

# Spirit of the Season

## Advent 2003

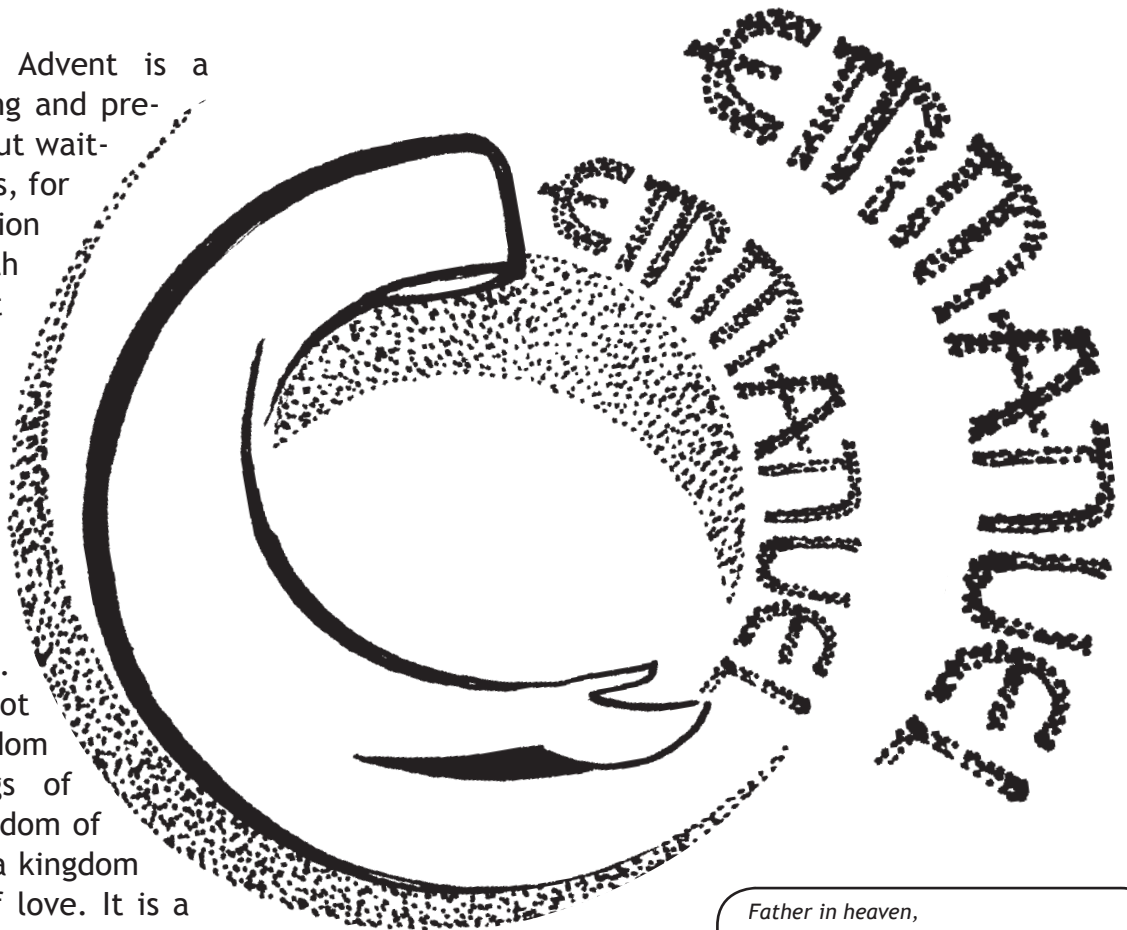
[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

### Waiting & Preparing

The season of Advent is a season of waiting and preparing. It is about waiting for Christmas, for the celebration of Jesus' birth and all that it means. And it is about preparing – not just the shopping for Christmas, but the preparing for the coming of the Kingdom of God. We hear a lot about that Kingdom in the readings of Advent – a kingdom of peace and joy, a kingdom of safety and of love. It is a kingdom that is very different to our world as it is. And Advent has us remember that, and invites us to see how in the way we live our lives we can help let that Kingdom come into our world.

A woman preparing for her baby to come to birth has much to

do – and often she will look so well for it, glowing with healthiness and expectation. As we look forward for the coming of God's kingdom we too can expect to thrive. Life is good, and life alive with the love and peace of God, is very good indeed.



