



Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Special Occasions – Christmas

Assembly



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Advent – forward looking

Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider the way they think about the future in the light of the Christian festival of Advent

Introduction

Forward looking

Are you looking forward to Christmas? Everything around us encourages us to do so. Not only have Christmas trees been erected in town centres, Christmas lights been switched on and TV adverts bombarded us with suggestions for presents, food and entertainment, but the weather has also taken a hand. Heavy snowfall has transformed the landscape of both countryside and city into a Christmas card scene. It feels like Christmas already. And we still have the real Christmas to look forward to.

Looking Deeper

Advent

For those who are Christians, this is the season of Advent. During this four week period leading up to Christmas day, Christians remind themselves of the way the Jewish people had for centuries looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, the one who would inaugurate God's new Kingdom on earth. In church, passages from the Bible are read in which God promised that one day the Messiah would come. Christians believe that God kept his promise when Jesus was born in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago.

There are other Bible passages read during the Advent season. These contain other promises from God saying that, however bad things might seem in the world, in the end God will bring his peace, justice and joy. Christians believe those are promises for the future still.

Even outside the Christian faith this Advent season is remembered through Advent calendars. I'm sure there's one in many of your homes. Starting at December 1st one door on the calendar has been opened each day to reveal some small gift, usually made of chocolate. The idea is similar to the Christian festival, a countdown to the crucial date of December 25th. A way of looking forward to Christmas.

There are two ways of looking forward. The obvious one is anticipation, full of hope and excitement, especially experienced by young children. Looking forward is about waiting and longing for the day to come, full of presents, food and entertainment. That's exactly what the Jewish people were doing in waiting for the Messiah to come. When he came they expected their nation to be set free from the occupation by foreign powers and for them to begin a new era of peace and prosperity. What they got in Jesus was maybe not exactly what they expected, but the Christian belief is that it was even better.

The other way to look forward would take us way beyond Christmas Day. People who are forward looking, while enjoying the present and celebrating each special occasion, also have longer term hopes. These hopes may be about their own career or vocation. They may be about bringing peace where there is war, or justice where there is injustice. They may be about developing a relationship. This kind of looking forward continues when Christmas is over. It's got a momentum that takes us into a new year, into the rest of our life.



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Are you looking forward to Christmas? I hope it lives up to your expectations. Are you looking forward? I hope your vision of the future is a big vision, and that you reach it.

Reflection

When Christmas is over and the mood feels flat, what do I look forward to . . .

When I'm 20?

When I'm 40?

When I'm 60?

And after that?

Prayer

Creator God, Father of Jesus,
Thank you for the anticipation of
Christmas.

May we look forward and forward and
forward into your future.

Amen

Thought for the day

How far forward am I looking?

