



St. Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School
"Love one another as I have loved you"

Religious Education and Catholic Life Fortnightly Newsletter Autumn Weeks 15



Gospel 'Celebration of the Word'



We began our Celebration of The Word' by gathering to the hymn 'When a child is born'. The children were invited to listen to the words of the hymn and to make links with the message from the Gospel.

With the help of Pupil Chaplains, we identified what we needed to make our table a sacred space. The liturgical cloth was purple indicating that we are in a time of prayer and reflection. The candle reminds us that God is present with us. The Cross reminds us that Jesus loves us and The Bible is where God and Jesus speak to us.

It was our turn to host the Jubilee candle reminding us that we are 'Pilgrims of Hope' in this special Jubilee Year.

Sunday marked the third Sunday of Advent. Our daily Gospel 'Celebration of The Word' focussed on Luke's Gospel account of Jesus' birth.

Each day we read part of Luke's gospel:

- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- The Birth of Jesus
- The Shepherds and the Angels

The message that God loves us so much that he sent His only son was emphasized throughout all the 'Celebration of the word' acts of worship this week.



Reflection: How can you live out this scripture message in your words and actions this week?

- **As Pilgrims of Hope can we carry out acts of kindness and showing love to others in our words and actions?**



Family Christmas Reflection

The real focus of Christmas is to reflect on the great joy of Jesus's birth for each of us personally.

Please read this reflection together as a family.

You are going to be invited to join the scene at the first Christmas

Holy Spirit, we invite you and welcome you here. Help us to know what a great gift Jesus is to everyone.

Imagine that you are on a dusty path in the middle of Bethlehem. It is a bit chilly as it's night-time. Look up into the sky – you can see millions of stars. More than you've ever seen before. Around you, you can hear laughter, singing and noise – the town is full of families and friends meeting for the census. It's crowded everywhere!

You notice one star in particular though – it seems brighter than the others. It looks as though it's hovering just above a small building you can see up ahead. Something about the brightness of the star makes you follow its light to the building.

Up close, you see the building is almost like a cave – a small, dark space. The star is definitely above it. You peer into the darkness and your eyes start to get used to the dark. At the back of the cave, you can see a mum, dad and can hear the cries of a tiny baby. It's so different from the noise and busyness on the Bethlehem streets.

You hear the mum's voice - she's saying, "Come in – you're so welcome. Come and see my new son - he's perfect." You walk quietly to where the mum and baby are sitting – they're on the hay and you can see animals sleeping nearby. You keep very quiet as you can see the baby is asleep. There is an amazing feeling of peace as you kneel down to get a closer look at the baby. He has the sweetest little fingers, and you realise as you look that you have a huge smile on your face. You can't help yourself at the sight of this baby!

The mum introduces herself – she tells you her name is Mary and that her husband's name is Joseph. She tells you that the baby is called Jesus and that He is God's son. You quietly whisper His name 'Jesus' and just saying the name brings you more feelings of peace and now a sense of joy too. You aren't sure what it means that He is God's son, but you sense that it's one of the most important things you will ever hear.

Mary says that you are welcome to hold the baby and give Him a cuddle. You can hardly believe it because He is so incredibly tiny and has just been born! But Mary has a look of trust on her face. She tells you that she wants to share

her baby with you – that she doesn't own Him, that He is a gift. Mary says that Jesus is a gift not just for her, but for everyone.

She gently gathers up the material he is wrapped in. You sit on the hay - it's soft and warm – and you get your arms ready to receive Jesus. Mary puts Him gently into your arms. You may have held a baby before, or it may be the first time but imagine holding Jesus now – He lies very still and doesn't cry. He feels so light in your arms and as you look down at His face, all you can think about is how special YOU feel to be holding Him. You've been trusted with Jesus, God's son! As you hold Him and make sure He's wrapped up and warm and safely held in your arms, you again experience this incredible feeling of peace and joy. You feel as though you can do anything – there is nothing to be frightened of when you are gazing at Jesus' face.

