy Spirit. Our time is the time of what is, and the promise of what is to come: the fullness of the Reign of God. ‘God with us’ is both a present reality and a future event. This is a mystery of our faith. ‘Emmanuel’ from the Hebrew, ‘God is with us’ is frequently found in Christmas carols, referring to the presence of God revealed in the life of Jesus.

The Advent liturgy speaks to this tension and reminds us that we are called to work together towards the fullness of the Reign of God.

“Now we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ our Lord will come again in his Glory”. (Advent Preface 1)

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Having explored the texts about figures from Scripture listed in Unit Content 1, students now identify the meaning and relevance of their stories for our lives today. In small groups of 2 or three, students work to brainstorm and agree upon one or two key attributes of a selected character from the scripture (Unit Content 1). They then identify how the attribute/s would still be important and applicable today e.g. Abraham, trusted God’s promise, left his home land – and he found God in each place. Trusting in God and following God’s call is still important for us today.
* Using newspapers/magazines, family photos – find representations of people who are signs of God’s presence in the world today. What do their stories tell about their belief in God and about the belief that Jesus will come again?
* The following matrix may be used as an independent strategy or in pairs or small groups.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | In our everyday lives | This Christmas |
| How are we the presence of the Lord in our world today? |  |  |
| In what ways are we bearers of the peace of the Reign of God? |  |  |
| How are we signs of God’s justice? |  |  |

* Students construct a time line of their primary school years using photos, documents, and memorabilia. Reflect on significant events and significant people from their seven years of primary school as they begin the time of preparation and waiting for high school. Identify signs of God’s presence in the significant moments of their primary school life.
* Read the story ‘Let the Celebrations Begin’ by Margaret Wild. Emphasise that the characters in the story did not know the exact time the war would end. They prepared and waited in joyful hope for their liberation. How do we, as members of the Church, “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ”? Journal a response to the question: How do I wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ?
* During Advent time, in class prayer, use the following from the Mass.

Our Father … deliver us from evil.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil,

graciously grant peace in our days,

that, by the help of your mercy,

we may be always free from sin

and safe from all distress,

as we await the blessed hope

and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Discuss the relevance of the underlined phrases to our longing for the coming of Jesus at the end of time.

Unit Content 3

Our Church celebrates Christmas as the fulfillment of the promised Saviour in Jesus.

At Christmas we remember that God came to earth and became one of us.

*Students will learn:*

* about the scriptural accounts of the annunciation and birth stories in Matthew and Luke’s Gospels
* to explore the significance of Christmas for Christians including the celebration of Mass as a holy day of obligation, gift giving, and the Christmas crib
* about the role of Mary in the Incarnation

Unit Content: Background Information

During the Advent and Christmas seasons we are challenged to live the Word of God each day.

The Annunciation refers to the announcement made by the Angel Gabriel to Mary. God had chosen Mary to be the mother of Jesus, to bring the Word of God to life. Mary had the freedom to accept this role. She models discipleship in her ‘Yes’ to the will of God, as the bearer of Jesus to the world, and by living a life of faith and courage.

At Christmas we celebrate our belief that the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, became human and lived among us. This is called the Incarnation. Christmas celebrates the fulfilment of God’s promise to send a Saviour. Jesus inaugurates God’s reign of justice, peace and love. In Jesus we discover what we and all humanity are called to be.

The term ‘Christ Mass’ (Christmas) refers to the Eucharist celebrated on Christmas Day in honour of Christ’s birth. This is a key feast in the Church’s life and a Holy Day of Obligation.

The symbol of the crib, empty until the vigil Mass of Christmas Day reinforces our feelings of anticipation and expectation. The empty manger challenges us to examine where Christ is in our lives. What part can we play in announcing God’s presence in our school, our parish and in our community?

The image of light in the prayers of the Christmas liturgy speaks of incarnation and salvation. Christ is the light of all people. An opening prayer from the Liturgy of Christmas Day speaks of the reality we are celebrating.