*Father in heaven,  
our hearts desire the warmth of your love  
and our minds are  
searching for the light  
of your Word.  
Increase our longing for  
Christ our Saviour  
and give us the strength to grow in love,  
that the dawn of his coming  
may find us rejoicing in his presence  
and welcoming the light of his truth.*



Opening Prayer - 1st Sunday of Advent

## Making an Entrance



**Meaning:** Come, O Lord!

**From:** This is an Aramaic word (the language Jesus spoke). Used at the very end of the Bible (Rev 22:20).

**Usage:** Used in Advent (another word to think about) as a cry that the time will surely come when we will rejoice at Emmanuel (God-with-us).

**Word colour:** Purple

**Singing:** Litany of the Word (Farrell–Laudate)  
Like a sea without a shore: *just the refrain* (Estelle White)



*To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul* is a setting of psalm 24 (25) by Marty Haugen. The refrain

could be used at the beginning of each day in Advent with children doing a simple gesture raising their hands — offering each day to God.

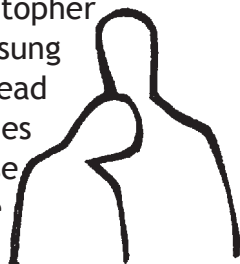
### Blessings

When we bless someone we not only ask God to make them holy but we also praise the goodness of God. Some criticise translations of the Beatitudes that say "Happy are the poor in spirit..." rather than "Blessed..." but it reminds us that to be blessed is to be happy and joyful.

Why not end each day saying together:

The blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all,  
now and for ever. Amen.

Or you could sing a blessing. *May God bless and keep you* by Christopher Walker (Laudate) could be sung by everyone using 'us' instead of 'you' There might be times when it is appropriate to use 'you' when a child leaves the schools, moving house for example.



One of the key things about our church buildings is that they are places dedicated, consecrated, to a particular purpose. They are places where in word and sacrament God is present to us, and we seek to be present to God. Go into a church and we can 'feel' the holiness of the place. 'Feeling' this can make all the difference to what we do there. God is everywhere, but in a church we can more easily know God is with us.

In our worship in school things are often different. We gather in spaces used for all sorts of things —in the morning the school hall might be used for PE, later it's where we gather for lunch, later still we gather there for Mass. All the more important, when we celebrate Mass there we indicate that now this place is being used for something truly special and we ourselves are part of that.



One way of emphasising this is by decorating not just the place where the altar is placed, but also the doors through which we enter.

- As we move from the classrooms and corridors into the place of worship, the use of flowers or greenery, banners or hangings help us know we are moving from the 'ordinary' parts of the world to the place where God will meet together with his gathered people.
- Each class comes in procession led by a candle. Older children can often be used for this.
- Bowls of blessed water for us to dip our hands into and make the sign of the cross over ourselves, silently invite us to prepare for what we are going to do.
- Seats arranged around a central altar rather than just facing front shows that we are all part of things and not just spectators.

Children and teachers gathered together as worshippers shows this too. Here especially we meet as equals before God, not just the children for prayer and the teachers to 'supervise' but each of us called to pray and serve as example and encouragement to each other.

# Collective Worship

The following key principles have been developed to support school communities when devising or revising policy and practice related to Collective Worship.

The *Directory for Masses with Children* is the Church document that describes the key principles for celebrating with children and suggests how the Mass can be adapted according to the needs of the children. A copy of the text can be found at [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk).

## Principle 1

Every effort will be made to give children positive experiences, based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.

*...there is a fear of spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible; for recent psychological study has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood, because of the special religious receptivity proper to those years. (DMC 2)*

- Recall a liturgy you enjoyed: which was a positive experience?

## Principle 2

Acts of Worship will prepare children for the liturgical life of the Church.

*A fully Christian life is inconceivable without participation in the liturgical services in which the faithful, gathered in a single assembly, celebrate the paschal mystery. Therefore, the religious initiation of children must be in harmony with this purpose. (DMC 8)*

- How do we celebrate the paschal mystery (the life, death and resurrection of Jesus)?

## Principle 3

Acts of Worship will take into account, as far as possible, the age, aptitude and backgrounds of the children.

