



GRATITUDE & WILLINGNESS

OUR LADY AND ST BEDE

# ORDINARY PEOPLE

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## ORDINARY PEOPLE

## Advent Vision:

**“We are called not to live a life of survival, but of significance”**

*Fr Dermott Donnelly*

Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds and the Wise Men; every Advent we hear their story. This significant story has shaped the history of world. But who were these people? Why did God choose them? How did the events change their lives? Were these people super heroes? Were they different from me and you? Or were they simply ordinary people who were given an extraordinary job? Normal people called to live a life of true significance?

During this season of Advent, we aim to delve deeper into the story, to ask the challenging questions and to reflect on our own lives. What does God ask of us? How can we live a life of significance?

### During Advent we focus on:

#### **Celebrating God’s Word**



*Enriching our worshipping and spiritual community.*

In discovering and renewing a genuine love for the word of God, we nurture our relationship with Christ. Through the Bible, we meet Christ who is alive in his word. We can listen to him speaking to us and guiding us in our daily lives.

#### **Living God’s Word**

*Enriching our social action and outreach.*

Scripture teaches us how to live in society, to respect the wonder of creation, especially each human being, and to work towards the common good. The Scriptures inspire us to put faith into action, living God’s word and doing God’s word.



#### **Sharing God’s Word**



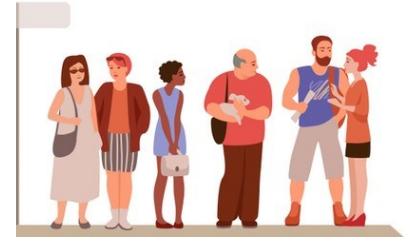
*Enriching our formation, proclamation and evangelisation.*

The Bible has inspired, and continues to inspire, learning, culture, art, music and literature. It enables science and faith to build up mutual understanding through dialogue. It challenges technology and social media to open up new ways to encounter and share Christ in the world.



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## Key Dates



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Date	Activity
Monday 28th	Hamper Launch
Monday 5th	St Joseph Mass
Thursday 8th	Sacrament of Reconciliation
Friday 9th	Primary school Mini-Mission
Wednesday 14th	Christmas Lunch
Thursday 15th	Advent Liturgy for community 6pm start
Friday 16th	Advent Liturgy for community Hamper deadline
Monday 19th	SVP trip to distribute hampers Advent afternoon tea for community Staff celebration & Secret Santa 3.30pm
Tuesday 20th	Christmas activities & celebration (pupils and staff welcome to wear a Christmas jumper/ accessory) Early finish 12.30pm <i>*Tuesday to follow slightly different timings to usual</i>



## **Advent– How can I be involved?**



### **Staff Celebration/ Secret Santa**

On Monday 19th, we will have our Christmas staff celebration in Hall A. During the celebration staff will have an opportunity to swap their secret Santa gifts!

### **Christmas Lunch**

During the week we will also be having Christmas Lunch on Wednesday. All staff are welcome to come and eat their dinner with the pupils and support if possible!

### **Advent Liturgy– Community**

For the first time since the pandemic, we will host our Advent Liturgy for our wider school community. All parents, carers, parishioners and members of our wider school community will be welcomed into school for a special evening of music, drama and reflection.

### **Advent Liturgy– Pupils**

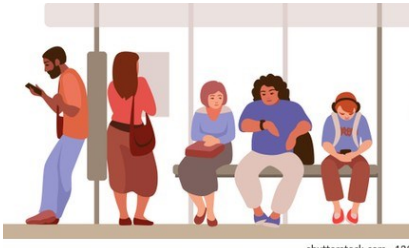
Our Advent liturgy will be performed live this year for all year groups. Pupils will spend an hour in St Mary's hall as they are invited to reflect on the theme of Advent through prayer, drama and music.

