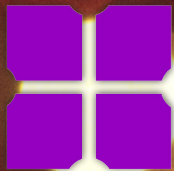


BIBLE



SUNDAY

Welcome the Word

Scriptural Inspiration for **Advent 2017** and beyond

This booklet was produced on behalf of the Scripture Working Group at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in partnership with The Liturgy Office and Bible Society.

For more information about celebrating Scripture in your parish or community, and to download the resources sampled here, please visit catholicbiblesunday.org

To request additional copies of this booklet, please contact Bible Society on 01793 418100 / contactus@biblesociety.org.uk / Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon, SN5 7DG

Additional image copyrights
Cover image: unsplash.com / Aaron Burden
P11 - © Mazur / catholicnews.org.uk

Dear Friends,

A very warm welcome from Bible Society for this year's Advent, Bible Sunday and Christmas celebrations.

We are delighted to offer you this exciting new resource pack created in partnership with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, with a variety of contributions supporting scriptural engagement in the Catholic community.

During Advent each year, the cycle of Scripture and prayer invites us to pray for openness to God's Word. The theme for this year is 'Welcome the Word', and you will find here Scripture-focused materials that help each of us to explore Advent, Christmas and beyond, with a special focus on Bible Sunday, which occurs this year on 10th December.

We are struck at this time by the recent words of Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera* recommending a Sunday dedicated to the Bible for every parish and for his repeated invitation to read the Bible daily.

At Bible Society and through the Catholic Bishops' Conference, we want to enable every man, woman and child to engage with the Bible in ways that are appropriate to them. So in addition to the resources available in this pack, we'd like to invite you to engage with some other new Bible Society's initiatives:

- throughout Advent, why not sign up to our #AdventChallenge
- Word on the Go: the Bible for Busy Catholics – wordonthego.org.uk

You can find out more about these by visiting biblesociety.org.uk

We wish you God's blessing as you seek to welcome God's Word in a new way this Bible Sunday.

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Dr Adrian Graffy
Chair, Scripture Working Group



Paul S Williams
CEO, Bible Society

Welcome the Word

This pack has been prepared to offer you a taster of inspirational online resources to help explore the Bible, either individually or as a parish community.

The material is divided into three sections, focusing on Advent, Bible Sunday (10 December 2017), and Christmas and beyond.

You can find a guide to what's available throughout the pack on these pages.

SECTION TWO: BIBLE SUNDAY (10th December 2017)

Homily Notes for the Second Sunday of Advent B (p11)

Helpful background, context and connections to the Lectionary Readings for Bible Sunday, prepared by Revd. Dr. Adrian Graffy.

Order of Commissioning for Readers (p12)

A prepared Order, for parishes who may wish to commission Readers on Bible Sunday.

Prayers of the Faithful (p12)

Some suggested Prayers of the Faithful for use on Bible Sunday.

Preparing the Responsorial Psalm (p13)

A reflection on how the Psalm of the day corresponds with the other Readings, and how best to prepare for proclaiming the Psalm together.

Advent

SECTION ONE: ADVENT

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany (p7)

An overview of the origins and biblical background of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

Sharing Scripture (p7)

A selection of Scriptural quotes to share with others as you write Christmas cards.

An Advent Image: The Annunciation (p8)

A reflection on Rossetti's painting of the Annunciation, for small groups.

Spiritual Preparation for Readers (p9)

A guided reflection to help readers prepare for the Advent season.

The Journey: 4 Advent Sessions for young people (p9)

4 ready-to-run sessions for 11-14 year olds, exploring the gospels of each Sunday of Advent.

Christmastide

SECTION THREE: CHRISTMAS AND BEYOND

A Christmas Image: The Nativity (p15)

A reflection on Arthur Hughes' *The Nativity*, for small groups.

Mark and the Lectionary (p16)

An exploration of how the Lectionary guides us through Mark and John in Year B, and how we can benefit from looking at the structure of the year.

Preparing Children for the Scriptures (p16)

Ideas for parents, catechists and teachers to help younger children connect with the Bible more easily.

Simeon and Anna (p17)

A deeper look at the characters at Jesus' Presentation, particularly written for those in the second half of life.

Going Further (pp18-19)

More information about the Scripture Working Group and Bible Society, and further resources and weblinks to continue your journey with the Scriptures.

