Level: 1
Title: HOW DO WE GET READY FOR CHRISTMAS?
Strand: CHURCH: Body of Christ, Community of Disciples, Witness to Unity and Justice.

Suggested Duration: 3-4 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit the students will explore the concept of waiting and preparing for special events in our lives. They will have an understanding of waiting and how it applies to their lives. They will be led to appreciate that Mary and Joseph waited for the birth of Jesus.

Level Outcome
By the end of Level Two students should be able to:

Describe the Church as a believing, welcoming, serving, caring and celebrating community.

Unit Outcomes
By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Understand that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus
2. Recognise that Mary and Joseph waited for the birth of Jesus.
3. Identify some of the liturgical symbols that are used during Advent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td>2. Jesus is a member of a family.&lt;br&gt;3. Mary is the mother of Jesus</td>
<td>531, 533&lt;br&gt;488, 508</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHURCH</td>
<td>1. Jesus invites people to be part of the church&lt;br&gt;2. The Church is a believing, welcoming, serving, caring and celebrating community.</td>
<td>759&lt;br&gt;752, 764, 775, 776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>2. The Gospels are part of the New testament and tell us about Jesus’ life.</td>
<td>125, 126</td>
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Key Understandings for Students
- Advent is a time of waiting and getting ready for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.
- Mary and Joseph had to prepare for Jesus' birth.
- We need to prepare for Jesus’ birthday.
Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The unit *How Do We Get Ready For Christmas* can be used to assess aspects of VELS. The table below gives an example of how Level 1 standards could be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students…</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building Social Relationships</td>
<td>“Students identify the qualities of a friend and demonstrate care for other students. They contribute to the development of positive social relationships in a range of contexts. They use appropriate language and actions when dealing with conflict. Students describe basic skills required to work cooperatively in groups.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
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### Curriculum Framework Context

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<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>How Do We Get Ready For</td>
<td>I Wonder What Happened at</td>
<td>The Message of Joy and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas?</td>
<td>the First Christmas?</td>
<td>Peace The Promise is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Student Context

Students are often impatient and find it difficult to wait for anything. They have had many experiences of waiting e.g. birthdays, a new baby, tuckshop line. Often, when we are waiting we prepare in some way e.g. by sending out invitations, cooking food etc. Preparing and waiting often make that event even more special.

Mary and Joseph are presented to the students as parents waiting the birth of their baby. Perhaps someone in the class can remember a similar experience and the children could explore some of the ways life was different at the time of the birth of Jesus.

Students at this level best learn through practical experience, opportunities to explore the waiting process and to be involved in special preparations are essential. The use of an Advent Wreath would give the children an experience of a ritual that is both associated with this liturgical season of the Church and is reflective of the marking of time in preparation.

All students may not be familiar with the season of Advent. Activities planned prior to the commencement of this topic would enable students to develop an appreciation of ‘waiting in hope and expectation’. For example, such activities as unwrapping a present layer by layer over a period of time, announcing a surprise treat for a week ahead, then giving a clue each day, or, marking off the days on a calendar leading up to an important event will assist students at this level to appreciate times of waiting.

### Theological Background for Teachers

- Advent is the liturgical season during which the church prepares to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a time in the life of the church community characterised by waiting in hope and expectation.

- Advent helps us to become aware of Jesus’ continuing presence in the Church.

- The Advent calendar could be explained as a way in which some people mark off the days of Advent leading up to Christmas. The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas, therefore, the number of days in Advent varies depending on what day of the week Christmas Day falls.

- The Advent wreath is a symbol of hope in Jesus Christ, light of the world. By custom the wreath has four candles. Traditionally three of these candles are purple and one is pink or white. The purple symbolises penance and the pink or white represent hope. During Advent the four candles are lit. (One the first week, two the second and so on.)
This time of waiting is also marked by the use of the colour purple, for example, priest’s vestments, altar cloths, banners and drapes.

Mary responded to God by hearing God’s word and keeping it. Jesus’ conception was possible only because Mary responded to God in this way at the Annunciation.

Mary lived as the Father wanted, even though at times she was disturbed (Lk 1:29), asked questions (Lk 1:34), wondered (Lk 2:33) and simply did not understand (Lk 2:50).

Scripture

Teacher Reference (NRSV)

Isa 7:14
Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Mt 1:18-25
Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.”

Mk 1:2-8
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed: “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me, I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

Lk 1:26-38
In the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings favoured one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Student Reference CEV

Lk 1:30-31
Then the angel told Mary, Don’t be afraid, God is pleased with you, and you will have a Son. His name will be Jesus.
Suggested Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

**Outcome 1** Understand that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus
- Students list ways in which they could prepare for Jesus’ birthday.
- Students name/draw activities that link Advent to a time of waiting.

**Outcome 2** Recognise that Mary and Joseph waited for the birth of Jesus
- Students complete a story map of how Mary and Joseph prepared for the birth of Jesus.

**Outcome 3** Identify some of the liturgical symbols that are used during Advent
- Students contribute to an Advent collage of the symbols and colours of the season.

*N.B* All of the above Outcomes lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

**Focusing activity:**
Read a story about waiting for a baby. Discuss the story. How do the people in the story feel? Invite a parent who is expecting a baby to come and talk to the children.

- Lk 1:30-31 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word read a story about Mary, eg. ‘Mary’ (Wildsmith, Brian) or ‘Mary’ (de Paola, Tommie). Discuss that in the Gospels naming means claiming and angels are messengers from God.
- Lk 1:30-31 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text students role play the story.
- Lk 1:30-31 To RESPOND to the Word students write their own birth notice using the following criteria, family name, parents, date, place of birth and their full name.
- Brainstorm ‘waiting’ times in our lives.
- Make a ‘Y’ chart. *(refer to icon in Planning Tool)* Waiting sounds like /feels like /looks like.
- Make and use an Advent calendar
- Sing Advent songs.
- Collect ‘gifts’ for the Giving Mass.
- Plan and prepare an Advent celebration.
- Learn and act an Advent action rhyme.
- Light the candles on the Advent wreath each week and talk about what the candles mean.
- Make an Advent wreath to take home.
- Share and sing songs both religious and secular about waiting times.
- Participate in class /school / parish based liturgical celebrations.
- Students have a mixture of cards (birthday, Christmas, weddings etc. In small groups students look at the cards and think of two things that would have been done to prepare for this event.

**Resources**
For resources to support this unit, refer to the online planning tool. For additional resources, refer to the Resource Centre Catalogue: [http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au) and follow links to Resource Centre.