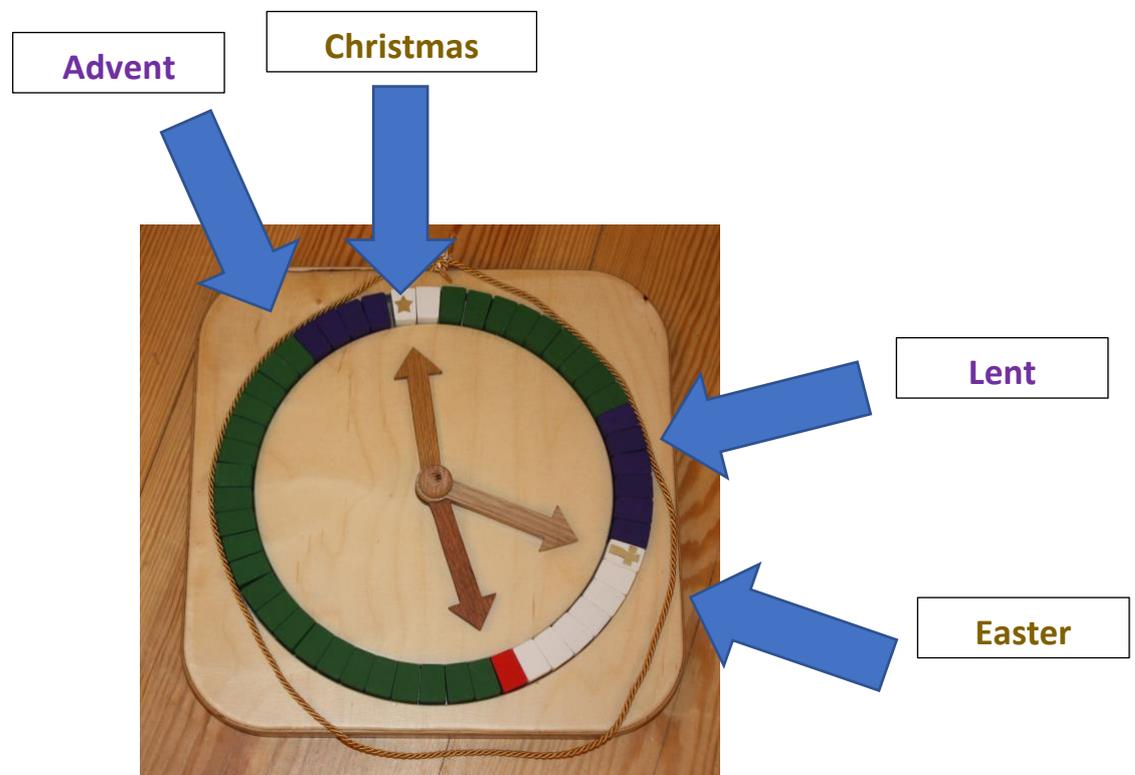




# Advent

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.