Ordinary Time

Welcome the Word

Inspiration for Advent

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany - In Between Times

An overview of the origins and biblical background of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

Advent

Advent has been observed since at least the 4th century. Originally, it was a time when converts to Christianity prepared themselves for baptism. During the Middle Ages, Advent became associated with preparation for the Second Coming. In early days Advent lasted from 11th November, the feast of St. Martin (of Tours), until Christmas Day. Advent was considered as similar to a pre-Christmas season of Lent when Christians devoted themselves to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Many Christians understand Advent both as a season to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus and to prepare for the incarnation of Jesus. More commonly however, it is seen as a time of anticipating the birth of the infant Jesus on Christmas Day.

Advent comes from the Latin word for an “arrival” or a “coming”. So Advent means that the Lord is coming. Jesus Christ, our brother and our God is about to arrive. He comes to us in different ways: Jesus came at a specific time in history to Bethlehem about 2000 years ago. Yet in the Church’s great feast of Christmas he mystically comes to us again each year. As the Alpha...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

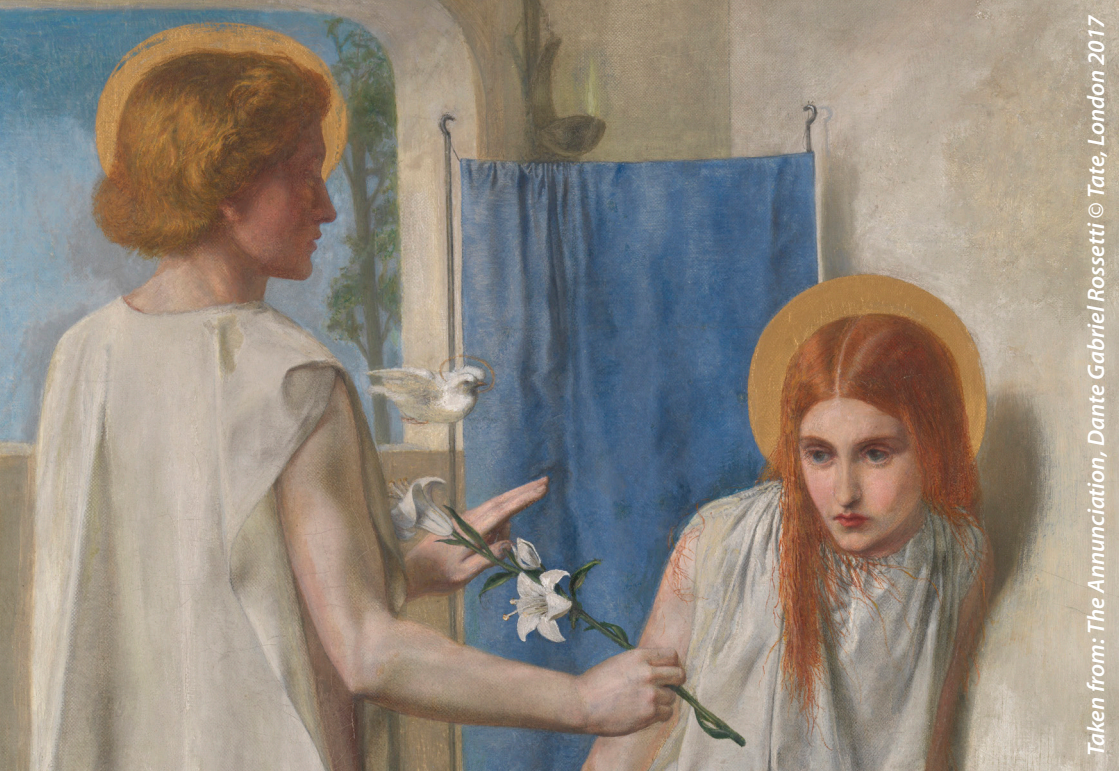
Sharing Scripture

A selection of Scriptural quotes to share with others as you write Christmas cards during the Advent season.

You might like to use any of the following quotes to share the words of Scripture with your family, friends, colleagues or neighbours this Christmas by writing them in your Christmas cards.

- Isaiah 7:14** The Lord will give you a sign... the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.
- Isaiah 9:2** The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
- Isaiah 9:5** For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us, and dominion has been laid on his shoulders; and this is the name he has been given, ‘Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.’

To see the full list of suggested quotes, visit catholicbiblesunday.org



Taken from: The Annunciation, Dante Gabriel Rossetti © Tate, London 2017

An Advent Image: The Annunciation

A scriptural reflection on Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting of the Annunciation, for individuals or small groups.

You want me to do what?

