



There is an accompanying PowerPoint for this assembly



12. Jesus' Big Family Tree

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. We begin this academic year with a reminder that it's good to be grateful. Research reveals the importance of gratitude even in the midst of adversity: that being aware of each day's 'blessings' can counteract anxiety, and so this term, we want to encourage schools to continue to do this through their collective worship. We provide a script with reflective ideas for classroom use and PowerPoint; both have additional content that you may wish to spread across the week and use in classrooms to ensure that you are meeting the requirement for daily collective worship and to support the spiritual flourishing of your whole school community.

You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. **One of the most important – and challenging – beliefs that Christians have about Jesus is that he is God 'incarnate' – literally, God 'in the flesh', which is at the heart of the celebration of Christmas. This assembly marks the start of the season of Advent, and links to Jesus' family tree, which is one expression of Jesus' humanity. We also link to our [online advent calendar](#) which picks up on the presence of Angels in the Christmas narrative, and across the Old Testament. This year, Advent begins on Sunday November 29th, so if you are using these collective worship materials on Monday 30th, the calendar won't open yet. You may wish to use this on December 1st, as you open the first door, or on November 30th, in preparation. The first & final slides in the accompanying PowerPoint contain phrases that you might want to use before you open a door – and afterwards.**



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

Use this section to reference how your school's vision & values help you to prepare for this season of Advent. You may also have routines and 'rituals' that are a part of your school life at this time of year. Your unique vision, by its very nature, has profound connections to the salvation story, and the person of Jesus, which should be celebrated at this time of year.

How might this link with the Guildford Diocese spirituality offer?

This icons in this section show how the collective worship theme links with the elements of **self, others, beauty** and/or **beyond**

-  **That each person has a 'birth story' which is a part of their own unique 'story'**
-  **That we are each part of a bigger family, including a school 'family', and that each family member is special & connected**
-  **That, for Christians, at the heart of the Christmas 'story' is an ordinary family and also the beautiful mystery of God's love**

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. To help any children with visual timetabling, we include an icon for each different part of this collective worship in the top right corner of each slide.
- Choose some family photos to show to children at the start of this collective worship, especially those from the past who are a part of your family 'tree'. You will of course need to bear in mind that there are many different models and experiences of family in your school community, so some aspects of your discussions together may need sensitive handling.
- **Do use an Advent candle to light at the start and blow out at the end of the collective worship – or use the opening stilling slide instead.**
- **Further opportunities for spiritual development: please use our [online Advent calendar](#).** Each school day during Advent (and extra for weekends if desired), there are materials to use for classroom reflection. There is a slide in this week's collective worship resources to introduce the calendar to pupils if you wish to use this in school.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Flickering Advent candle stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly here, watch the candle as it flickers or the snow as it falls.....**[PAUSE]**

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to watch....**[PAUSE]**

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....**[PAUSE]**

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today.....**[PAUSE]**

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will..... **Look at some photos.....think about some words together....and then reflect on what they might mean for us here in this school community as we start Advent together.**



'Count your Blessings'

12. Jesus' Big Family History

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But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....we have a brand new greeting, especially for this Advent season as we begin to move towards Christmas....

- **Slide 2:** Use the Advent greeting on the screen.

Leader: As we light our Advent candle...

All: May our time today brighten our lives, like light in the darkness.

Engaging:

- **Slide 3: Who might these people be? [Insert your own family photographs here.....]**
Talk children through some photos from your family album that are important to you. Can children see any family likenesses?
- **Slide 4: I wonder who's in your family 'tree'?**
Talk together about immediate and wider family, such as cousins, and grandparents – and whether children know anything about people from further back in their family history. Are there any interesting stories from your family history? [Remember that there are many different models of family, and that some children may not know much – or wish to divulge much – about their family, or might be facing difficult situations in their home life.]
If it helps, refer back to your own family, referring to the photos you have shown as an illustration: you are just wanting children to get an idea that families can be quite big – and go back through time.]
People sometimes call this their 'family tree' because each part of their family history is like a branch, that grows and spreads out over time.
Preparing for a new family member is something that some of you might have experienced if you have smaller brothers or sisters – or even cousins!
A new life is always worth celebrating, and so we can maybe understand why each year, the birth of Jesus is remembered by many people, and the story of Jesus' family is retold.
- **Slide 5:** In Matthew's version of the story, we can see Jesus' family 'tree' – it's a lot of names [pick out any people whose stories you have shared – the references to King David are highlighted in yellow] But here are the most important words.... **He (that's Jesus!) came from the family of David. David came from the family of Abraham.....And then at the end.....Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus.**
Jesus would not only be part of King David's family, he would be the Son of God.
- **Slide 6: The Annunciation**
But there words in other parts of the narrative that are even more important than these.
Let's zoom in on a very important moment at the very start of the story, which thousands of artists across time have captured, like this painting here....
When the Angel Gabriel visited Mary, long before Jesus was born, the Angel spoke these words:
'...God will give him [that's Jesus] the throne of King David, his ancestor....He will be called the Son of God.' [Luke 1:32,25]
At Christmas, Christians will celebrate that Jesus is Mary's Son – and God's: Jesus is human – like his mother Mary – and divine – like his Father, God.
- **Slide 7 [optional]:** This Advent, we will also join together as a school family each day as we open the doors on a very special Advent calendar that will take us to the end of term – and help us to prepare for Christmas..... In our Advent calendar, we will be exploring some more moments from the long history of Jesus' family and God's people where angels have visited, so we hope you enjoy exploring these stories with us.....and wondering together.
[If you want to, open the first door image and use the words which explain it....]

Slide 8: Responding (and words for worship)

We're going to have some quiet moments now to begin/continue our wondering!.....

....you might like to look at the flame of the candle as you think....

...we've heard about Mary's visit from the Angel Gabriel...listen again to the Angel's words about Jesus:

'...God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor...He will be called the Son of God.'

.....I wonder how it felt to know that the Rescuer, God's Son, would come as a tiny baby?....



....I wonder if this is what people expected?....
....I wonder which other stories we might share together during this Advent to help us to wonder?....
...I wonder what they might say to us?....

Now I'm going to use a short prayer, asking God to help us as we begin this Advent adventure together. If you would like to join me and make the prayer your own, then join in with 'Amen' at the end – or if you prefer, just be still with your own thoughts.....

Slide 9: Prayer

Dear God

As we begin this Advent season, may our hearts be open to hear this special story of the very first Christmas. May we, like Mary, who heard the words of the Angel Gabriel, find things to make us wonder this Advent.

Slide 10: Amen

To listen to & sing:

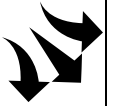
[Mary had a baby](#) (BBC) [The Virgin Mary had a baby boy](#) (BBC), [The Angels Knew](#) (NBD) or [Silent Night](#) (BBC) or school choice

Slide 11: Sending

(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.



Further ideas to build spirituality in your classroom reflection areas:

Use the online Advent calendar linked from here, to support spirituality in your classrooms during Advent

