



2nd December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Celebration of the Word – Half Term Two, Week Six

This week, as we light our first Advent candle within school- our Gospel reading and school **Celebration of the Word is from Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**. In this passage, Jesus speaks of signs that will announce His coming and reminds us to stay awake and ready. He says, “Stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.” This message calls us to live with hope and trust in God, even when facing challenges, and to remain alert to His presence in our lives.

This Gospel aligns perfectly with the start of **Advent**, a special time in our Church calendar when we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. At school, we mark this season with acts of reflection, prayer and charity throughout the school. As we light the first Advent candle, we focus on **hope**—hope in God’s promises and His presence in our daily lives.

Our children can live this out at school by offering encouragement to a friend, being patient in difficult situations, or joining in with our Advent activities, such as taking part in prayer times or supporting charitable events around school. Let us remind our children that by living in hope and readiness, they reflect the light of Christ and prepare their hearts for His presence

This week, our focus is on the Catholic Social Teaching principle of **Rights and Responsibilities**, which reminds us that every person has basic rights that must be respected, as well as responsibilities to others and the wider community. As we begin **Advent**, we invite our children to consider how they can honour this principle by recognising their responsibilities to care for others and support those in need. Advent is a time to reflect on how our actions can bring light and hope to others, just as Jesus brings light to the world.

Just a reminder that we will be hosting a **Carols for Caritas concert on 12th December at 6:30pm**. Tickets for this festive event are available on Parent Pay. There will also be a raffle with some wonderful prizes such as a £100 Marks and Spencer voucher, Sunday Lunch for two at Dakota and many many more! Raffle tickets are also available in advance on Parent Pay. It promises to be a delightful and festive evening.

Our **Foodbank collection** was a tremendous success, with enough donations gathered to support two different food banks within Stockport. These charity initiatives would not be possible without the invaluable contributions of our pupils, parents, and the volunteers who kindly transport our donations each year. A heartfelt thank you to everyone for your generous support of the Catholic Life at St James’.

On 12th December- we are also hosting a **retired parishioner party** here at school. It will commence at 11:15am, and will be a lovely occasion for us to join with local parishioners to celebrate the festive season. If you have a retired relative or friend who would like to attend- please email me at h.purkiss@stjamesheadle.co.uk by Monday 9th December.

Last week, we began our special **Travelling Nativity reflection**, and it has been a wonderful moment of prayer and reflection to start Advent with our Key Stage Three children. This meaningful activity will continue throughout the season, enriching our spiritual preparations for Christmas.



The Travelling Nativity will continue to visit each form until 18th December, and we hope it will inspire and enrich your child's experience of Advent, keeping the spirit of Christ at the centre of our preparations.

The month of December is a special time for the Catholic community as we journey through **Advent**, a season of preparation and anticipation for the birth of Jesus. Our school prayer for Advent reflects this theme, guiding us to focus on hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare our hearts for Christ. Each day during lessons, we come together in prayer, using this time to reflect on the meaning of the season and to consider how we can share Christ's light with others.

I have included our Advent prayer below for your own reflection at home, so you can join us in this journey of faith and preparation during this holy season.

Prayer for Advent

Christ, come into our world of darkness

Light up our lives with your coming.

Fulfil all our longings with the joy of your birth

Strengthen our resolve to work for change in our world

And to share the hope of your birth that each Advent brings.

Amen.

We also continue with our **lunchtime prayer** each day:

Lunchtime Prayer

Bless us, Oh Lord,

*and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty
through Christ, Our Lord.*

Amen.

This week, we turn to the words of Pope Francis: *"Mary teaches us to say 'yes' to God, helping us to be open to His love and grace."* Just as Mary courageously embraced God's call, we too are encouraged to say "yes" to God in our daily lives by showing love, compassion, and faithfulness. This week, we can challenge ourselves and our children to reflect on how we can follow Mary's example by being open to God's presence. Let us consider how we can bring others closer to Christ during Advent through small acts of kindness, patience, and generosity.

As always, I welcome any feedback you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me at h.purkiss@stjamesheadle.uk.

Yours faithfully

Miss H Purkiss

Associate Assistant Headteacher