Father, we are filled with new light

by the coming of Your Word among us.

May the light of faith

shine in our words and actions.

(Dawn Mass, Christmas Day)

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Use Dictogloss strategy to explore Luke 1:26-36. Students record keywords independently, students form pairs or small groups to share keywords and to reconstruct the text. This may be recorded on butcher’s paper and displayed, for student observation.
* Referring to Luke 1:26-36. Students choose a medium to re-tell the passage. They use this passage to help them explain what Christians celebrate at Christmas.
* Introduce Matthew’s Annunciation to Joseph and birth story (Mt 1:18-25). Refer to Scripture Background: Information for this piece of Scripture. Explain that the different authors of the two Gospels tell us of different events according to their purpose and their audience. Use engaging processes for students to identify and discuss similarities and differences between the two accounts.
* Compare and contrast the Infancy narratives, Mt.1:18 - 2:12 and Lk 2:1-20. Students work in small groups. Findings recorded on matrix (Resource Sheet 3) or on a Venn Diagram.
* Read *Our Heritage* – *The First Christmas Crib* (KWL Year 6, p184). Further information may be obtained from: [www.franciscanfriarstor.com](http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com)
  + What was St Francis of Assisi trying to teach his followers?
  + Why does the Crib form an integral part of the Christmas liturgy?
  + Ask students why they think Jesus came as a human person with a human heart into our world.
* Use Luke 2:1-7 in a guided meditation, ‘One Starry Night in Bethlehem’, *Guided Meditations for Children,* Vol 1 or the re-published combined volume - *Guided Meditations for Children* (2002) by Jane Reehorst. Students journal some of their thoughts, feelings and beliefs around this story. Christmas artwork and craft could be integrated with this guided meditation.
* Read *With Love at Christmas* by Mem Fox.

- Students explain the old woman’s gift.

* As a class, list Christmas celebrations/traditions in students’ families, parishes (Christmas Mass, gift-giving, Christmas crib. Explain to students the meaning of the word ‘Christmas’. Highlight the Mass as the central celebration of Christmas for the Catholic community.
* Engage class in ‘Audience Participation’ strategy, eg ‘Behind the Views’ – *Christmas* *Celebrations* by Rina Wintour, p40.
* Students engage with the school’s or parish’s gift-giving program and / or come up with ideas of their own e.g. making a gift voucher for someone, for babysitting, car-washing, raking leaves, room tidying etc.
* Read ‘A Most Unusual Gift’ (KWL Year 6, p182-184). Describe the actions/qualities of the two women in the story. How did the actions of each change the other? How does this reflect the celebratory spirit of Christmas?
* Students import nativity images from an internet search engine and incorporate an appropriate Scripture quote to make a Christmas bookmark or card.

**Resource Sheet 1**

**6.8 Our Advent Prayer Place**

**YOU WILL NEED:**

\* a small table

\* a box or basket, containing a ***purple*** cloth, Bible, bookstand, candle and empty Jesse tree, next to your chair

See Jesse Tree story script for suggestions for ‘tree’.

*Invite children to sit reverently in a circle in the part of the classroom where you intend to set up a prayer place. Begin by saying…*

**As Advent begins we’re going to change our prayer place. This is a place where we can be quiet with God. We can listen to God and pray.**

**During the season of Advent we’ll have some different objects and symbols to help us to pray.**

*Cover the table with the* ***purple*** *cloth.*

**At this time of the Church’s year we place a *purple* cloth on the table.**

**Purple is the colour for getting ready. Advent is a time for getting ready. Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year.**

**During Advent we are getting ready for Christmas and also for Christ’s coming again at the end of time .**

*Hold the Bible up for all children to see. Be conscious of handling the Bible in a reverent manner.*

**The Bible is our special book. At this time in the Church’s year we tell the stories of people from long ago who were getting ready for the birth of Jesus.**

