

A five part journey through Advent designed to be used by households—helping us to shine as Lights for Christ.

Travelling Light at home

Welcome

The Bible is full of comings and goings. People travel, sometimes long distances, sometimes just locally. We can learn a lot from these journeys to help us on our own journey.

In this Advent devotional, we follow a few of these travellers. We read their stories, think about how they felt and what we might learn from them.

Using this resource

This short weekly devotional is written to be used by households. It has been written to be inclusive of children but it doesn't require children to use. Each slot aims to be about 10-15 minutes...but please adapt it to your needs to make it shorter or allow it to run longer. The aim is not to do everything but to do the things that most stand out to you.

Travelling Light

These short devotionals have been inspired by 'Travelling Light' a small group resource. It's part of the *Lights for Christ* resources produced by the **Diocese of Sheffield**, which are designed to help us think about how our faith impacts our daily lives. We'd definitely recommend having a look if you are part of a group or want to delve deeper yourself. You can find the small group materials here:

www.lightsforchrist.uk/travellinglight.

PART 1 – HEADING FOR THE HILL COUNTRY

Q. What do you need to get ready for Christmas?

Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas day. It's a very special time as we get ready and think about the friends and family we love and want to celebrate with. We have Advent as a time to prepare our hearts as we think about God coming to the world as a baby.

Receiving the Light

An angel had appeared to a young girl called Mary. The angel had told her she was going to give birth to a special baby and that he would be God's son. Mary travelled to see her cousin Elizabeth... Elizabeth was very old but she was pregnant with another special baby. When Elizabeth saw her she said:

 **Read Luke 1:43-45** (Or for a longer passage Luke 1:39-56)

"You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. You are blessed because you believed what the Lord said to you would really happen."

(International Children's Bible)

Walking in the Light

Both these women will have been very surprised but they celebrated together. They both trusted God even when God's promise seemed impossible.

You might want to think, talk, write or draw using one of these ideas...



Who do you go to when you have special news? Why do you trust that person?



I wonder what Elizabeth and Mary were feeling when they met up...? Were they excited, nervous, happy, worried...



The Bible shares a song Mary sang when she met Elizabeth (Luke 1:46-56). It is full of gratitude. What good things are you grateful for?



Reflecting the Light

How might we show Mary and Elizabeth's trust, kindness and love to others?



Show someone that you care. You might travel to their house like Mary did or write a letter, give them a call or draw them a picture.



Many people are worried at Christmas. How could you help? E.g. drop food into the foodbank, clear toys and clothes for charity.



Write your own song or poem about what God has done for you and others. Share it with someone else.



Winter Wander

This week, why not travel a little yourself if you are able. Why not take a short walk along your street or around your neighbourhood? You could pray for whoever is behind the doors and shop windows you pass. Keep an eye out for beautiful Christmas lights and pray for God's light to shine there.

PART 2 – THE ROADS TO BETHLEHEM

Q. Do you like travelling? What makes it fun or boring?

Jesus was born just after a very long journey. Mary and Joseph will have had a long hard time on their walk. But they will have met many interesting people on the way and perhaps even people who stopped to help.

Receiving the Light

Jesus' birth happened when whole countries of people were travelling around. The rulers (the Romans) ordered everyone to go to the place they were born so they could count everyone up.

 **Read Luke 2:4-7** (Or for a longer passage Luke 2:1-7)

“So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed..”

(International Children's Bible)

Walking in the Light

Let's take a moment to think about Mary and Joseph's journey.

You might want to think, talk, write or draw using one of these ideas...



Imagine you are Mary or Joseph...How do you feel? What do you smell, see and hear?



Have you ever been on a difficult journey? What or who helped you on the way?



I wonder where God was felt and noticed in this part of the story...? Where have you noticed God this week at school, home or work?



Reflecting the Light

How can we be good friends to those we travel with at home, school and work?



Ask someone 'How are you?' Perhaps someone you don't often speak to.



Do you know someone having a tricky time at the moment? How can you show them you care?



Sometimes if we make a bad choice we feel guilty or sad...it feels like a heavy backpack. Say sorry to the person and to God to take away that feeling and empty the backpack.



Winter Wander

This week, take another short walk along your street or around your neighbourhood? This time can you say hello to people, offer a prayer or ask 'how are you?' If you pass a church pray that people will be drawn to celebrate God there.

