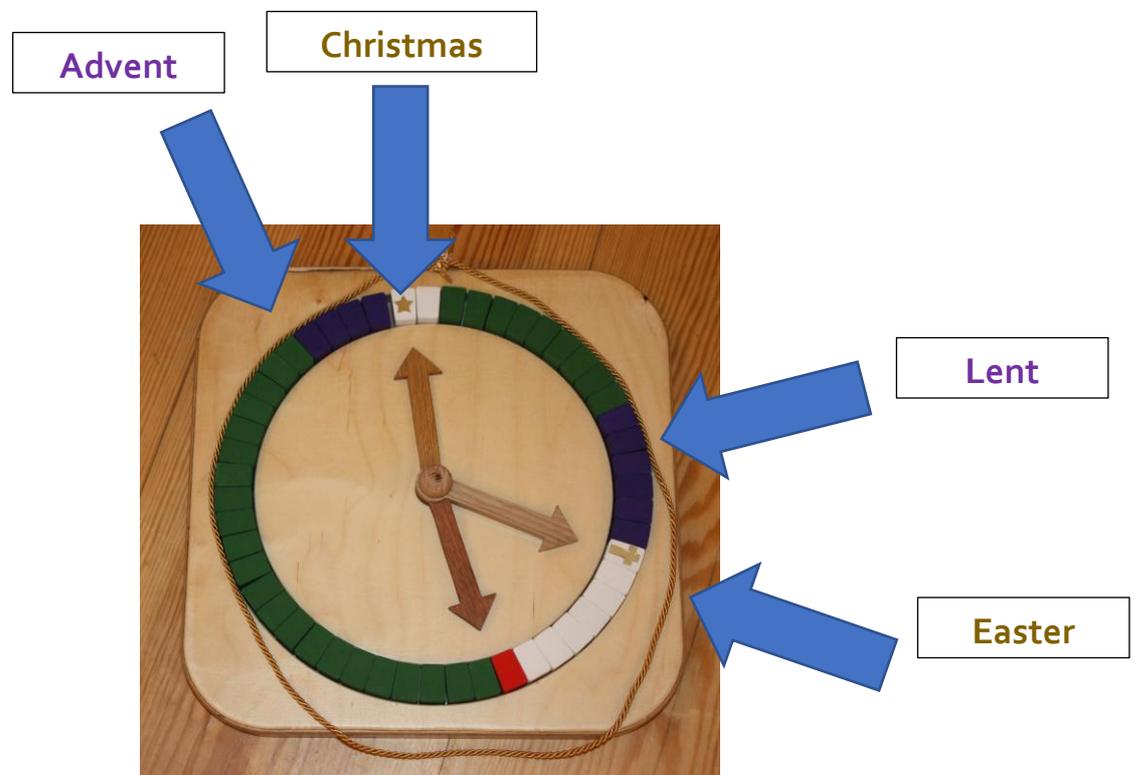


Advent

At St Jérôme C E Bilingual School we teach the children about the circle of the Church year.

The time for getting ready for the great mystery of Christmas is called Advent. From the Latin word *Adventus*, meaning 'coming'. Advent is the first season of the church year. It begins four Sundays before Christmas and is set aside as a season to **prepare** for Christmas, Christ's first coming, and to remember that Christians believe that he will come again. As a season of preparation, it is similar to the season of Lent which helps us to prepare for the mystery of Easter.



There are a wide range of traditions from different parts of the world that have developed that help Christians to **reflect and prepare** during the season of advent.

