Level: 3
Title: CHRISTMAS THE PROMISE FULFILLED
Strand: CHURCH: 
Body of Christ, Community of Disciples, Witness to Unity and Justice.

Suggested Duration: 4 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit students will explore how Christmas is a fulfilment of God’s promise and a time to celebrate Jesus’ birth. At Christmas we celebrate Jesus with us today by living lives of love and service to others.

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

*Identify the Church as a community that celebrates the life and work of Jesus.*

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

1. Understand the concept of promise.
2. Examine ways in which Scripture depicts various characters preparing for and responding to the birth of Jesus.
3. Show how Jesus was the fulfilment of God’s promise
4. Propose ways they can live lives of love and service, and continue to reveal God to the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
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| God             | 3. The Scriptures contain many stories and images that give us some insights about the mystery of God.  
4. God call us to reach out in love to each other | 42, 214, 1706, 1822   |
| Church          | 1. The Church is a community of believers called to celebrate and makes present the ministry of Jesus.  
2. The Church celebrates Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in the many feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. | 783, 1168           |
| Scripture       | 1. The Scriptures are intended to make us think about and reflect on our lives. | 141                 |
| Christian Life  | 4. When we use our gifts we are serving the community and helping to spread the Reign of God. | 1942                |

Key Understandings for Students
- Promises involve a relationship between at least two parties. There are obligations on both sides.
- We make Advent promises as one way to prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus.
- God made promises with all people and God keeps these promises.
- Over the years, many people were part of the fulfilment of God’s promises.
- The birth of Jesus was the fulfilment of God’s promise to be close to his people.
- At Christmas we are reminded that we can continue the work of Jesus in our world.
### Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The unit *Christmas The Promise Fulfilled* can be used to assess a range of VELS. The table below gives examples of how Level 3 standards could be assessed.

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<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students…</th>
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<td>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building Social Relationships</td>
<td>&quot;demonstrate respect for others and exhibit appropriate behaviour for maintaining friendships with other people. They support each other by sharing ideas and materials, offering assistance, giving appropriate feedback and acknowledging individual differences. They work with others to reduce, avoid and resolve conflict.&quot;</td>
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<td>Working In Teams</td>
<td>&quot;cooperate with others in teams for agreed purposes, taking roles and following guidelines established within the task. They describe and evaluate their own contribution and the team's progress towards the achievement of agreed goals.&quot;</td>
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<td>Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;contribute to the development and support of class rules and participate in school celebrations and commemorations of important events. They describe some of the roles and purposes of groups in the community. They work with other students to identify a local issue and plan possible actions to achieve a desired outcome.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Learning</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
<td>ICT for Visual Thinking</td>
<td>&quot;use ICT tools to list ideas, order them into logical sequences, and identify relationships between them. Students retrieve their saved visualising thinking strategies and edit them for use in new, but similar situations. They explain how these strategies can be used for different problems or situations.&quot;</td>
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<td>ICT For Creating</td>
<td>&quot;create information products to assist in problem solving in all areas of the curriculum. With minimal assistance, students use ICT tools to capture and save images. They use simple editing functions to manipulate the images for use in their products.&quot;</td>
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<td>Reasoning, processing and inquiry</td>
<td>&quot;collect information from a range of sources to answer their own and others’ questions. They question the validity of sources when appropriate. They apply thinking strategies to organise information and concepts in a variety of contexts, including problem solving activities. They provide reasons for their conclusions.&quot;</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>&quot;apply creative ideas in practical ways and test the possibilities of ideas they generate. They use open-ended questioning and integrate available information to explore ideas.&quot;</td>
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</table>
Reflection, evaluation and meta-cognition

-“identify strategies they use to organise their ideas, and use appropriate language to explain their thinking. They identify and provide reasons for their point of view, and justify changes in their thinking.”