*Demonstrate how to carry, lift and hold the Bible in a reverent manner.*

*Place the Bible on a stand on the table.*

*Take out the candle and show to children.*

**The candle reminds us that Jesus is always with us. We will light the candle when we are talking and praying to God or when we are listening to the stories from the Bible.**

*Place the candle on the table.*

*Take out the Jesse tree and show to children.*

**Advent is a time of longing, waiting and preparing. Using this Jesse tree we’re going to read and learn about people in the Bible who waited for the Saviour, promised by God.**

**During Advent we too long for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and a t the end of time.**

**Other symbols may be added appropriate to the season and unit.**

**This is our prayer place for Advent.**

*Point to the symbols and objects as you name them again.*

**It has a *purple* cloth, a Bible, a candle, and a Jesse tree.**

**Resource Sheet 2**

**The Jesse Tree**

**YOU WILL NEED:**

* Purple cloth for underlay
* Christmas tree or branch of tree in bucket with rocks or sand or drawing of tree with branches on cardboard on wall
* 2D illustrated symbols (see RE Online, Primary Curriculum and Resources) laminated to put on Jesse Tree
* Big Books (borrowed from K-2)

*Old Testament Stories (K), Joseph the Dreamer (Yr* 1), Moses (K-2), King David (K), Jonah (K),

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Scripture references on which stories are based. Students are not expected to read all of these as some are a number of chapters.** | **Image** |
| Noah | Genesis 7:1-5, 17-23, 8-17 | ark |
| Abraham & Sarah | Genesis 12: 1-7 & Hebrews 11:8 | stars in the sky |
| Joseph (the dreamer) | Genesis 37:2-36; 39:1-46:34 | coat of many colours |
| Moses - Birth | Exodus 2:1-10 | Tablets of the Commandments |
| Moses - Burning Bush | Exodus 3:1-12 |
| Moses - The Exodus | Exodus 14-15 |
| Moses - Ten Commandments | Exodus 20:1-17 |
| Ruth | Ruth 1:16-18, 22 | gathered barley |
| Jesse | Isaiah 11:1-2 | branch growing from the roots of tree |
| David anointed as King | 1 Sam 16: 1-13 | crown |
| David and Goliath | 1 Sam 17 |
| Isaiah | Isaiah 7:14-15; 9:5-6 | scroll with words of Isaiah |
| Jonah | Jonah 1-4, (4 short chapters) | large fish |
| John the Baptist | Matthew 3:1-11 | camel hair coat |
| Mary | Luke1:26-38 | mother & child |
| Joseph of Narareth | Matthew 1: 18-24 | carpentry tools |
| Jesus | Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-24 | child in manger |

*Students are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. Go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Begin by rolling the purple cloth in front of you and say:*

**Purple is the colour for getting ready. It is the colour of Advent which is the beginning of the Church’s year. In the season of Advent we get ready to celebrate the great feast of Christmas. Advent is also a time of waiting, longing and preparing for Christ’s coming at the end of time.**

*Bring over the tree in bucket or put up cardboard with drawing of tree on wall.*

**During Advent we use symbols to help us prepare for the coming of the Saviour. These symbols remind us of people who waited and prepared the way for the long awaited Saviour.**

*Pointing to the tree say:*

**The name Jesse Tree comes from the words of the prophet Isaiah (11:1-2), “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots”. Jesse was the father of King David and the Bible tells us that Jesus would be born “of the house of David”.**

*Sit back and say:*

**As we prepare for the great feast of Christmas, we remember some of God’s people who recognised that God was with them through some surprising events in their lives.**

*Bring out, one at a time, laminated illustrations of symbols representing the people of God mentioned in the story. Use the scripts below as you place the symbols on the branches. The students may be able to help you recall / re-tell the stories. You might only do two or three at a time. Engage the students with recalling and wondering about each of the symbols and the characters’ stories. Students might wish to hear / read some of the stories again. The K-2 Big Books could be utilized for this purpose.*