You realise that the time is passing quickly and you need to go and find where you are staying for the night with your family. Gently, you hand Jesus back to Mary and thank her for the opportunity to be close to Jesus. Joseph is looking on proudly at Mary and Jesus and thanks you for visiting. Joseph and Mary tell you that you're welcome to visit any time. Mary says again that Jesus isn't just hers and Joseph's – that He is for everyone. She says He is a gift for you too and for everyone in the whole world in the whole of history! This news makes you feel so joyful and as you get up from the hay to find your family, you think about how you can't wait to tell them the amazing news about how you have been close to God's son! You accept Mary and Joseph's invitation to visit any time you want and say thank you again and goodbye.

Holy Spirit, help us to know that Jesus' birth brings us great joy!



Loving Father,

Jesus is the greatest gift we have been given.

How we live our life is our gift back to Him.

Please guide me to make the right choices in what I say and do.

Amen

Catholic Social teaching:



CAFOD World Gifts

Mini Vinnies have selected CAFOD as our focus charity for this half-term. Each class has been carrying out fundraising activities to support our brothers and sisters who are living in poverty.

The children from each class are using the money that their class has raised to buy a CAFOD World Gift. This World Gift contributes towards supporting our brothers and sisters to get the basics they need to survive and live.

For more information about CAFOD world gifts please use the following link: <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

Mini Vinnies presented what each class did during a 'Celebration of the Word'. They shared the activity that each class organised, how much money the class raised and what CAFOD gift each class bought.



It was very moving to hear about and see how each class worked as a team putting their faith into action to support their brothers and sisters who live in poverty and are in need.

Below are details of each class' fundraiser.

Reception Fundraiser

Reception made Christmas decorations in their class which was very fun

They raised money for goats that give. They help families get milk and meat.



The goat that gives
£30.00

Year 1 Fundraiser:

Year 1 made christmas decorations in their classroom.

They made Christmas trees from paper and had lots of fun. They used their donations for clean water for a family and a chicken to make eggs and meat.

Year 1 successfully raised £53



Chirpy chickens
£20.00



Water for a family
£33.00



Y2

Year 2 brought in soft toys and watched a movie.

They raised money for the children's stocking for children in Ukraine.



Year 3

Year 3 had a pajama day and brought in their teddies. They raised money for the chirpy chickens. They were able to raise a total of £48!!!



Chirpy chickens
£20.00



In Year 4, they raised £50.

They raised enough money to help a healthy mum and baby, before and after the birth. This includes the food and clothes the baby and the mother need to stay healthy and the clothes the baby needs.

This support will help CAFOD help a baby and a mother.



Y5 Y5 had a fun pyjama day with a bingo afternoon. They raised money for water for a family and a goat.



Y6 FUNDRAISER

CAFOD Gifts

Year 6 had a pyjama and movie day where each person was asked to bring £2 or more.



What we raised money for

In year 6 we raised £100 for 2 family stockings which give a family all that they would need to keep warm over the cold winter and for many other basic needs ensuring that people can survive the harsh winters.



Reflection:

- There are lots of people who need help in our community and in our world. Who can we help? How can we help?

Examples may include: praying, donating food to a foodbank, buying a present for someone who will not receive any on Christmas Day etc..

Pupil Advent 'Prayers of Hope'



Last week, Pupil Chaplains asked us to live out the Advent message of hope in our lives by writing 'Prayers of Hope'.

The children wrote prayers and prayed for: the homeless; the sick; the lonely; the hungry; the elderly; the poor, those affected by war etc...

Through the children's prayers, each of these groups are given the hope of being thought about, cared for and prayed for.

We placed each class' 'Prayers of Hope' on our Catholic Social teaching display.



Response:

Please keep our brothers and sisters who live in poverty and are in need in your prayers.