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<td>Christmas - the Promise Fulfilled</td>
<td>What Was the Message of John the Baptist?</td>
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<td>Christmas - The Message of Joy and Peace</td>
<td>The Birth of Jesus, the Messiah</td>
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<td>Feasts of the Christmas Season</td>
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**Student Context**

As students move through Level Three their understanding of themselves, their community and the wider world expands. They are less self-focused and enjoy working collaboratively. Their reasoning ability takes an important step forward and, whilst still being very literal, they are developing the ability to understand different levels of meaning and hence appropriate symbols and symbolic actions. They have a better understanding of time and the sequence of events, therefore Scripture stories take on a new significance.

When using the Infancy Narratives in this unit the difficulty of explaining their literary forms needs to be taken into account. The emphasis should be on the cultural celebration for Christians and our identity as being part of the story of Jesus being present in the world.

**Theological Background for Teachers**

- Advent is the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year. Each year the Church celebrates the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus through feasts and seasons.

- During the season of Advent, we prepare for the commemoration of Christ’s first coming to us.

- The Church Year begins on the first Sunday of Advent which is the Sunday nearest to 30th November.

- **Advent takes its name from the Latin word meaning ‘coming’. As Christians we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem.**

- The idea of having a period of preparation for Christmas was probably influenced by the practice of the season of Lent leading up to Easter which began in Spain in the 5th century. Some hundreds of years later Pope St. Gregory the Great spoke about four Sundays in preparation for Christmas, and by 800 AD the four weeks of preparation before Christmas became common practice. Advent is a period of joyful and spiritual expectation of the mystery of Christ’s birth.

- In Advent we live out the hope of Christ’s coming and we look forward to celebrating the presence of God with us through the celebration of Christmas. We come to hear the story of the past, the promises made to the people of Israel and brought to fulfillment in the person of Jesus.

- There is an Advent custom, known as ‘The Jesse Tree’ that uses stories to develop a stronger sense of who Jesus Christ is and who the people are that pointed the way to him. The Jesse Tree is the representation of Christ’s family tree suggested by the prophets’ words, “There shall come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse.” (Isa.11:1). The tradition is named for King David’s father.

- From the very beginning of time, God has promised to be with God’s people. Scripture conveys the story of the covenant established by God and brought to its fulfilment in the covenant renewed by Christ’s life, death and resurrection.
• The prophet Isaiah foretells the coming birth of the Messiah (Isa 7:14). The liturgy of Advent invites us into a time of waiting that is filled with hope in the promised coming of the Messiah who will bring justice and peace.

• In Matthew’s Gospel the passage from Isaiah is quoted to show that God is faithful to God’s own covenant with Israel.

• As Christians we celebrate the faithfulness of our God, the same God who made agreements with the people of the Old Testament. God’s promise is fulfilled in the sending of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus reveals God’s great love for all people. We rejoice in the coming of Christ.

• During Advent, we experience the ancient longing of God’s people for a saviour. For Christians, the preparations associated with Advent are made in the light of faith that God’s Kingdom has already been established and God’s covenant has been fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. It is a time to focus on the presence of Christ in our lives.

• Advent and Christmas present opportunities for us to reflect on the challenge of living as true followers of Jesus.

• Messiah is the Hebrew term for Christ (The Anointed One). The Old Testament taught the Jews to expect salvation to come from God in the person of a kingly Messiah.

• The one to bring salvation is also called Saviour (Healer). Joseph was told that Jesus will save His people from their sins (Mt 1:21) and the angel announced to the shepherds the birth of a Saviour who is the Messiah, the Lord (Lk 2:12).

• Mary conceived Jesus. In the Incarnation God becomes human. Through this event humankind becomes immersed in God’s presence. This doctrine is central to the whole philosophy of Christianity.

• At the feast of the Nativity, the church recalls the historical birth of Jesus. We recall the Infancy Narratives found in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. These are interpreted as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

**Scripture**

**Teacher and Student Reference**

**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 call him Emmanuel.

**Mic 5:2**
But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from old, from ancient days.

**Jer 33:14**
The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

**Lk 1:26-28 The Birth of Jesus Foretold**
In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by 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.”