*Noah and the Ark - image of the Ark and animals*

**The story of Noah is a very old story. Evil and violence had filled the earth. God told Noah to make an ark for himself, his family and two of all the animals and birds. He was to take food and provisions. Then waters came and flooded the earth and washed away all the evil people and all living creatures. Noah, who had been faithful to God, and all his family and every creature on the ark were saved. Eventually the waters dropped and the earth dried and Noah and his family and all the animals came out of the ark. God blessed Noah and his children and told them to “be fruitful and fill the earth.” God made a covenant with Noah and all creatures, promising that never again would the earth be flooded and all life washed away. He placed a rainbow in the sky which would be a reminder of this covenant God made with the earth.**

**I wonder if you remember any more of the story of Noah and the Ark.**

*(You might borrow the Kindergarten Big Book ‘Old Testament Stories’ for students to revisit the story.)*

**I wonder if you know another time when God told people to “be fruitful and fill the earth.”**

**I wonder what the rainbow in the sky means to you.**

*Abraham and Sarah - image - stars in the sky*

**The history of God’s chosen people begins with Abraham and Sarah. In faith Abraham and Sarah obeyed God’s command to leave their home country. On their journey they discover that God is with them in every place. Abraham is promised as many descendants as the stars in the heavens. Although very old at the time Sarah has a son, Isaac, who marries Rebekah and they have children and these children have children and so begins the great family which is as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore.**

*(You might borrow the Kindergarten Big Book ‘Old Testament Stories’ for students to revisit the story).*

**I wonder if there’s something else you can remember about Abraham and Sarah.**

**I wonder if anyone remembers Sarah’s reaction when God first told them they would be the parents of a great nation.**

**I wonder what you like about the story of Abraham and Sarah***.*

*Joseph – image – coat of many colours*

**Joseph was the son of Jacob. One day Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colours. Joseph’s eleven brothers were jealous, and so they kidnapped him and sold him into slavery in Egypt. There, with God looking after him, Joseph rose to a position of power. When famine came to the land of Joseph’s father and brothers, they went to Egypt for food. Joseph was the governor. He gave his brothers plenty of food but he also tested them to see if they had changed. When he saw that they had changed he greeted them with the words, “I am your brother Joseph.”**

*(The story is worth re-visiting in the Year One Big Book ‘Joseph the Dreamer’). Students could be encouraged to generate their own wondering statements).*

**I wonder if you remember anything else in the story of Joseph.**

**I wonder how the brothers felt when Joseph greeted them as their brother.**

**I wonder how Joseph’s father felt when he saw his son again.**

*Moses – image – Tablets of the Commandments*

**Moses was one of the greatest leaders of the Hebrew people. God chose Moses to free the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. As Moses tended his flock near the mountain of Horeb, he saw a burning bush and heard the voice of God telling him to take off his sandals as he was standing on holy ground.** **It was here that God called him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.**

**You may remember the story of Moses asking Pharaoh to let his people go. Finally Moses was able to lead the people out of Egypt, through the Red Sea and into freedom. It was here in the desert on Mt Sinai that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the laws that guide us all in the best way to live.**

*(You might borrow the K-2 Big Book ‘Moses’ for students to revisit the story).*

**I wonder if anyone remembers the story of Moses’ birth.**

**I wonder which part of Moses’ story you like the most.**

**I wonder why Moses is considered such an important leader of God’s people.**

*Ruth – image – gathered barley*

**The symbol of gathered barley reminds us of Ruth who collected grain from the fields of an Israelite farmer. Do you remember Ruth’s story? She was a foreigner who married an Israelite. After her husband’s death Ruth looked after her mother-in-law, Naomi and returned to her husband’s land and remained faithful to his family and God. Later she married the farmer, Boaz in whose fields she worked, and God blessed her goodness by giving her a son named, Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of the great Jewish king David.**

