

Advent: Religious Education Support Materials

These materials support the religious education enquiry process advocated in the local agreed syllabi in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The following activities are suggestions that may be used to support a learning enquiry based on Advent as a lead into the GenR8 presentation or as follow up.

Engaging and Enquiring		
Focus	Suggested questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
Waiting	How many days until your next birthday? How many minutes until your next meal? How many weeks until the end of term?	Talk about the idea of waiting; that we spend a lot of time waiting for things.
Packing Bags	What is your biggest packing mistake? What do you always take with you on holiday? What have you forgotten to take on cub/brownie camp?	Link back to the sketch - if GenR8 have already visited. Ask the children what they might pack for a really important event.
Advent Calendars	Who has an Advent calendar at home? Why do you have one? Have people always had Advent calendars? How have Advent calendars changed over time? Why do we have chocolate in our Advent calendars?	Find out about the history of advent calendars. Look at different examples. What do the children want to find out about advent? The following provides some useful information on Advent Calendars: http://request.org.uk/festivals/2013/07/30/advent-calendars/
Getting ready for a special visitor	How might we prepare for the visit of...? What might we change about what we do now? What might we change about our school to prepare?	Choose a famous person that the children are familiar with. Ask them to make a list of things they would need to do to prepare for their visit. Move on, to ask the children how they think Christians might prepare for Christmas.

Exploring		
Focus	Suggested questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
Poem: If God came down from heaven by Amy Robinson	<p>What do you think God might look like?</p> <p>Do you think God could come down from heaven?</p> <p>In what ways might God be like Santa Claus?</p> <p>In what ways might God be like Aladdin?</p> <p>Would you want God to visit your house?</p> <p>Why do you think God chose to come as a baby?</p>	Write their own poem to reflect the meaning of Advent. i.e. that Advent is about waiting for Christmas when Christians believe God came down to earth as a human being. Talk about what this means, and the nature of God using some of the questions.
Story of John the Baptist	<p>Linking back to the GenR8 presentation:</p> <p>What do you think Jesus would be like if he was on earth today? Why?</p> <p>Why did John say that one greater than him was coming? What did he mean?</p>	<p>The following may be helpful to for the children to learn about baptism today. http://request.org.uk/life/2014/09/08/baptism/</p> <p>Read the story of John the Baptist birth in Luke 1 v 5-20, and also learn more about the story in the GenR8 presentation in Luke 3 v1-18. Why not get the children to re-enact the story of John at the River Jordan?</p>
Advent Candles and their symbolism	<p>What do the candles represent?</p> <p>What other symbols might Christians use in Advent?</p> <p>How else might Christians symbolise hope, joy, love and peace?</p>	<p>The following provides background information on the Advent candles: http://request.org.uk/festivals/advent-festivals/2013/06/24/advent/</p> <p>Focus on the concepts of love, hope, peace and joy, and Jesus as light of the world.</p>

Evaluating and Expressing		
Focus	Suggested questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
Advent as preparation for welcoming Jesus	How might Christians express their welcome of Jesus at the end of Advent?	Create a special event to 'welcome' Jesus. This might be a church service or something more like a party. Encourage the children to think about all the different things they have learned about Advent and include these in their event. e.g. a 'Light Party'
Incarnation- a focus on advent as a reminder that Christians believe God came down from heaven in human form.	Why do Christians believe God came as a baby? Why is it important for Christians that Jesus was God and human at the same time? If God came down to earth now, where would he go? What would he do?	Create sculptures of Jesus to represent how children think he would appear now if he was to 'come down from heaven' in the 21st Century. You may want to link to news items about a sculpture of a 'homeless' Jesus which was put in various places. http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/galleries/p0265l3x Create a poster or TV trailer advertising Christmas and what it is that people are waiting for. Use photoshop (or similar) to create images of Jesus imposed into every day scenes in the local and global community.
Engaging with Advent practically	How do Christians try and bring Advent hope, love, joy and peace? What difference does believing in the 'Advent hope' make to Christians?	In 2013, Christian Aid provided a different way to do Advent. The following link helps children to find out more about Waleed Badir. There is something to do each day during advent. http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Advent-2013-countdown-for-children.pdf The Children's Society has an appeal linked to Christingle, which takes place during Advent. For more information and resources see http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/fundraising-and-appeals/events-and-activities/christingle