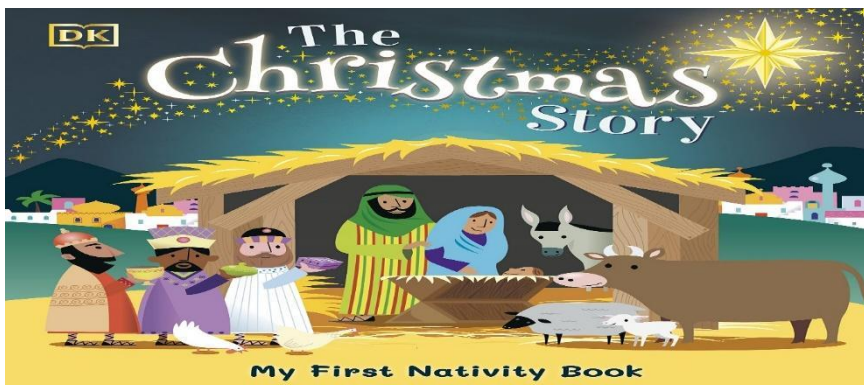
Y6 pupils attend the Diocesan Advent Service

Our Y6 pupils made a pilgrimage to St George's Cathedral to take part in the Diocesan Schools' Advent Service. They also took the opportunity to go through the 'holy door' which is only open for pilgrims to walk through during the Jubilee Year. Entering the church through the holy door is symbolic of a pilgrim's choice to follow Jesus and links to Chapter 10 of St John's Gospel

which says: 'I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.'



Advent and Prayer Pilgrim Packets



Pupil Chaplains created Christmas Prayer Packets to help families to pray more at home.

At present, a children's version of 'The Story of the First Christmas' is moving through each class. Every family will have the opportunity to welcome Mary, Joseph and Jesus into their home.

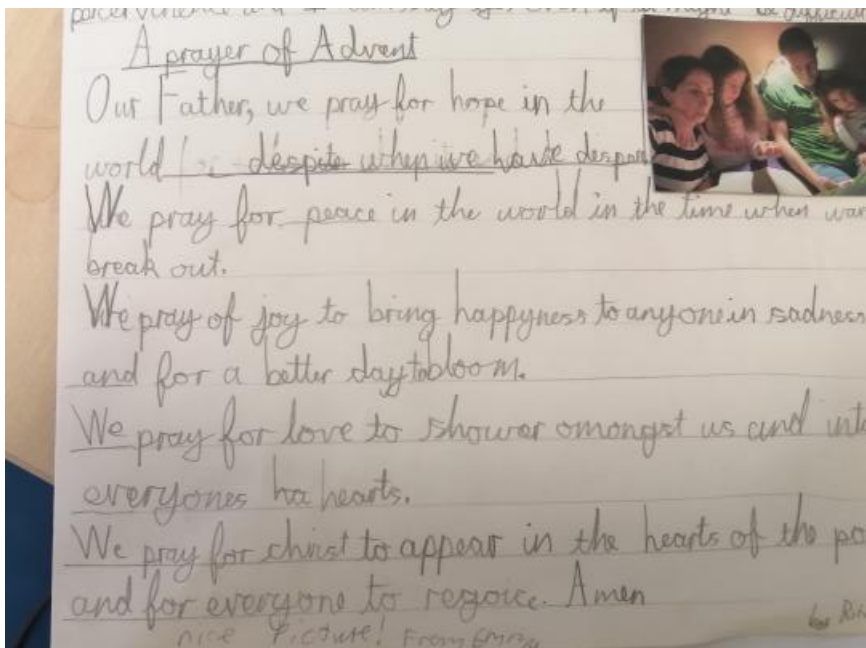
As the story is read -each family will share the journey of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Baby Jesus. Families have reflected how they can also go on a journey during Advent and grow closer to Jesus.

Children have been responding to the story by writing prayers and reflections and by drawing pictures.

