

Wait For The Saviour – He Will Come!

In *Wait For The Saviour – He Will Come!* students learn that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the birth of the Son of God at Christmas. They explore the writings of the prophet Isaiah and the symbolism of the Jesse Tree to reveal signs of God's presence in the lives of the Old Testament people and in their own lives today. At the conclusion of this unit the students are asked to develop a personal action for celebrating Christmas.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1961 God, our Creator and Redeemer, chose Israel for himself to be his people and revealed his Law to them, thus preparing for the coming of Christ.
(See *Compendium #8 What are the stages of God's revelation?*)

#134 All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and this one book is Christ, 'because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ' (Hugh of St Victor).
(See *Compendium #18 Why does Sacred Scripture teach the truth?*)

#1846 The gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners. The angel announced to Joseph: 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins'.
(See *Compendium #73 How should we understand the reality of sin?*)

#437 To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: 'To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'. From the beginning he was 'the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world', conceived as 'holy' in Mary's virginal womb.
(See *Compendium #82 Why is Jesus called 'Christ'?*)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

During Advent, Christians listen to and read about great figures who waited in hope for the Messiah – Isaiah, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary. The longing and waiting included times of darkness, uncertainty and tension as well as moments of anticipation, of dreams and of deep trust. Advent is a season in which we can reflect on these experiences in our faith life and consider what God is asking of us. What are some of the Advent images and words that capture your longing and hopes?

The emphasis in Christmas is not so much on Jesus Christ's birth 2000 years ago but on Christ here among us today reflected in the signs of God's love among people. How might you reach out to another throughout Advent? How might the school community be an expression of God's justice and peace during this season?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Most students are able to listen to a story with a critical mind and analyse the text using literary skills. They are able to relate the message of the story to their own lives. Many students understand that God is revealed through sacred story, people and the physical world. *How can we help students to identify God's activity in the world today?*

Many students adopt the behaviour and values of their immediate family and social groups. They begin to question any inconsistencies in the beliefs and behaviour of adults. Christians ideally adopt beliefs and values from the life story of Jesus Christ. *How can we assist students to make choices when there is tension between the Christian message and the values and beliefs of contemporary culture?*

Students are developing an understanding of the Christian message of the Christmas Season and many may want to participate in opportunities to share this message with people who are in need. *What acts of service will be realistic for students in the classroom or the whole school at this level?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Isa 7: 14–15 Isaiah Tells of God's Sign of the Promised Saviour

This passage occurs in the context of Isaiah's encounter with Ahaz, the embodiment of the Davidic dynasty, and the head of Jerusalem. Ahaz was called to manifest steadfast faith by looking only to the Lord for help. In this encounter Ahaz may have been undecided about the path he should take, with the prophets urging one way and his advisers another. Into this, Isaiah offered a sign. The sign need not mean something miraculous, but would in the future confirm the truth of what the prophet had spoken. The child promised will guarantee the future of the House of David, and for this reason can be called Emmanuel ('with us is God'). Emmanuel will have the maturity echoed in Old Testament thought, that he will know the right way through a sound discernment of rejecting evil and choosing good.

Isa 9: 2–6 God's People Waited in Hope for the Promised Saviour

The prophet Isaiah in this first section of the Book of Isaiah is speaking in eighth century BC Jerusalem. He is referring to a child born into the royal Davidic family of his day with the hope that this child will be a great ruler.

The prophets were very much of their time. They reflected on the signs of their time and directed the people how best to live the covenant relationship with God. This passage is a statement about the exalted position of the Davidic dynasty and the ruler from that family. The Davidic house had been promised eternal existence in the second book of Samuel (2 Sam 7: 8–16).

Isaiah was not consciously writing about Jesus Christ. He was writing for the people of his own time. However, the early Church quickly identified Jesus Christ in this and other Messianic texts. This was possible as the author, text and readers are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Hence, this prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Highlight the place of the word, particularly for this unit. Decorate a lectern or book stand in Advent colours. Place a large ribbon marker across the open Bible. Add an Advent wreath to the prayer table, and place a branch or 'tree' nearby to function as a Jesse Tree.