PART 3 – MOVING ON: JOYFUL

Q. When was the last time someone made you jump?
What did they do?

No one thought shepherds were important. Many people thought they were very unimportant because they were dirty and smelly. But, God didn't...they were the first people to find out about Jesus being born. What a surprise for them!

Receiving the Light

 Read Luke 2:8-12 & 16-20 (Or for a longer passage Luke 2:8-20)

"That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."...

... So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.."

(International Children's Bible)

Walking in the Light

Let's take a moment to think about the shepherds' journey.

You might want to think, talk, write or draw using one of these ideas...



What do you think the shepherds did when they got back to their fields? I wonder what they talked about...?



Do you ever feel unimportant? Do you ever make others feel unimportant? How would it be different if everyone saw each other as important?



What is special about you? (If you are in a group you might tell each other what makes them special to you too.)



Reflecting the Light

How can we be good friends to those we travel with at home, school and work?



Share the Christmas story with someone...don't forget to tell them that God thinks everyone is important and precious.



How can you make someone near you feel special and important?



Sing some Advent/Christmas carols and songs together. You could listen, dance or sing.



Winter Wander

This week's walk pray for the people you see moving about. It might be on a walk to school, to work or just a wander. If you pass a place where asylum seekers or refugees live pray for them to feel God's love.

PART 4 – MOVING ON: FEARFUL

Q. Who are your closest/best friends? Why do you like them?

Wise men travelled a long way together (possibly even for a few years) to see Jesus. But not everyone was excited! King Herod wanted to stop Jesus because he wanted to be the only king.

Receiving the Light

 Read Matthew 2:1-3, 8 & 11-12 (Or for a longer passage Matt 2:1-12)

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."

When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too...

...Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too..."

...They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

(International Children's Bible)

Walking in the Light

Let's take a moment to think about the wise men's journey.

You might want to think, talk, write or draw using one of these ideas...



The star was a special sign from God. Have you ever had a sign from God? (It might be a feeling, a symbol, a Bible verse, a few words or something that happened).



What presents would you have taken to the baby Jesus?



The wise men had to keep Jesus a secret so he was safe from King Herod. I wonder how they felt on their journey home...? I wonder what they quietly spoke about...?



Reflecting the Light

How can we be good friends to those we travel with at home, school and work?



Ask God for help with something (perhaps asking God to guide you in a decision or choice) and then listen and look.



Invite a friend to do something together to celebrate Christmas.



The wise men were fearful/scared of King Herod.
Write/draw/talk about what makes you scared and ask God to help. *Dear God, take away my fear and help me to trust you. Amen.*



Winter Wander

This week, invite some friends to go on a walk with you. Talk to your friends about how they are, have fun together and pray for them (out loud or in your head).

PART 5 – GOD COMES TO US

Q. What does the Christmas story mean to you? What is the most important part to you?

Do you remember Mary's cousin Elizabeth? Her baby was called John. He was born to tell others about Jesus and how important he was.

Receiving the Light

When John was born his dad (Zechariah) praised God for John saying...

 Read Luke 1:76-79 (Or for a longer passage Luke 1:57-80)

"Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

You will go first before the Lord

to prepare the people for his coming.

You will make his people know that they will be saved.

They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

With the loving mercy of our God,

a new day from heaven will shine upon us.

God will help those who live in darkness,

in the fear of death.

He will guide us into the path that goes toward peace."

(International Children's Bible)

Walking in the Light

Let's take a moment to think about how we fit into the story.

You might want to think, talk, write or draw using one of these ideas...



Which words in the Bible passage stand out to you? I wonder why that's important to you...?



How do you feel about Jesus coming to rescue you from your sins (bad choices)?



How does God help people who 'live in darkness' (sadness, fear, guilt, loneliness)?



Reflecting the Light

How can we be good friends to those we travel with at home, school and work?



Invite God to be your guiding light. You might want to say a prayer, talk to someone, listen to God.



How can you help people who feel sad, alone, fearful?



Write your own poem, song or story about why Jesus is important to you.



Winter Wander

For your walk this week, take some Christmas cards and post them to your neighbours (perhaps even to the ones you don't know). You might want to make the cards yourself to show your favourite part of the Christmas story.