Key stage 1 response:



Key Stage 2 response:



St Elizabeth's Prayer of the Month



Each month St Elizabeth's School community will say a prayer which focuses on the liturgical season. At present we are in the month of December. Let us pray....

The Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

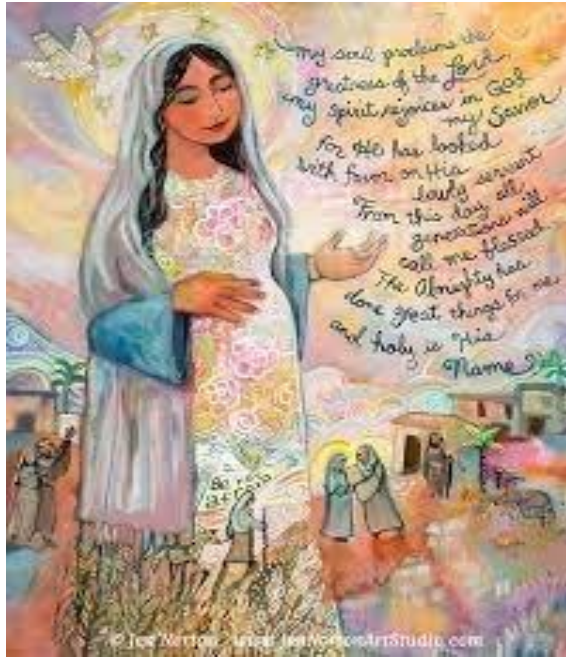
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.



The Magnificat is the Blessed Virgin Mary's canticle of praise, which she recited when she visited her cousin Elizabeth.

This prayer is strongly and explicitly linked to Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and acts as an inspiration for social justice and a model for working towards a transformed world.



Response:

Through praying the Magnificat in December, can you look for ways you can help your brothers and sisters who are in need both locally and throughout the world?

The Nativity: Preparations for the birth of Baby Jesus

We find ourselves approaching the fourth week of Advent. Amidst all the busyness of getting ready for Christmas, the fun of making decorations, decorating the Christmas tree, receiving and giving cards, attending Christmas discos and other celebrations etc we need to remember the real importance and significance of Advent in our Christmas preparations.

In school the children in every class have been preparing and working hard to retell an age appropriate version of 'The Nativity' and sharing the real meaning and importance of Christmas with their families - the birthday of Jesus, the Son of God.

We would like to thank:

The children in Reception for telling 'The First Christmas' through singing carols around the tree.



The children in Key stage 1 for re-enacting a 'The First Christmas' through the dramatization of 'The Inn-spectors'.





The children in Key Stage 2 for leading a reflective Advent Service.

Year 3



Year 4



Year 5



Year 6



The children at St Elizabeth's have definitely put Jesus at the centre this Advent.

The children have offered their Nativity liturgies to raise money to support CAFOD World gifts which supports their brothers and sisters who are in need

We would like to thank all parents and carers for attending these liturgies and for donating to our Advent charity.



Response:

Please keep Jesus at the centre of Advent and Christmas.



Wednesday Word

'The Wednesday Word' is a weekly Gospel 'gift' from school to each family. Each week the Sunday Gospel is sent out via the link below into school family homes through the 'Wednesday Word'.

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/wednesday-word/holiday-booklet?pid=MTA101634&v=167.5>

Through this resource, the key message(s) from the Gospel is shared. This link also contains resources linked to the Mass over the Christmas period.



Response:

Please take the 'Wednesday Word' to Mass on Sunday.

Pope Leo's Prayer Intention for the month of December



The Holy Father, Pope Leo, asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. We are all invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month

Pope Leo asks... 'Let us pray for Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, to be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.'



Response:

Can we take the time to find peaceful solutions to problems?



With thanks for your support of the Catholic Life of our school,
Mrs Diver and the Pupil Chaplains