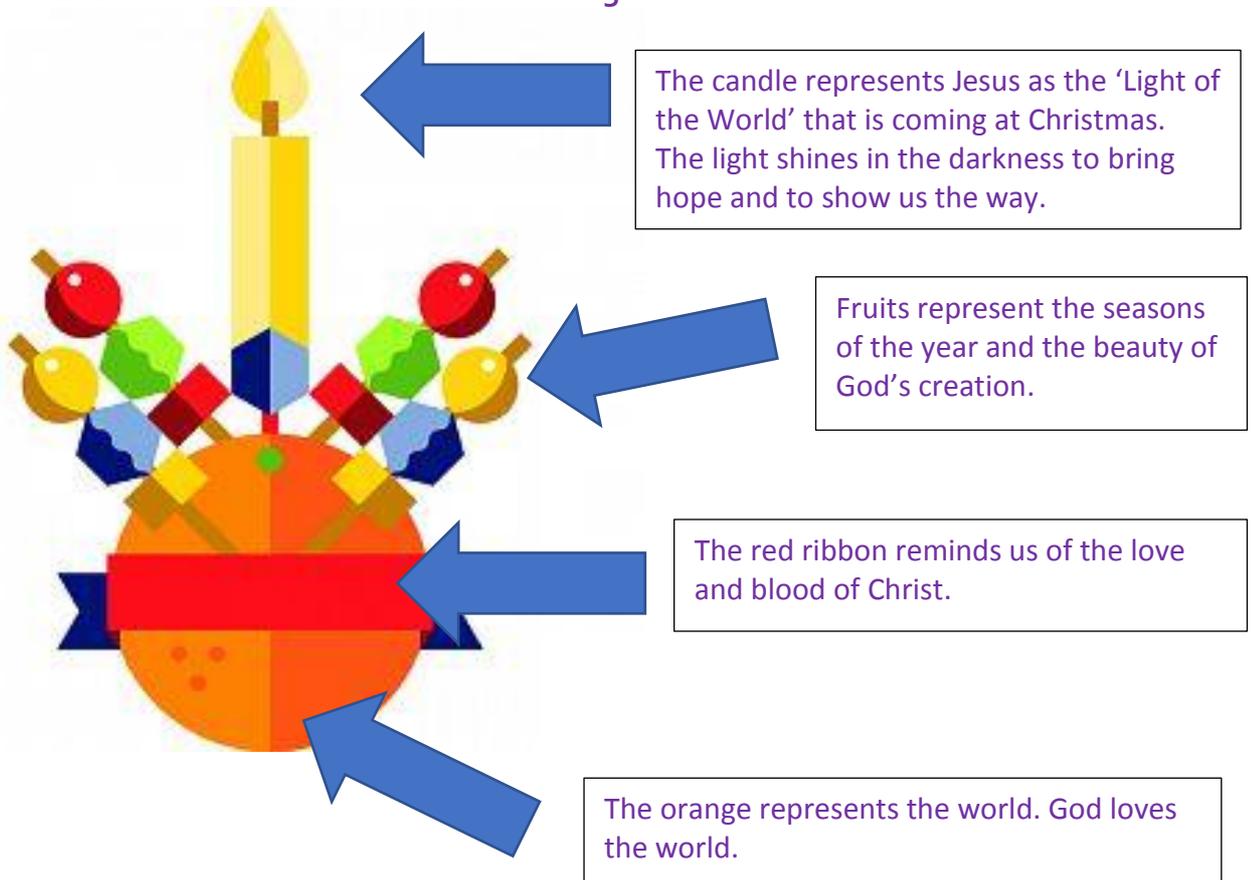
Many people count down the days of advent using an **advent calendar** or with an **advent candle**. In school, as in many churches, we have an **advent wreath** with candles that we light in the four weeks of advent.

Traditions of Light in Advent



- The **first candle** symbolizes **hope** and is called the 'Prophet's Candle'. The prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, waited in hope for the birth of Jesus.
- The **second candle** represents **faith** and is called 'Bethlehem's Candle'. Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David.
- The **third candle** symbolises **joy** and is called the 'Shepherd's Candle'. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. The colour rose signifies joy.
- The **fourth candle** represents **peace** and is called the 'Angel's Candle'. The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace--He came to bring people close to God and to each other again.
- The (optional) **fifth candle** represents **light and purity** and is called 'Christ's candle'. It is placed in the middle of the wreath and is lit on Christmas Day.

During advent at St Jérôme School we hold a **Christingle** service.



The history of the Christingle can be traced back to Bishop Johannes de Watteville, who started the tradition in Germany in 1747. This tradition has become popular in the United Kingdom and is promoted by the charity the Children's Society.

Traditions of Journeys and Family in Advent

During advent we remember the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. We tell the story of the 'Holy Family' in word and song through the **Nativity** play.



There is also an opportunity for families at St Jérôme School to host 'Mary and Joseph' in their homes. This tradition, called **Posada** originates in Mexico. The word *posada* means 'inn' or 'shelter' in Spanish, and in this tradition, the Bible story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and their search for a place to stay is re-enacted. Children bring home Mary and Joseph and take a photograph of them enjoying hospitality in their homes.



The tradition of **The Jesse Tree** first started in Medieval times. A Jesse Tree is used to tell the story of the bible from the creation of the world to Christmas. Characters (represented by ornaments) are added to branches as their story is told. The name of this special tree comes from Jesse who was the Father of the great Jewish King David. The prophet Isaiah wrote of a new branch that would come from the stump of Jesse. A branch is a sign of new life and beginnings. Jesus was a descendant of King David and the Jesse Tree is like a family tree.



Traditions of Prayer, Silence and Reflection

In contrast to the business of Christmas shopping and other preparations, the season of advent invites Christians to be still, quiet and reflect on the journey of their lives and what is really important to them. Many Christians decide to try to take a time of quiet reflection each day during advent.

The Diocese of London is promoting an App that can be downloaded to electronic devices with daily reflections for the season of advent. It is free to download from the App Store. Search for 'A Good Advent'.



Translating the love of God in words and actions