### **Christmas carols with the community**

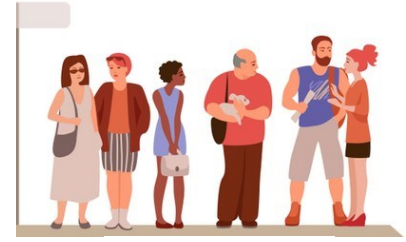
This year the choir will be singing carols with the community (location and date tbc). This is always a lovely opportunity for our pupils to share the joy and the true meaning of Christmas with our local community. During this time pupils also raise money to go towards our Christmas Hamper appeal.

### **Christmas cards at Sainsbury's**

During Advent pupils will be chosen to hand out Christmas cards at Sainsbury's. The Christmas card will be chosen from the competition ran by Miss Woollett every year in the Art Department. This is always a moving experience for both pupils and staff and it is part of our outreach work in the local community.



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### **Advent afternoon Tea for local community**

We will be inviting guests from both our parishes, the Asylum seekers project in Stockton and Stockton Hope project to join some of our pupils and choir for afternoon tea and carols.

### **Primary mini mission**

On Friday 9th December, Y5 pupils from our four main feeder schools have been invited into Our Lady and St Bede. The morning will be full of song, activities, dance, prayer and input led by our school Mini Mission Team. Pupils from the Mini Mission Team will prepare the morning and lead our primary pupils.

### **Reconciliation**

Fr. Mark along with Fr. Cooper and Fr. Ollie will be joining us over lunchtime on Thursday 8th December for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Reconciliation is an opportunity to reflect on the struggles we all face in life and to ask for forgiveness for the times when we have got things wrong. The priest will absolve us of our sins enabling us to enter Christmas with a fresh outlook. Those of us who are not Catholic are also welcome to speak with the priests and to receive a beautiful blessing.

### **Christmas activities & celebration**

We are currently working with the PLT to confirm plans for Tuesday 20th. It will be a morning full of Christmas activities & celebration where pupils and staff will be welcome to wear a Christmas jumper/ accessory.

Early finish 12.30pm

*\*Tuesday to follow slightly different timings to usual*

# Christmas Hampers

- During Advent we think of those less fortunate than ourselves and as a school we continue to show our support and generosity with our Food Hamper campaign. The hampers will be distributed to families in our local parishes.
- Our food hampers will include basics such as tins, rice, pasta, sugar, coffee and tea. Also some Christmas treats, biscuits, crisps and cakes. This year there has been a special request for toiletries.
- Form groups will be allocated families. We will be given some basic information about the people in this family and their needs. Each form will aim to make between 3-5 hampers, or more if possible.
- Boxes will be available from the Wb 28th of November. We will distribute these.



**Decoration of the boxes this year will take place during lunch time with the SVP/ community group.**

**All hampers will need to be completed by Friday 16th December at the latest and left in the Chapel.**



## School at Advent

- As we begin our Advent journey, the colour purple will be very visible throughout the school. It is the liturgical colour for the Season of Advent. Both Halls will be our main visual focal points for Advent, with one of our Nativity Cribs to be set up in St Mary's Hall.
- As one of our virtues this half term is Gratitude, this year we will also be creating a visual Advent display of our own. Each pupil and member of staff will receive a Christmas tag, on which they can write a message of gratitude for one person in their life that they are truly grateful for. These will be placed on both Christmas trees and pupils and staff will be invited to stop and read.



## Prayer Stations

- During Advent we will be launching our new prayer stations in each form room. These will be focal points to be used during times of prayer and reflection during form time and lessons.
- These spaces will be owned by the pupils ensuring that they are used appropriately, are well-cared for and are conducive to prayer. Two pupils from each form will be nominated to look after the prayer station on behalf of the form group.
- During times of prayer and reflection (including liturgies) staff will be invited to light the candle as a symbol that Jesus, the light of our world, is present with us at this sacrosanct time.



## Wait a Minute It's Advent

- This Advent, we will journey alongside our fantastic Diocesan Youth Ministry Team and their special guests for 'Wait a Minute– It's Advent'.
- Every day, for the first few minutes of P4, staff will show a YouTube video produced by YMT.
- Staff will turn the lights off, light the candle and play the video.
- Each day, the short reflection will focus on a different aspect on the run up to Christmas, pupils will be invited to pause, reflect and pray.



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