**I wonder why the story of Ruth is important.**

**I wonder what we can learn from Ruth and her life.**

*Jesse – image – branch growing from roots of a tree*

**It was in the family line of Jesse that Jesus was born in fulfilment of the prophecies.**

**Many years after Jesse lived, the prophet Isaiah would speak of the coming of the Messiah and would trace Jesus’ ancestry back to Jesse, the father of King David.**

*King David – image – crown*

**God chose David to be king. David had great faith in God. He trusted God and tried to obey him. David made many mistakes, but he continued to turn to God for forgiveness and guidance. Israel became a strong nation under his leadership.**

*(You might borrow the Kindergarten Big Book ‘King David’ for students to revisit the story.)*

**I wonder if you can remember the story of David being anointed as King or the story of David and Goliath.**

**I wonder what we can learn about God… about David in each of these stories.**

**I wonder what else you know about King David.**

*Isaiah – image – scroll of the prophet with words from Isaiah*

**Isaiah is one of the great prophets in the Old Testament, who gave hope to the Israelites that peace, would come to their nation. He also spoke of the birth of a special child who would be called ‘Emmanuel’ which means ‘God is with us’.**

*Jonah – image – large fish*

**Jonah is the prophet who does not want to go where God sends him. He tries to run away from God. He boards a boat, God sends a storm and Jonah is tossed overboard and swallowed by a large fish. Jonah prays to God to forgive him. He is saved and he then does what God wants and takes the message of salvation to the people of Ninevah.**

*(You might borrow the Kindergarten Big Book ‘Jonah’ for students to revisit the story.)*

**I wonder what else you remember about Jonah.**

**I wonder why Jonah didn’t want to follow God’s call and go to Ninevah.**

**I wonder if you’ve ever felt like that.**

*John the Baptist – image – camel hair coat*

**John was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He was Jesus’ relative. He announced the coming of Jesus. When John grew up he preached that the people should turn away from sin and be baptized. He baptized many people in the river Jordan, including Jesus.**

*Mary – image – mother and child*

**God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary in Nazareth. The angel told her that God was with her and that she was chosen among all women to bear God’s son, whom she should name Jesus. Her trust and faith in God enabled her to do what God asked of her, to be the mother of God’s son, Jesus.**

*You may wish to include reading and work on Luke 1:26-38 – The Annunciation at this point - see Unit Content 3*

*Joseph of Nazareth – image – carpentry tools*

**Joseph, a descendant of David, worked as a carpenter. An angel appeared to him and told him that Mary had conceived a son by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this son would be named Jesus. He loved and protected Jesus, the Son of God, as his foster son. He also loved and cared for Mary, his wife.**

*You may wish to include reading and work on Matthew 1:18-25 – The Birth of Jesus - see Unit Content 3*

*Jesus – image – child in manger*

**We know the rest of the story. God was faithful to the promise and Jesus, son of God was born in Bethlehem.**

*You may wish to include reading and work on Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18-24 – The Birth of Jesus - see Unit Content*

**I wonder what the birth of Jesus means for you.**

**I wonder how the prophets and holy people knew that God was speaking to them.**

**I wonder how we can know what God is saying to us.**

**I wonder how we prepare ourselves for the season of Christmas.**

**I wonder how we can be a sign of God’s presence in our world.**

**I wonder if you know people in this world who point the way to Jesus.**

**Resource Sheet 3**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **QUESTIONS** | **Matthew 1:17-2:12** | **Luke 2:1-20** |
| 1 | In what city was Jesus born? |  |  |
| 2 | Where was Jesus born? |  |  |
| 3 | Where did Mary and Joseph live? |  |  |
| 4 | Why did they go to Bethlehem? |  |  |
| 5 | What ruler is mentioned? |  |  |
| 6 | Is a star mentioned? |  |  |
| 7 | Are angels mentioned? |  |  |
| 8 | Who arrives in Bethlehem? |  |  |
| 9 | What do they bring? |  |  |
| 10 | What voices of authority are quoted? |  |  |