*Depending on their age and their psychological and social situation, children will gradually open their minds to the perception of Christian values and the celebration of the mystery of Christ. (DMC 9)*

- In preparing an Advent liturgy what differences would you make between Reception and Year 5?

## Principle 4

Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with those children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage.

*It is always necessary to keep in mind that such eucharistic celebrations must lead children toward the celebration of Mass with adults, especially the Masses at which the Christian community must come together on Sundays. (DMC 21)*

- How does the celebration of Mass in school relate to Sunday Mass in the parish?

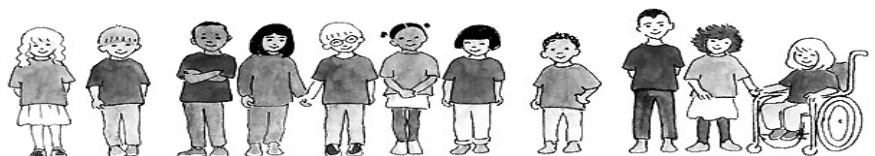
## Principle 5

Acts of Collective Worship will usually follow the basic structure of Christian Worship.

*Various kinds of celebrations may also play a major role in the liturgical formation of children and in their preparation for the Church's liturgical life. By the very fact of such celebrations children easily perceive some liturgical elements, for example, greetings, silence and common praise (especially when this is sung together). (DMC 13)*

- What liturgical elements can you identify in a recent Collective Worship in the school?

*With acknowledgment to the Diocese of Leeds*



## Forming liturgical ministers in school

A good celebration of liturgy involves liturgical ministers. They can be performing many functions within the liturgy; leading it, reading, singing or serving, to name a few.

When inviting people to be ministers it is important that they have necessary skills to 'do the job well' and that they are encouraged to develop these skills and begin to understand their role within the context of the whole celebration.

To develop liturgical ministry it is necessary to:

- have an understanding of the function and necessary skills for each ministry.
- identify people's gifts.
- develop these gifts through formation.
- encourage careful and suitable preparation for each liturgy.

This may seem to go against the often well-meaning desire to involve everyone in doing something as a means of participation. It is better for all to be engaged by a reading well proclaimed by one person than for numerous readers be more concerned about where their line comes and not appreciating the whole.

Part of the root of the word 'worship' is 'worthy'. What we offer to God in worship should be worthy, we offer to God our best. In preparing liturgy and choosing ministers it is important we offer our best. This means that children who are invited to be liturgical ministers are given formation appropriate to their level.

In the next 3 issues of *Spirit of the Season* there

will be more detailed material for readers, musicians and servers. The series will finish by looking at everyone gathered to celebrate: what skills do they need to participate, how should they be given formation in these skills and how do we prepare to celebrate?

### ———— Mary as model

At each end of Advent is a celebration of Mary and her role in preparing for and welcoming Jesus. On Monday 8 December we celebrate the Immaculate Conception and the Gospel is the Annunciation – Mary's yes to do God's will. On the 4th Sunday of Advent we hear the Gospel of the Visitation – Mary's visit to Elizabeth;



though the holidays will have started by then why not use this Gospel as central to special Advent service (a full text can be found in *God's Story 2* pg. 56).

Mary is a link between many of the themes of this issue.

- Mary **waits** and **prepares**.
- Mary is **blessed** by God.
- Mary is **welcomed** by her cousin Elizabeth.

*Use the following for Word Art*

Rejoice, Mary,  
God has blessed you  
and God is very close to you.  
*God's Story 2, pg. 55 based on Luke 1*

I want to please God.  
I am happy to do whatever  
God wants.  
*God's Story 2, pg.55 based on Luke 1*

How happy you are because  
you know God's message will  
come true!  
*God's Story 2, pg.56 based on Luke 1*



### Make an Advent Calendar

Behind the door of each day alternate between:

- a) a stage of preparation for welcoming a special visitor
- b) an invitation to demonstrate an act of service, a ministry, to do whatever God wants.

**HIA:** visitors

## Calendar

2003

### November

30 First Sunday of Advent  
*Cycle C begins for Sundays*

### December

8 Immaculate Conception  
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent  
25 Birth of our Lord  
28 Holy Family

2004

### January

1 Mary Mother of God  
6 Epiphany of the Lord  
11 Baptism of the Lord  
*Cycle II begins for weekdays*

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