

Advent and Christmas



FOCUS

1. The Church year begins with the first Sunday of Advent.
2. Advent is a season of joyful and spiritual expectation.
3. Advent and Christmas are to be understood in the context of the mystery of the Incarnation: Jesus the Son of God, is truly God and truly man.
4. The shepherds (fringe people) were the first to hear of the birth of Jesus but they were also the first to share this news with others, praising God for all they had seen. Their response is what is expected from all Christians.

In these lessons your child may have:

- explored the season of Advent and its place in the Church's liturgical year;
- identified customs and practices of Advent that help them prepare for and celebrate the birth of Jesus;
- described the role of John the Baptist in Scripture;
- listened to and responded to the Christmas Story;
- explored the meaning of each of the gifts brought by the Magi;
- searched for clues that show Jesus is true God and true man.

Isaiah 40: 3

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

John 1: 6-23

A man came sent by God. His name was John . . . When the Jews sent the priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He declared quite openly, "I am not the Christ." . . . "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us" . . . so John said, "I am, as Isaiah prophesied: 'A voice that cries in the wilderness: Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

Luke 2: 8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields . . . An angel of the Lord stood before them . . . and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; . . . I am bringing you good news of great joy . . . 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 back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us" . . . When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about the

baby, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. Mary treasured all these words and kept them in her heart. The shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