- The Reformed Church in America site has a copy of a Jesse Tree celebration that may be useful: <<http://www.rca.org/worship/material/advent/jessedevotions.html>>. Prepare symbols related to the many people and prophets who longed for a saviour down through the ages, e.g. Abraham (star) Gen 15: 5; Jesse (tree stump) Jer 33: 14–16; David (harp) Ps 132: 11–12; Ruth (wheat) Ruth 1: 19–22; Isaiah (lion and lamb) Isa 11: 6–9; Esther (golden sceptre) Esth 4; John the Baptist (shell) Mt 3: 1–6; Mary (heart) Lk 1: 26–38. Finally, place a symbol for Jesus (star) Lk 2: 16–21.
- Who are our modern-day prophets – those who cry out for justice and those who proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ by the way they live? Prepare a prayer celebration around the theme of our modern prophets.
- Dim the lighting in the room as you light the Advent wreath. Read Isa 9: 2, 6. Allow a few moments of silence for reflection. Sing a song about our longing for Jesus Christ, e.g. 'O Emmanuel' (Michael Mangan, *Follow the Star*, Litmus Productions).
- Pray a litany to give expression to our own longings as we wait for the coming of Jesus Christ. Pray the following response:

Jesus Christ is Emmanuel – God-With-Us forever.
- Spend a few moments each day praying *The Angelus*, a prayer from the Church's tradition.

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 6: Chapter 10, The Word of God; Chapter 19, Advent People.

Faith concepts: scripture, revelation, culture, beliefs, values, presence, prophet.

An inquiry into:

What is Advent and Christmas?
How is God revealed to us in the Scriptures?
What does revelation mean for me today?

Seeking understanding:

Advent is a time of preparing and waiting for the celebration of the Saviour’s birth and of looking forward to the time when he will come again in glory.
The telling and reading of Scripture reveals the story of God’s people and their relationship with God.
Old Testament prophets challenged people to see signs of God’s presence.
God is seen in people, places and times in our own lives today.

Scripture Text: Isa 9: 2–6.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advent as a time of waiting, longing, looking for signs of God’s presence and preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ.• How God reveals himself in creation and through the Scriptures.• The prophet Isaiah who tells of God’s signs of the promised saviour.• Old Testament prophets who challenged people to see signs of God’s presence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on their experience of Advent and Christmas.• Express beliefs, ideas and feelings about the importance of Jesus Christ’s birth two thousand years ago, and for Christians today in light of new learnings about the coming of the Messiah in Isaiah.• Interpret the meaning of a scripture text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan and participate in a liturgy for Advent and Christmas.

• Ways Christ is present with us today.		
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PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Unit Evaluation Use an organiser of choice to record what the students already know about the topic, e.g. use the Inquiry questions to elicit students' initial thinking and attitudes. 	Assessment for/as Learning Compare pre-unit evaluations and post-unit evaluations to assess progress made in an individual's learning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion in Advent and Christmas Use a variety of Advent and Christmas music to immerse the students. Use music and lyrics from religious and secular music. • Longing and Waiting: Y-Chart Brainstorm waiting times and times of longing. Reflect on these experiences using a Y-chart. A Y-chart is an organiser shaped like a Y using the headings LOOKS LIKE, FEELS LIKE, SOUNDS LIKE. 	
Additional Reading for Teachers	Development <i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning

thinking and learning?		
<p>Advent is the period of preparation before Christmas. It is named from the Latin word <i>Adventus</i> meaning coming. The period of Advent begins on the Sunday four weeks before Christmas with a gospel that looks forward, not to the coming of Christ in history, nor to the coming Christmas feast, but to the coming of Christ at the end of time.</p> <p>The gospels of the next two Sundays focus on the role of John the Baptist in preparing for Christ. The last Sunday focuses the Church's thought on Mary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posing a Fertile Question about Advent and Christmas A fertile (FAT) question is a rich question that involves the students using inferential and critical reasoning. Ask students: What is the difference between Advent and Christmas? Invite students to explore this question through a variety of modes: Think – Pair – Share; Compare and Contrast chart; role play. Share with the whole class and compare students' ideas and beliefs. As a whole class discuss: What common understandings are emerging? Are there any puzzling ideas and beliefs? 	
<p>John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. A rugged and unconventional figure, he had withdrawn from the cities to live and preach in the desert. He called the people of his time to repentance, and spoke of the Holy One who was to come. Jesus Christ called him the greatest of the prophets.</p> <p>The stories of Mary, the mother of Jesus, feature in the gospels of the fourth week of Advent. Mary, the Mother of God, has a unique and integral place in Christian tradition. She is honoured because she was chosen by God to give flesh and human nature to Jesus Christ the Son of God. This</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding Out: Advent and Christmas Seasons in the Liturgical Year Using an Excel spreadsheet, create a pie graph of the seasons of the Church year. The <i>Sadlier We Believe</i> website has a helpful diagram and information for primary students, see: http://www.webelieveweb.com/liturgical_year.cfm On the pie graph identify and highlight the Advent and Christmas seasons. Students create icons to place on the chart which illustrate the essence of 	

