



13. Advent 1 – Mary’s Song

Age range: Primary

Theme:

We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we have been reflecting on some important words of Jesus in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’, which Christians call the ‘Beatitudes’. As Advent starts, we are going to return to the start of Jesus’ earthly life, and find out why preparing for Christmas is such an important time in the Christian calendar.

One of the most important - and challenging - beliefs that Christians have about Jesus is that he is God ‘incarnate’ - literally, God ‘in the flesh’, which is at the heart of the celebration of Christmas. This assembly marks the start of the season of Advent, and links to the [online advent calendar](#) which reflects on the theme of light in the darkness. Advent begins this year on Sunday 1st December, so we have allowed for the fact that this collective worship might include the opening of the first door in your school Advent season. You will need to adjust the script if you are not using the calendar.

The first & final slides in the accompanying PowerPoint contain phrases that you might want to use before you open a door in the online calendar - and afterwards.



How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school’s values with the concepts of **Advent**, a time of waiting and preparation, and **Incarnation**.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. Because of the photos included this week, a screen is the best option for this collective worship.
- You may want to have a special Advent candle for this season. You will need to change the opening greeting to the alternative words if you’re not lighting a candle (real or battery operated). The reflection slide includes a video of a flickering candle.
- **Reflective prayer activity:** for the Advent period, we are providing reflection materials through our online Advent calendar, which you can find using the links above, highlighted in yellow.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Today is the first Monday (or....) in Advent, and so we have some special collective worship times during this season. We’re going to use this special greeting for the Advent season, as we light our Advent candle. [Omit if you’re not using one]

Leader: As we light our Advent candle... [or, As we join together as a community]

All: May our time today show us something new, like light in the darkness.



Engaging:

- **Slide 2:** I am sure that you all know what this is – and how many days there are from the start to the end.....Advent calendars are a way of helping us keep track of the days leading up to Christmas Day! We are beginning the season in the Christian calendar known as Advent – a special time of waiting and preparation for Christmas Day, the day that celebrates the birth of Jesus. We will be doing this ourselves in school in lots of different ways.....
- *If using online Advent calendar: In a few moments, we’re going to find out about a very special Advent calendar that will join us together as a school community, and take us through Advent together.*
- **Slide 3:** We’ve been thinking all through this term about Jesus’ words in the Beatitudes, and thinking what difference they made to the people who heard them then, and what they might mean for us now. Today, we’re going to go back in history to a time just *before* Jesus was born.....but before we go there....
- **Slide 4: I wonder who’s in your family?** Talk together about immediate and wider family, such as cousins, and grandparents – and whether children know anything about people from further back in their family history. *[Remember that there are many different models of family, and that some children may not know much – or wish to divulge much – about their family. If it helps, use your own family, with photos if you like, as an illustration: you are just wanting children to get an idea that families can be*



quite big – and go back through time.] People sometimes call this their **'family tree'** because each part of their family history is like a branch, that grows and spreads out over time.

- **Slide 5:** Share (and talk about) your own family photos if you prefer!
- **Slide 6:** Today we're going to go back to a time just a few months before Jesus was born, not long after the Angel Gabriel had spoken to Mary and told her about the special baby she would be carrying. There are many works of art capturing this important moment (including this one from the National Gallery in London), but let's hear the words that the Angel spoke to her: **'You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus*He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end....He will be called the Son of God.'** (*Luke 1:31,33,35*) *NB the name Jesus means 'Saviour'. The news that the Angel shared must have been both exciting and scary at the same time! Jesus was not going to be any ordinary baby: he would be God's son, the Great Rescuer and part of a great family!
- **Slide 7:** Mary had known about this Great Rescuer for a long time, but had *no idea* that she would be the Great Rescuer's mother!! Her words of response are some of the most famous words in the Bible: **'With all my soul I praise God; my heart is happy because God is my Saviour.....God has done what he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and his family forever!'** (*Luke 1: 46, 55*)
Mary's family was only just beginning, but this birth was part of a much bigger story....
- **Slide 8:**a story that started (and went wrong!) at the very beginning of time: a story that Mary, and Christians across the world believe this baby had come to fix! The darkness that Christians believe entered the world with Adam and Eve's disobedience was not the end of the story. Into this darkness the Light of the World would be born.....
- **Slide 9:** It's no wonder, then, that we hear later on in this story that Mary 'treasured' and wondered about all these things in her heart. So, that's what we're going to do now....to reflect on and wonder about the words we've heard....

Slide 10: Responding (and words for worship):

....you might like to look at the flame of the candle as you think....
...we've heard about Mary's response to the birth of Jesus....
...listen again to her words: "God has saved his people....
...God has done what he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and his family forever!"

....I wonder how it felt to know that the Rescuer had come as a tiny baby?....
....I wonder if this is what people expected?....
....I wonder what it is about this story that makes us wonder...?
....I wonder how Jesus might be light in the darkness?....

- We'll be picking up on this theme of light in the darkness as we travel together through Advent *especially through our special Advent calendar*. [use the link to open the door for today]
<https://calendar.myadvent.net/?id=1uiwq8a1ta0c7dn76sridohrumzys9yd>

Now I'm going to use a short prayer, asking God to help us as we begin this Advent adventure together. If you would like to join me, then join in with 'Amen' at the end – or if you prefer, just be still with your own thoughts.

Slide 11: Prayer

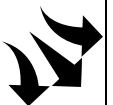
Dear God

As we begin this Advent season, may our hearts be open to hear this special story of the very first Christmas. May we, like Mary, find things that will make us wonder, and give you praise.

Slide 12: Amen

Sending: Slide 13 (You might want to use this slide throughout the Advent season to end your time together)

Leader: As we leave this place and time....



All: May the light of Advent shine brightly in our school today.

To sing:

[The Virgin Mary had a baby boy](#) (AAOS), or a joyful song from your own school Christmas repertoire that fits this theme.

As you gather or leave, you could use the song **'Mary, did you know?'**, [this version](#) by the vocal group Pentatonix, or **'Immanuel'** by Michael Card: [Immanuel \(Michael Card\) - YouTube](#), based on the words from Isaiah 7:14, which express the idea of God being human, and 'with us'.

