



15. Advent 3 – To Bethlehem we go!

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.

This assembly continues in the season of Advent, in this last week of term.

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.
- There are slides in the presentation that will help you to tell and reflect on the story (wondering questions are included in the script), but there is also the option of a more active, everyone-join-in story, which was written for an outdoors collective worship during lockdown. We encourage you to actually do this outside if you can, though it would also work indoors if weather doesn’t permit it! You may feel this is more appropriate for younger age groups.
- **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: 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: Going on a journey** I wonder if you’ve ever been on a long, long journey? *[Compare who’s been where and talk about the emotions of travelling, exciting and otherwise!]*
- **Slide 3: To Bethlehem we go....** At this point in the year, we often journey together through the account of the birth of Jesus – and so we are going to dip into this story again now, and reflect on the fact that everyone seemed to be travelling to the same place, but for very different reasons. *[You can do this in 2 ways, using the script on p. 3-4 which you can take outside if you’re brave enough! Rejoin the main script at slide 9. Or you can use the words under the slides in the PowerPoint if opting for the on-screen story]* So let’s share this story together now – and spend a few moments wondering....
- **Slide 4:** That very first Christmas, there were many people travelling to Bethlehem as Caesar had ordered that everyone go back to the town of their birth to be counted. Mary and Joseph travelled too – and Mary was about to have her baby! Bethlehem was a very busy place....and it’s quite likely that not many of the visitors even realised that some very important events were to take place. I wonder what they might have done if they had?.....**I wonder what all these visitors to Bethlehem thought about the journey they had taken?....**
- **Slide 5:** We hear in the story that Baby Jesus was born in a stable because all the inns were busy. This part of the story is especially important to Christians because they believe that Jesus, God’s son, was born as a human baby. But any family that has waited for a baby to be born will understand how it feels when that baby finally arrives! **I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt now that Jesus had finally arrived?....**
- **Slide 6:** Shepherds were watching their flocks during the night – and suddenly the sky was filled with angels who told them all about this special baby.
- **Slide 7:**and they were the very first visitors to travel to the stable!! **I wonder how they felt to be the first to see such a special baby – and why God chose them to be the first to arrive?....**



- **Slide 8:** The wise men were the final visitors to travel to Bethlehem. They brought him gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh. They had been watching the skies for many years, searching for a bright new star, the sign of the birth of a new king. **I wonder how these travellers from far, far away felt to finally be able to visit this special baby?...**

Slide 9: Responding (and words for worship):



... We're going to have some quiet moments now to think about all the different things we've explored today.....

...we've heard how many visitors travelled to Bethlehem – all for different reasons....

....people whose families lived in Bethlehem....

.....Mary and Joseph.....shepherds.....travellers from far far away....

...I wonder what brought all those visitors to Bethlehem?...

...I wonder how it felt arriving to find a new baby, in a manger, and to wonder who that baby might be?

Slide 10:Every Christmas, Christians all over the world will remember this story, and travel again in their hearts and minds to Bethlehem to gaze on Jesus....

...take a few moments to think quietly for yourself now.....

...you might want to turn your thoughts into your own prayer....

Slide 11: use the word 'Amen' to signal the end of this time.

Sending: Slide 12 (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 angels knew](#) (NBD) or sing one of your own school repertoire that focuses on Bethlehem.

Watch / join in: [O little town of Bethlehem](#)



Hi Ho! Hi Ho! To Bethlehem we go!

I wonder if you've ever noticed how much of the Nativity story happens outside?! So, it's good to be able (to be outside) to tell it together today. In order to stay warm, we're going to get up and active - so do join in all the actions.

There are three journeys to Bethlehem - and we're going to travel them all today, in our playground as we tell our story of the very first Christmas. Luckily, our journeys will be much quicker than the real ones! Each time we journey together, we'll say **"Hi ho! Hi ho! To Bethlehem we go!"** and sometimes **"Hi ho! Hi ho! FROM Bethlehem we go!"**

I've got a special version of the story now, which everyone gets to play a part in. Each of you get to decide which character you want to be.....and every time you hear me use your character's name, wave at me and say **'That's me!!'** [Practise this...] If you want to, you can even join in and do some acting right where you're sitting!

A long time ago, there was a lady called **Mary**.

One day, while **Mary** was doing her household chores, she saw a bright light.

She had to cover her eyes because it was so bright.

The bright light was an **angel**.

The **angel** gave **Mary** a message from God - he said she was going to have a baby, a very special baby, who was God's Son.

Mary was engaged to be married to **Joseph**

The **angel** also appeared to **Joseph** in his sleep, and told him to stay with **Mary** and look after her.

Just a few weeks before her baby was ready to be born, the king told all the people in the country that they had to travel back to the place where their family was from.

So **Mary** and **Joseph** had to travel on a long, long journey **"Hi ho! Hi ho! To Bethlehem we go!"** all the way by donkey to a town called Bethlehem.

When **Mary** and **Joseph** got to Bethlehem, all the inns were full, so they had to sleep in a barn, where the animals sleep

That night, **Mary's** baby was born. She called him 'Jesus'.



They didn't have a cot to put baby Jesus in, so she laid him in the animal's feeding trough!

Most of the people in Bethlehem were asleep, but there were some **shepherds** in the fields, looking after their sheep.

God sent some **angels** to sing to the **shepherds** and tell them about baby Jesus, because God wanted everyone to know that Jesus had been born. The **angels** said that it was good news for all people - even ordinary **shepherds**!

The **shepherds** were so excited that they ran on their journey to the barn to see... **"Hi ho! Hi ho! To Bethlehem we go!"**.

The **shepherds** found Jesus and **Mary** and **Joseph**, just where the angel said they would be. The **shepherds** went back to their fields, **"Hi ho! Hi ho! FROM Bethlehem we go!"**, praising God for all that they had seen.

God also put a giant star in the sky like a big birthday candle for baby Jesus.

Some **wise men** were looking at the sky and they saw the special star. The **wise men** also went on a long, long journey by camel to Bethlehem... **"Hi ho! Hi ho! To Bethlehem we go!"** following the star all the way to Jesus.

When they saw him, the **wise men** bowed down to tell Jesus that they thought he was special.

They gave him precious gifts - one **wise man** brought gold; the second **wise man** brought frankincense and the third **wise man** brought myrrh. Then the **wise men** went back to their country by a different route. **"Hi ho! Hi ho! FROM Bethlehem we go!"**

After all these visitors had been and gone, **Mary** thought about everything that had happened and treasured the memories in her heart.

[Rejoin the main script at slide 9]

