

15. Joy to the world!

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 are focussing on creativity, and the content of an exhibition being hosted in Surrey this term: **Threads Through the Cross**, the work of textile artist Jacqui Parkinson. **Throughout these final few weeks of term, we will be drawing on traditions associated with Advent, but picking up on the key thought about Hope that we introduced in the final Threads Through the Cross panel, last week. Today, we use the visit of the Magi to think about the messages of hope not just being for God's people, but for the whole world. We make some links in the materials today with the Big Story and Jacqui's panels for one last time, to try to explain how Christians connect the message of the angels about 'joy to the world' with the concept of Salvation.**



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

We will be thinking about the word **Hope** over the coming weeks, as we link with the Cathedral art theme for 2025, but also draw on what this word might mean for us in our school, our communities, and our world. Today's materials link to the message of joy for all people, spoken by the angels, but embodied in the visitors from the East – hope for everyone, from anywhere! We use this message of joy to think about how we might be carriers of joy as we begin the Christmas holidays... **NB We will use some words in prayer today that not all pupils in your community will be able to pray: 'O come let us adore him'. We reflect this in the way that the prayer is presented, so pupils will be able to opt in or opt out of praying.**

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 to go with today's script, but you could quite easily use some of this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- NB On slides 16-29, we are hoping to include some photos of installations in the Schools' Cathedral Art initiative for 2025, themed around 'Joy to the World', so don't download it too early! It should be ready by the end of the 1st week of Advent. If you don't wish to use these slides, then remove them from the presentation.**
- Reflective prayer activity:** use our image Advent Calendar, which will contain reflective materials throughout this season.

Gathering: 3rd week of Advent

Slide 1: Use this special greeting for the Advent season, as you light your Advent candle.

Leader: As we light our Advent candle...

All: May today's thoughts bring us hope, like light in the darkness.



Engaging:

- Slide 2: What fills you with joy?**
Maybe it's pictures of cute or funny animals, or maybe the sight of your Christmas lights at this time of year.....or spending time with family....or doing something you love
Have a chat together now..... *[ask for feedback]*
- Slide 3:** Last week we heard how, for Christians, Jesus is **Immanuel: 'God with us'** and thought about what this meant for the ordinary people in the Nativity account, as well as what this might mean as a message of hope. We also heard the words of the angels saying that the birth of this special baby was**good news of great joy for all people**....and saw how the shepherds were also filled with joy, so much joy that they told everyone the met about this good news.
- Slide 4:** In today's section of the story, found in Matthew's gospel, it says that wise men in lands far, far away in the East, had been studying their books, maps and charts. They believed that one day, a new King would be born – and that a bright, new star would tell them when. They had been watching the skies for years and years, waiting for the moment when this time would come. The Bible says that **'When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy.'** And so, the star led them to this new King, a journey that brought them from so far, they were probably travelling for over a year....
- Slide 5:** ...so Jesus would probably have been a toddler! *[you can see this in the sculpted panel, top right, part of a 3rd-4th C sarcophagus, from the Vatican Museum]*
Imagine what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to have such important, wealthy and unexpected visitors!



The gifts that the wise men brought with them – gold, frankincense and myrrh – were like their own **secret messages** to the world....(Remember this from 2 weeks ago?!)

You can probably tell me the gifts they brought..... *[wait for response]*....gold, frankincense and myrrh: gold – for the highest King; frankincense – an expensive incense used in worship in the temple, so a sign that Jesus was to be worshipped, and myrrh – a spice to anoint the dead, which seems like an even stranger gift for a toddler than gold and frankincense! *[older/more able pupils may be able to link these to ideas about Jesus from their learning in RE, or previous weeks' resources this term]*

The angels said that Jesus' birth was good news for everyone – 'all people' – from the ordinary shepherds looking after their sheep to the learned wise men, travellers from so very far away.

- **Slide 6:** Christians believe that this is still **good news** for today – and every day: Jesus, God incarnate, came to be Immanuel, 'God with us' and joy for the whole world.