**Lk 2:1-20 The Birth of Jesus**
In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**Suggested Assessment Tasks**

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

**Outcome 1** Understand the concept of promise.
- Students retell/write/draw/cartoon strip an example of a promise kept

**Outcome 2** Examine ways in which Scripture depicts various characters preparing for and responding to the birth of Jesus.
- Imagine being a character represented in the Scriptures. Recount in diary form the experience of responding to or preparing for the birth of Jesus.
- Write and present an imaginary radio or television interview with characters from Scripture who waited for or responded to the birth of Jesus, recalling their role, reactions and feelings about the fulfilment of the promise.

**Outcome 3** Show how Jesus was the fulfilment of God’s promise.
- Children complete a character map of Jesus, showing how he fulfilled God’s promise by the way he lived. (Maurice Ryan Teaching the Bible)

**Outcome 4** Propose ways students can live lives of love and service, and continue to reveal God to The world.
- Design a Christmas card that highlights Christmas as a time of loving and serving others.
- Create a gift voucher that outlines a commitment to loving actions.

N.B All outcomes lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding.

**Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences**

**Focusing Activity**

Using Inside/Outside circle or think/pair/share the students share their personal experiences of times when they have been promised something or made a promise themselves. *(refer to icon in Planning Tool)*

- Locate related picture story books and videos of promises being made.
- Complete a Y chart (looks like, sounds, like, feels, like) about times when the students have been made a promise.
- Create a story map about their experience of a time when they have been made a promise.
- Explore stories from the Old Testament and the New Testament that show how people were preparing or being prepared for the coming of Jesus. e.g. Abraham, Moses, David, Ruth, Sarah, Esther, Mary and Joseph
- Create a class Jesse Tree showing the symbols that represent people from scripture and events of scripture that show that Jesus was the fulfilment of God’s promise.
- Create class echo mime/liquid picture on suggested Scripture passages.
• Complete a 5 W’s chart and or a story review on suggested Scripture passages.

• Using the What identity am I? strategy students could have cards on their backs describing a person/ animal/ object from the Scripture story. Students move around asking others about their character who responds using yes and no responses.

• As part of a prayer ritual. Students are invited to make personal promises about how they can make Jesus alive in the world today.

• Introduce the other symbols of Advent to the students and incorporate these into class prayer and Liturgy.

• Students interview their parents to find out the ways that they prepared for the birth of a child. Include feelings associated with waiting and then the birth.

• Read Lk 2: 1-20 - The Birth of Jesus. Make a comparison between children’s parents and Jesus’ parents (see Stead pp. 22-27, A Time for Jubilee).

• Students brainstorm promises that the group could make this Advent. List them.

• From the displayed list, students write promises on paper card and put them into a box. Each day, at prayer time, a student pulls a card out and the class are invited to keep this promise.

• In groups students plan, prepare and organise a class liturgy that includes songs, Scripture and stories that reflect the concepts studied in this unit.

• Class invitations sent to parents and family members to participate in the celebration of the class liturgy.

• Students invited to consider and reflect on how it is that they might themselves be a reflection of God’s promise to be present with God’s people in their lives.

• Students complete the sentence and illustrate “I can show God’s love to the world when I………………………………..”

• Isa 7:14 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word - locate the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, Isaiah was a great prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah (Jesus, son of God)

• Isa 7:14 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text broaden students understandings of certain words in the text e.g. Sign, young woman and Emmanuel (God is with us)

• Isa 7:14 To RESPOND to the Word – Emmanuel means God is with us. Have the students draw and/or write about Jesus-with- us today.

• Isa 7:14 To RESPOND to the Word - Teach students the Michael Mangan Song “Oh Emmanuel”. Students explore other names of Jesus used during Advent and Christmas.

**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