was not forced upon her. God waited upon the acceptance of a human being. The first chapter of Luke records her response to God's initiative 'Let it be done to me according to your word'. So Mary is both Mother of God and first and best of believers.

The Church firmly believes and teaches that Mary was the **Mother of God**. Several other teachings flow from this conviction:

- That she was and remained **always a virgin** – Jesus Christ was *God's* son he had no human father.
- That she was **conceived without original sin** in anticipation of the presence of God's Son within her. She is a perfect human being – a second Eve. (The feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, occurs during Advent).
- That sharing in the victory of Jesus Christ over death she, at her death, was **taken body and soul into glory** (the Assumption) where she is the hope and promise of eternal life for everyone.
- That she is the **model and mother of the Church**, of all Christians, and of all those whom Christ came to save.

Another very significant figure in the Scriptures of Advent is **the prophet Isaiah**. A prophet is a person who speaks for God in a particular time and in a particular society. The writings of Israel's prophets are listened to

the meaning of Christmas and Advent, their symbols and signs, and the associated Scripture.

<p>and honoured in the Christian tradition for their intrinsic wisdom and for the light they throw on the mystery of Christ. The readings from Isaiah in Advent are hopeful and look forward to a time of peace and restoration under the Messiah – the Prince of Peace.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Group Activity Re-ask the fertile question and use a Think – Pair – Share or jigsaw strategy to construct explanations of Advent and Christmas. Compare these explanations with the initial thinking in the orientation session. Identify any changes in thinking, ideas and beliefs. 	<p>Assessment as Learning The cooperative task will give students an opportunity to monitor and assess development in their learning.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The God Revealed in Advent Scripture: Isa 9: 2–6; 14–15: Orientation to Text Write up the Isaiah texts on a large scroll and proclaim to students. Ask students to record their understandings of Isaiah’s message for us today in word, symbols and images. This is how God is revealed to us! (See Graffiti sheet in White, D, <i>Into the Deep</i>, pp. 122–126.) 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate how students respond to and interpret the Isaiah texts.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Responding to the Word Through the creative arts, students capture the images of light, darkness, 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will also demonstrate students’ ability to interpret the images in the Isaiah texts.</p>

	<p>shadow, birth, wonder, mighty, eternal and peace as expressed in the Isaiah texts. For example, stained glass windows, music, dance, sculpture, poetry. Use these creative art pieces as the stimulus for preparing a liturgy.</p>	
<p>The Messiah – Isaiah of Jerusalem (c. 742–700 BC) hoped that God would bring about peace and salvation politically through the kings descended from David. He looked forward to a king who would meet the ideal; an expectation which developed into the great hope for a Messiah, the anointed one of God, whose reign would initiate an era of peace, stability and freedom for Israel.</p> <p>Jesus Christ’s followers saw in Jesus the messianic prophecies fulfilled – they began to call him the <i>Christ</i>, a Greek word with the same meaning as the Hebrew word Messiah – anointed. They began to understand the <i>Kingdom of God</i>, not in a political way but as a spiritual reality which would have immense implications for Christians in whatever political, religious or social context they lived.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posing Fertile Questions: The Messiah Ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What did the Jews of Jesus’ time understand by the word ‘messiah’? – What is the understanding of the word ‘messiah’ to Jews and Christians today? <p>Record students’ initial responses on a class chart.</p> <p>Record students’ questions or wonderings. Record ways that the class can find answers to all of these questions, e.g. interviewing people from the Melbourne Jewish community; guest speakers; online resources; fiction and non-fiction texts; film.</p> <p>Students are supported to investigate the questions.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and Contrast Strategy Compare and contrast the Jewish and Christian understanding of ‘Messiah’ in 	<p>Assessment of Learning The chart will demonstrate how students understand the role of the Messiah in</p>