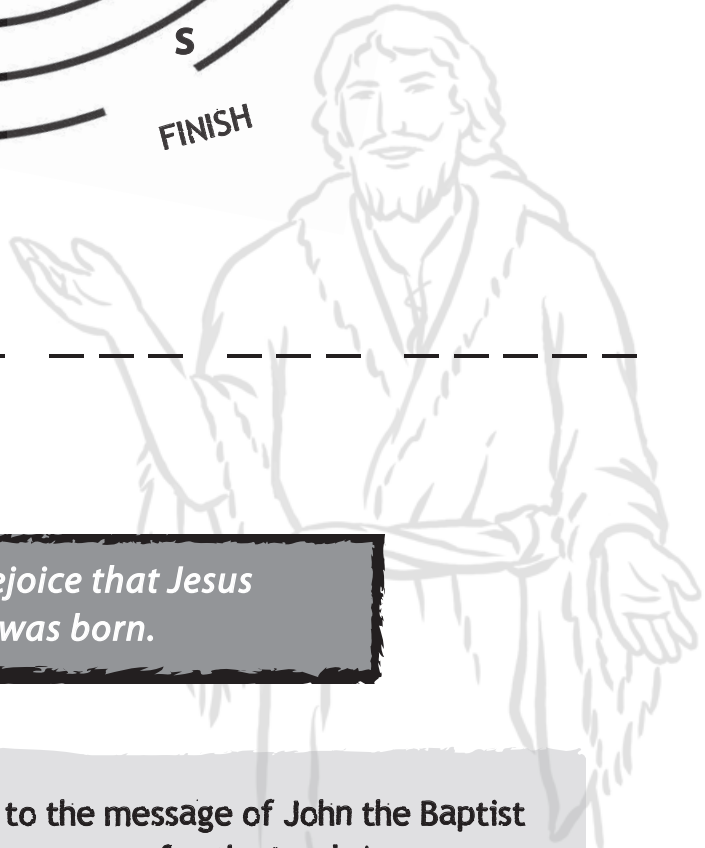
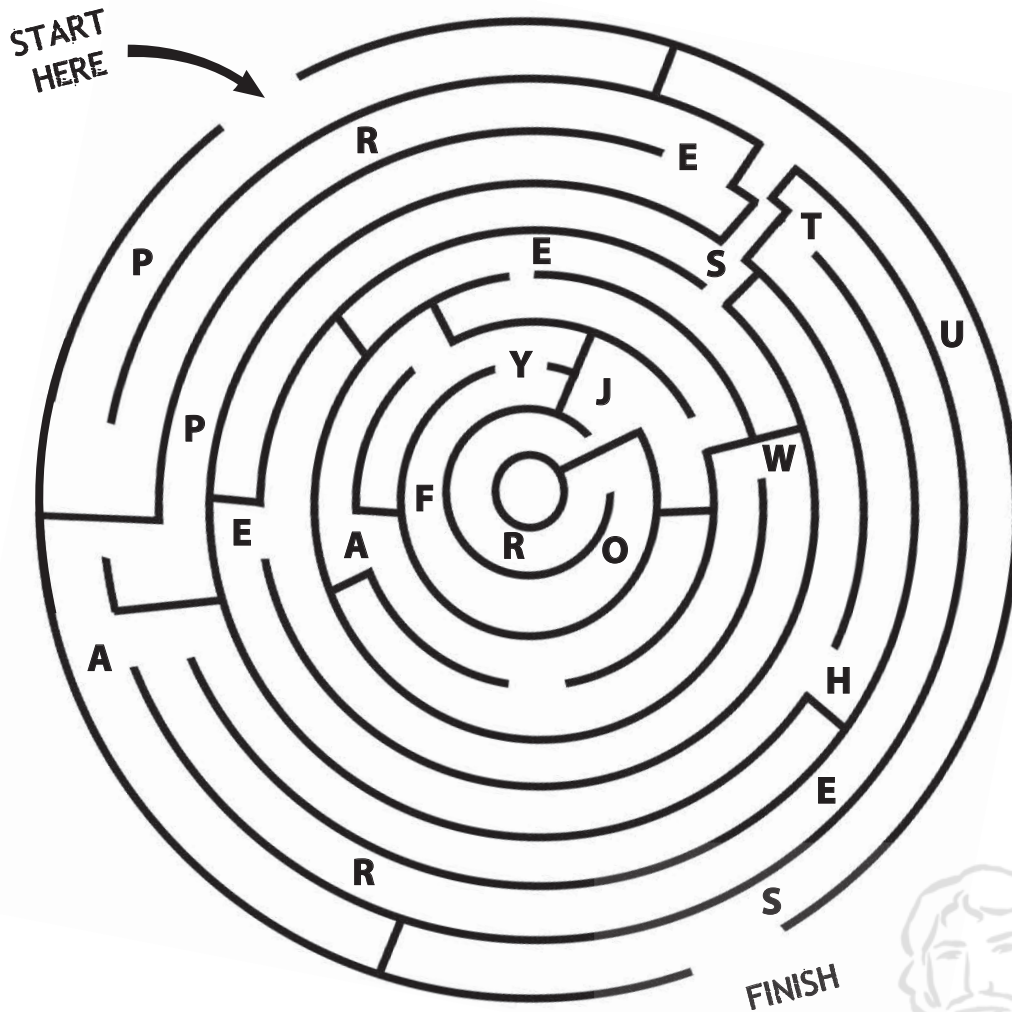
SUGGESTED HOME ACTIVITIES

The following are suggested activities for you to do with your child.

1. Make an Advent calendar.
2. Share with your child times you have had to wait and prepare during your life.
3. As you prepare Christmas cards for your family and friends consider including a written message that tells them why they are important to you.
4. Encourage your child to research Christmas customs from other countries.
5. Encourage your child to think about the ways they can bring joy into the lives of others.
6. Talk about symbols that are associated with Advent and the preparation for Christmas: Advent wreath, Advent calendar, Christmas Tree, Card giving, carol singing.
7. Encourage your child to complete the activity page.
8. More activities can be found at www.ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au Click on **Home Activities**.

- Find your way through the maze and discover the message that John the Baptist gave to the people. Write each letter below as you come to it and discover what he said.

Once you have discovered the message think about what you will do.



TO REMEMBER:

At Christmas we rejoice that Jesus our Saviour was born.



Dear God, help us to listen to the message of John the Baptist so that this Advent we truly prepare for the Lord. Amen