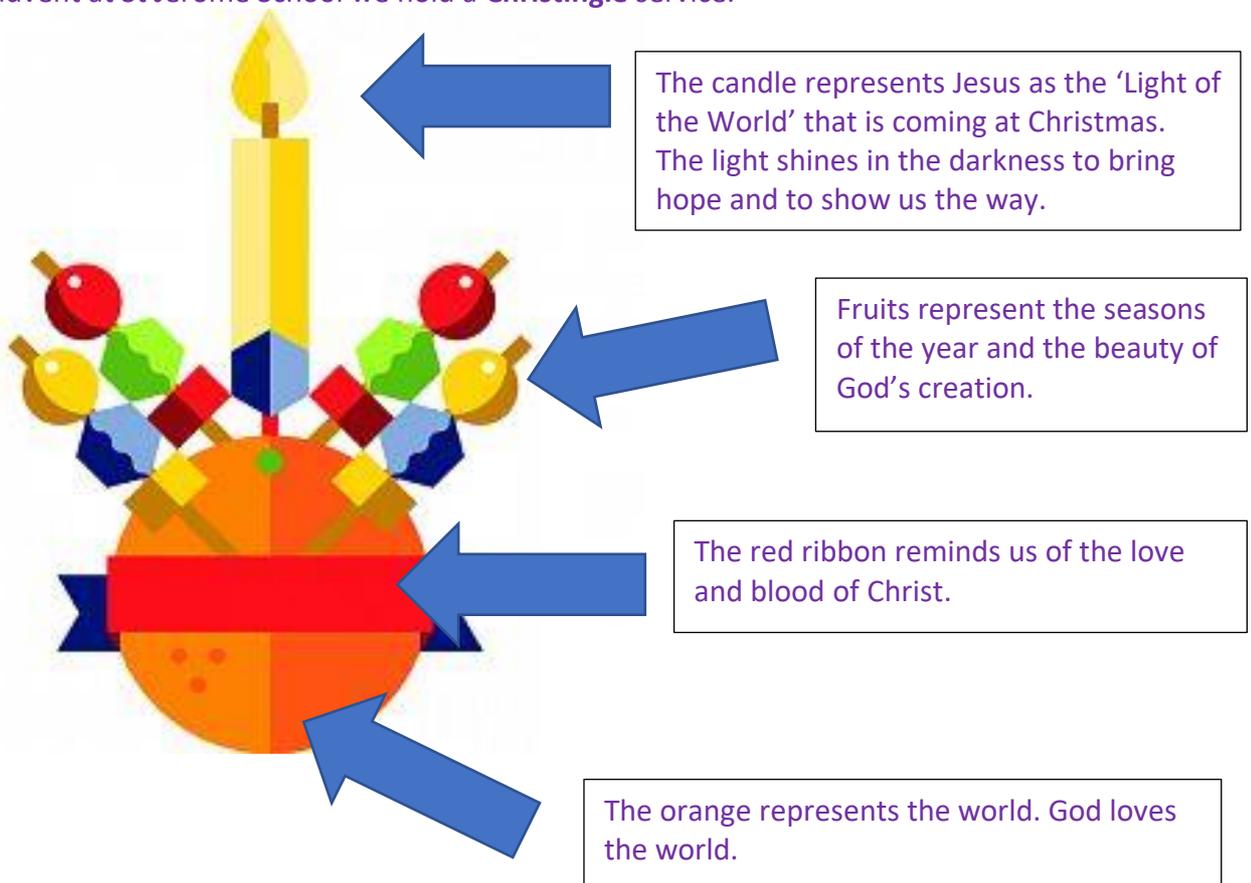
## Traditions of Light in Advent



- 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 and is lit on Christmas Day.

On the school website you will find a video of Mrs Tyler making an Advent wreath and you may like to make one for your home. Children have been told never to light candles without an adult.

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. Key Stage 1 will perform this later in the term and it will be shared via google classroom.



There is usually an opportunity for families at St Jérôme School to host ‘Mary and Joseph’ in their homes. Unfortunately this year we are unable to do this in the same way due to the restrictions of the global pandemic. 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 usually bring home Mary and Joseph and take a photograph of them enjoying hospitality in their homes. This year we would encourage you if you have a Nativity set to take a photograph of this in your home and send it to the School Office.



In your family you might like to talk about these questions:

- What journeys have we been on together this year? where did we go? how long did the journeys take? how did we feel on the journey? was it easy or hard?

Are there journeys that we could not take and that we have missed?

- What did it feel like when we got home from our journey? What do we like about our home? What are we thankful for?

- Who has visited our home this year? Who have we shown hospitality to this year? Who has not been able to visit?

- Who has hosted us in their home this year and has shown hospitality to us?

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. Perhaps this year, when we are preparing for Christmas and living with restrictions, we can take the opportunity to reflect and pray.

It is our part to seek  
God's to grant what we ask;  
Ours to make a beginning  
God's to bring to completion;  
Ours to offer what we can,  
God's to finish what we cannot.

St Jerome (347 - 420 AD)

Translating the love of God in  
words and actions