As we saw last week, there are Christians all over the world....who will all be gathering to celebrate this 'joy to the world' this Christmas.

[All photos ©IMB International Mission Board L-R, top-bottom: Kenya, Syria, Ghana, Bangladesh, France]

- **Slide 7:** We heard in the story behind Jacqui's textile panels that Jesus came to be the Great Rescuer, who would put right everything that had gone wrong in the Garden of Eden. For Christians, it's this bigger story that makes sense of the angels' words, that the birth of Jesus was **good news of great joy for all people**: no matter what happens in their lives or in the world, Jesus came to be Immanuel now, and one day will put everything right again. Some of the very last words in the Bible say this....**there will be no more death, sadness, crying or pain. All the old ways are gone!**
- **Slide 8:** It's this good news that has inspired Jacqui to create her panels telling this story of Jesus being 'joy to the world': it's not just about his birth being a joyful occasion (which it was!), but about the good news of the whole story.

Slide 9: Responding and words for worship

Let's draw our time together to a close as we are quiet and still with our thoughts. Today we have heard the story of how the news of the birth of Jesus filled the wise men with joy...and continues to fill Christians with that same joy, as they approach Christmas. The angels said that the birth of Jesus was joy to the world.

....I wonder what you think about this idea?....

....I wonder what fills you with joy at this time of year?....

....I wonder how we might bring joy to others?....not just at Christmas, but every day?!....

You might like to talk about this back in class.

Slide 10: Prayer

Like the wise men, and the other visitors who came to visit Jesus, the response of those who saw him was to worship, because of the joy and wonder that they felt.

I'm going to use some words from a famous carol – 'O come all ye (you) faithful' – which express this idea: **'O come let us adore him!'**

These words will be a part of my prayer: if you want to pray with me, then you might want to join when these words come on the screen, or you can continue to be quiet with your own thoughts.....

Slide 11: As we think about this special story, of Jesus, born as a baby.... **'O come let us adore him!'**

Slide 12: As we remember how the wise men knelt in worship.... **'O come let us adore him!'**

Slide 13: As we experience the joy that is a part of this Christmas season..... **'O come let us adore him!'**

Slide 14: With Christians all over the world, may we sing this Christmas time.... **'O come let us adore him!'**

Slide 15: Amen.



Slides 16-29: Many of you will recall that Jacqui's beautiful panels were recently displayed in Guildford Cathedral, which (by the way) is your cathedral! As you can see, is a beautiful space to see such wonderful art! As part of our Christmas celebrations across the Diocese, many of our Church schools have sent some artwork of their own to display in Guildford Cathedral across Advent and Christmastide, on the theme of 'Joy to the world'. Our next few slides are going to show you some of the thought-provoking work.... As you view them, you might like to think about the following questions (there may be some words written by the school to help you here!):

- How does this piece of art link to the theme 'Joy to the World'?
- What makes you think as you look at it?
- What do you like about it?
- What would you like to ask the children who created this?
- How might you show your own ideas about 'Joy to the World'?

If you would like to view the whole collection as a short video, please use this link: ['Joy to the world!'](#)

[Guildford Diocese Schools' Art Exhibition December 2025](#)

If you would like to see the full PowerPoint, which includes any words that pupils wrote, you can find this with our other CW resources.

Sending: Slide 30

Use these words throughout Advent (the number of candles will change each week!)



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

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

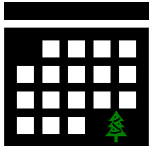
To listen to / sing:

To listen to: [Joy to the world](#) (Chris Tomlin version, with new refrain 'Unspeakable joy' or [Nat King Cole](#) or [traditional version](#).

To sing: [Mary had a baby](#) (BBC) [The Virgin Mary had a baby boy](#) (BBC), [The Angels Knew](#) (NBD) or school choice

Slide 23: Reflection spaces – online Advent calendar

Use the link to connect you to reflective materials for school days during Advent.



The link should open from here: [Joy to the World! Primary](#)

If this fails, please use the links on the Diocesan Collective Worship webpages: [Advent and Christmas - Diocese of Guildford](#)

