

St Elizabeth's School RE Newsletter  
December 2021



Advent is a time of preparation. During this season of Advent, we have been preparing for the Key Stage 1 Nativity, the Key Stage 2 Advent Service and for other Christmas festivities.

In school the children have been learning about the real importance and significance of Advent.

Advent is a time of preparing for two things: to **welcome Jesus at Christmas**, and to **be ready for His return**.

Therefore, it is important for us all to make space in our busy lives to put Jesus at the centre this Advent and Christmastide.

The children have been preparing to welcome Jesus in their hearts.

# Stand Tall



*Jesus said to His disciples:*

*“Before I come again, amazing things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. People will be confused, but then they’ll see me coming on a cloud with power and glory! When that happens, stand tall and don’t be scared: instead pray that you will be ready to stand tall before me when I come again.”*

***Paraphrase of Luke 21: 25 – 28, 34 – 36***

In the Gospel assembly of w/c 29<sup>th</sup> November children learned that standing tall has nothing to do with how physically tall a person is – it is more about how, through God’s grace, we respond to difficulties with strength and courage. In fact, the star of the film shown in assembly, Rick Hoyt, was unable to stand up at all and spent his life in a wheelchair. December 3<sup>rd</sup> was the **International Day for Disabled Persons** and reminded us that we are *all* called to stand tall. We watched the extraordinary story of Team Hoyt, who stood tall together...

Children learned how Dick Hoyt found himself in a difficult situation when his son, Rick, was born with a disability. Dick and his son, Rick, stood tall: they responded to difficulty with strength and courage, and achieved incredible things!

Through this Gospel, children heard Jesus’ reassurance not to worry. Jesus says that things might happen which are difficult, but that we can find strength in

Jesus' promises so that we can stand tall and be ready for Him when He comes again.

Like Team Hoyt, children learned how Jesus calls us to have strength and courage when times are tough and when things happen that we don't expect. He wants us to stand tall by relying on His promises: that He loves us, that He's coming back, and that we should love God and love others while we wait.

In assembly the children shared how they were going to 'stand tall'. The examples given by the children ranged from being inclusive in friendships to persevering with challenging work.

*With your child, why don't you...*

- *Discuss some situations where, like Rick Hoyt, people didn't believe you could do something, or any situations where things felt tough. How did you respond?*
- *Share about how Jesus gives you strength and confidence to stand tall.*
- *Discuss some ways that you can love God and love others as part of your Advent time of preparation.*



### **Mass: Celebrating Advent**

Children participated in Mass in school on 2<sup>nd</sup> December to celebrate the beginning of Advent.

The Mass was organised and led by Y3. Thank you to Mrs Sheridan and all of Y3 who took part in the celebration of Mass.

During this Mass we lit the first candle on our Advent wreath.

We prayed and reflected upon how during the Season of Advent we prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming and for the celebration of Jesus' birth. We would like to thank Fr. Brian from Our Lady of Loreto and St. Winefride's Church in Kew, for leading the celebration of Mass.

### *Pupil Chaplains*

Pupil chaplains chose CAFOD for the Advent charity the school would like to support this year.

In assembly the Pupil chaplains launched 'One Kind Act' as part of the school's Advent preparations.

Children were encouraged to undertake one kind act each day at home. The children were rewarded financially for carrying out kind acts by their parents.

In addition to raise money for CAFOD, pupil chaplains organised a 'Crazy Hair Day' on 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Children brought in a donation of £2 in return for wearing their hair in the craziest way possible.

Each class pooled the money they have collected together to buy world gifts such as a well to provide water, a goat for a family and books for a school child.

<https://cafod.org.uk/Give/World-Gifts/Christmas-World-Gifts>

Buying World Gifts this Christmas has helped transform the lives of people living in poverty across the world.



### Christmas Reflection

We prepare for Christmas by decorating our homes, buying special food and presents.

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

You may wish to 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



As our term drew to a close, it is with real pride that we look back upon all that the School has been able to achieve.

Our school values which underpin everything we do have been the foundations onto which we engaged with each other and with our learning each day.

We all acknowledge that the last few years have been tricky for all of us, and yet we are astounded by the resilience and positivity that our pupils have displayed. Their enthusiasm and humour have buoyed us all. We have continued to see musical and sporting success, charitable endeavours, and a wide range of individual and collective achievements.

Gratitude goes to St. Elizabeth's staff for their unwavering dedication and commitment to providing the very best for our pupils.



The Advent Service and Infant Nativity were fantastic, where the true meaning of Christmas was delivered.

The staff of St Elizabeth's wish you a happy and Holy Christmas.  
We look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

**Mrs Diver**  
**RE and Catholic Life Lead**