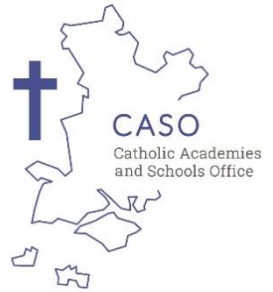




PRAYER & FORMATION FOR EDUCATING TOGETHER IN OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



PRAYER

ADVENT - THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE IN THE JESSE TREE



Gather, light a candle and pray the sign of the cross to acknowledge Christ's presence amongst you then click [here](#) to sing/listen to the hymn, **We are Waitina** listen for 2:59

Opening Prayer God our Father, help us to wait patiently for the birth of your Son, Jesus. Show us ways we can share the peace of Christ during Advent, So that the world might know the hope and love that your Son brings. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Read & reflect upon Jeremiah 33:14-16

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will fulfil the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

“In those days and at that time I will make a righteous branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it^l will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Saviour.”

.... **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Pray together the Advent litany: Your kingdom come

Lord, we wait with eager expectation for the coming of your kingdom when the humble will be exalted and the hungry fed.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we prepare for your advent with searching minds and contrite hearts, trusting in your healing spirit and redemptive love.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we watch with those who wait and weep, longing to see the rule of justice and reign of peace.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we seek you amongst the despised and rejected, knowing that there we will find your light shining in the dark.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we proclaim sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed, trusting in your tender mercy and passion for justice.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we work with you to proclaim your truth, challenging the mighty and raising the meek.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

Lord, we wrestle with our hopes and our fears, our struggles and our joys, labouring with creation to come to new birth.

Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

The Jesse tree was created to help people link the custom of decorating Christmas trees to the events leading up to Jesus birth. The tradition of decorating Christmas trees actually predates the arrival of Christianity in western Europe and was adopted by the early Church. In order to associate the custom more clearly with Christianity, people made Jesse trees—Christmas trees with decorations related to the events of Jesus' birth and the prophecies about him in the Old Testament. Many parishes and families make Jesse trees during Advent to remind them of these events as they prepare for Christmas.

[The Jesse Tree: 1st Week of Advent | Loyola PresS](#)

Read these texts then discuss your chosen question

1. What memories do you have of a Jesse tree and how did it help you in your journey of faith.?
2. What contemporary secular traditions could be exploited by a school or parish community to spread the Good News in a local community.
3. What prophecies would you choose to recall by placing a symbol on a Jesse Tree. Why?
4. How could a Jesse tree be used in your community to help its members understand that God keeps his promises?

Isaiah 11:1 The branch from Jesse

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

Andrew Cameron-Mowat SJ describes how the Advent readings guide us through our hopeful waiting for the coming of Christ.

Advent is fast becoming the "forgotten" season in our Calendar; shops full of decorations to attract our eye, we hear the sound of tinkling bells and merry carols, and even the scent of spices and pine tempts our nostrils as we pass through these precious few weeks before Christmas. But this is not a time for looking forward to a little child in Bethlehem, so much as a time to wait in expectation for the coming of Christ who leads us into our future. Advent calls us to consider who we are as Christians and how we hear the voices of ancient prophecy.

Sunday by Sunday during Advent, the prophetic voice of Isaiah speaks directly to us with surprising and ever-contemporary force. Isaiah reminds us that we must be in right relationship with God, particularly in times of distress. He prays "Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the power, we are all the work of your hands" (64:7) and we realise our utter dependence on God's help. Isaiah was speaking at a time when the people were not following the ways of the Covenant. His words are also contemporary: the coming of the Messiah will be a time, not simply for salvation, but also for judgement: what are we proud of as a civilisation, and is there need for repentance? Can we stand before our risen Lord when he comes in glory and say that we have been good and faithful servants?



Adapted from an article originally published in the Rapid Response series on the web site of the Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life.