	<p>the past and today.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="833 327 1413 534"> <tr> <td data-bbox="833 327 1111 432">What I've learned about the Jewish Messiah:</td> <td data-bbox="1111 327 1413 432">What I've learned about the Christian Messiah:</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="833 432 1111 499"></td> <td data-bbox="1111 432 1413 499"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="833 499 1111 534"></td> <td data-bbox="1111 499 1413 534"></td> </tr> </table>	What I've learned about the Jewish Messiah:	What I've learned about the Christian Messiah:					Christian tradition.
What I've learned about the Jewish Messiah:	What I've learned about the Christian Messiah:							
<p>Jesse Tree: A symbolic tree that represents the ancestors of Jesus Christ and other figures of the Old Testament who longed for the coming of the Messiah.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Exploring Advent Through the Jesse tree</p> <p>Use the Jesse tree as a visual stimulus to begin an exploration of the stories of the prophets. Incorporate into the tree, prophets read at Advent such as Isaiah, as well as prominent women of Israel such as Judith, Esther and Ruth who also longed for the Messiah.</p> <p>Read the stories of these women of Israel who saw signs of God's presence in their midst.</p> <p>See the resources section for web addresses that may provide students with information about the Jesse tree.</p> 							
<p>Christmas celebrates the fact that the child in the manger is none other than the eternal God who created us. Jesus Christ is God in our flesh, truly Emmanuel – God with Us. This is the wonder, marvel and mystery of Christmas. It is God's Son who comes to us, who lights the human future, giving it hope and direction and a destination. Yet Jesus Christ is also Mary's son, a human being like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Waiting for the Saviour – Christmas Cards</p> <p>Divide the students into two groups and create Christmas cards which reflect the message of the Isaiah texts in the modern world.</p> 	<p>Assessment as Learning</p> <p>Christmas cards will indicate the ways in which students interpret and apply the Isaiah texts, reflections on the Jesse tree, and reflections on the Messiah to their own lives or to modern-day living.</p>						

<p>us, but perfectly open to the thought and will of God, and so without sin.</p> <p>We celebrate the birth of the Saviour, the One who lived, died and rose from death bringing us with him: the One who shared our humanity so that we could share in his divinity.</p> <p>It is because Jesus Christ is both truly divine and truly human that he was able to reconcile humanity with God.</p>		
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>SYNTHESIS</p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Assessment Students repeat the first activity of the unit, recording responses to the inquiry question. Compare responses at the end of the unit with those at the beginning. In journals or learning logs, students identify how their thinking, ideas and beliefs have changed. • Personal Commitment Develop a personal commitment to celebrating Jesus Christ's birth two thousand years ago and his presence among us today. The commitment must be realistic, e.g. I'm going to try to give more of myself at Christmas! 	<p>Assessment as/of Learning</p> <p>The self-assessment will enable students to monitor the development in their learning. It will also provide teachers with information about how students' understandings of the topic have developed.</p> <p>The commitment will indicate ways in which students respond to the meaning of Christmas in their lives.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advent and Christmas Liturgy Plan Advent and Christmas liturgies with students that draw on the symbols, stories, people, Scripture texts and messages explored throughout the unit. During the liturgy distribute the Christmas cards students developed in the development phase.	
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RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 6: Chapter 10, The Word of God; Chapter 19, Advent People.

Teacher Resources

Elliot, M 2000, *A-Z Learning Strategies: Compare and Contrast Strategy*, p. 23, Catholic Education Office, Brisbane.

Ryan, M 2001, *Teaching the Bible*, Social Science Press, Katoomba.

White, D, et al. 2003, *Into the Deep*, KD Publications, Marayong.

Websites

Information about women in the Old and New Testaments can be found at the Women in the Bible web site.

<<http://www.womeninthebible.net/>>

The Sunday School Lessons site gives information about people and places in the New Testament.

<<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/people.htm>>

Information about people and places of the New Testament can also be found at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

<<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN720People.htm>>

The Domestic Church site gives information on the symbols of the Jesse Tree.

<<http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19971201/FRIDGE/FRIDGE1.HTM>>

The Reformed Church of America also has information on the Jesse Tree.

<<http://www.rca.org/worship/material/advent/total.html>>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 4 standards.

Students analyse and reflect on scripture texts and stories from Church Tradition to inform actions, attitudes and values. Students express the significance of ritual in the Catholic Tradition by planning and evaluating prayer, liturgical and sacramental experiences.