

December 2024

Advent starts right at the beginning of December this year. It's a special time of year and more than just the 'busy run up to Christmas'. Why not take some time, amongst all the busyness, preparations and celebrations that anticipate the coming of Jesus, to pause, reflect and get ready to welcome Jesus with open minds, open hearts and open lives.

This newsletter shares some of the content children will experience in school throughout December and suggests ways for you to engage with them about it. We hope it is a useful resource for your family prayer time.

Year of Jubilee

The Assembly for the first week of Advent introduces the Year of Jubilee, which officially begins on Christmas Eve with Pope Francis opening the [Holy Door](#) at St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

A Jubilee Year is an ancient celebration, now celebrated in the Church every 25 years. Pope Francis has named 2025's Year of Jubilee - **Pilgrims of Hope** and it's an invitation to place our hope in God's love for us and to share His love with others. It's a celebration of reconciliation and renewal.

But this is just a taster - you'll hear more about this Holy Year in 2025!

Open Minds

As well as the anticipation of the Year of Jubilee, this Assembly reminds children of the meaning of Advent and invites them to ask Jesus to open their minds.

With minds open to welcome Jesus into our lives, and be like Jesus to those we meet, we can learn how to respond to difficulties with strength and courage.

With your child, you might like to...

- *Set aside a time to find out more about Jesus in the Scriptures. You might like to share and discuss your own favourite stories of Jesus' life.*
- *Talk about Advent as a holy time of preparation for Christmas and add a holy activity or prayer to daily Advent Calendar opening times. You might like to use our Jesse Tree resource (see below).*
- *Think of ways as a family you could be open to the needs of others this Advent and be more like Jesus in your words and actions at home.*

Jesse Tree

Once again, our beautiful 'Jesse Tree' resource is available for schools and families at home. It's a bit like an Advent calendar and based on the Advent tradition of spiritual preparation through tracing Jesus' ancestry. We hope that parents and carers will take the opportunity to share children's excitement in discovering the daily stories about Jesus' family tree. You can access the 'Jesse Tree' through the [Prayer & Liturgy Parent Portal](#).

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

Open Our Eyes

As Advent progresses and anticipation for Christmas builds, the Celebration of the Word assemblies offer children a chance to pray with a simple song that helps prepare their hearts to welcome Jesus this Christmas.

St Augustine said singing in worship is like praying twice, and children are invited to spend time with Jesus through singing "Open Our Eyes" by CJM Music.

You might like to sing this song together as part of your family prayer time or simply listen and let the words sink into your heart. Access the full lyric video by logging into the [Prayer and Liturgy Parent Portal](#).

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