Rossetti was heavily criticised for this painting as being far too human and not holy enough. Yet he still relies on earlier traditions for many of the symbols he places in the scene, but his method of employing these symbols, his depiction of space, and most significantly his portrayal of the two figures represent significant departures from earlier tradition.

His goal was to mix contemporary realism with religious feeling. Usually Mary is shown in studious contemplation, but here she rises awkwardly from her bed as though disturbed while asleep. Rossetti used white as the dominant colour to reinforce the idea of feminine purity. In giving Mary the lilies, Gabriel presents her with an embodiment of the chastity and virginity she is associated with throughout her life. Rather than dressed in red or blue, as is the case with most Annunciation paintings, Mary wears a...

To continue reading or download the full resource with the complete image, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Spiritual Preparation for Readers

A guided reflection to help readers prepare for the Advent season, using the Lectionary text from Isaiah 40.

Begin by reading the text a couple of times with a pause for silence in between. Even if you are alone try reading it out loud so you hear the words and feel them on your lips.

- [In a group you may wish to follow a Lectio Divina process and reflect on the text of the reading.]
- Underline all the ways that speech is mentioned. What strikes you?
- How much variety of tone do you bring to proclaiming the readings?
 - o Do you fill in the valleys?
 - o Do you console or shout with a loud voice?...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

The Journey: Four Advent Sessions for Young People

Four ready-to-run sessions for 11-14 year olds, exploring the gospel reading of each Sunday of Advent.

Overview

The four sessions are:

- Session 1: Ready (Mark 13.33-37)
- Session 2: Prepare (Mark 1.1-8)
- Session 3: Witness (John 1.6-8, 19-28)
- Session 4: Promise (Luke 1:26-38)

You may choose to run these four sessions in the week preceding each of the four Sundays of Advent, which will enable your group to prepare to hear the proclamation of the Gospel on the following Sunday.

Each session has a similar structure, and is designed to last for an hour. You can either run these as whole sessions, or adapt the elements to suit your own preferences and timings.

For every session, there is an equipment list to help you prepare.

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Welcome the Word

Ideas to mark Bible Sunday
10th December 2017



Homily Notes for Second Sunday of Advent B

Helpful background, context and connections to the Lectionary Readings for Bible Sunday, prepared by Revd. Dr. Adrian Graffy.

Today is Catholic Bible Sunday and it is themed: Welcome the Word. Bible Sunday reminds us each year of the gift of the Word of God, God's Word in human language, recorded for us in the pages of the Holy Scriptures, proclaimed in our Liturgy and available for prayer and reflection day-by-day.

We know and experience being fed by God's Word and Sacrament at Mass. Christ the Word teaches us. Christ our Eucharist nourishes us.

Catholic Bible Sunday reminds us to hear, to be attentive to God's Word through reading and reflecting on the Scriptures in our homes daily. It reminds us too to seek ways of proclaiming that life-giving Word to everyone that we meet.

How appropriate then that we begin reading the Gospel of Mark on...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Order of Commissioning for Readers

A prepared Order, for parishes who may wish to commission Readers on Bible Sunday.

After the Homily, the Presider comes to stand centrally towards the edge of the Sanctuary.

Presider St Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth:
There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor. 12.4-6)

When we come together in the Eucharist to celebrate the mystery of our redemption, God enriches us with different forms of service so that...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Prayers of the Faithful

Some suggested Prayers of the Faithful for use on Bible Sunday.

Priest: On Bible Sunday we open our hearts to receive God's words of love and truth.

Reader: We pray for all Christians, that our love for the Holy Scriptures will grow as we ponder on them in our hearts, and respond to their challenge, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Reader: For Bible scholars, teachers and catechists, that by fidelity to prayer and the Scriptures they may witness to the love and truth of God, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the Jewish people, the first to hear the Word of God, that they may remain faithful to God's call, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer....

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Preparing the Responsorial Psalm

A reflection on how the Psalm of the day corresponds with the other Readings, and how best to prepare for proclaiming the Psalm together.

Those who sing the Responsorial Psalm at Mass have a number of things to consider when they are preparing it. For many the first consideration will be getting the notes right and being confident with them. The words may be considered for articulation and clarity of emphasis. Some will spend time thinking about the text of psalm, particularly within its context within the Liturgy of the Word.

The following notes will look at these different stages in more detail.

- How do I prepare to sing a responsorial psalm?
- Are there different stages?

Preparing the music

Though it may sound obvious it is important to get the response right. A psalmist should know the response well enough that they can look at...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Welcome the Word

For Christmas and Beyond...



Taken from: *The Nativity* - Arthur Hughes, 1857-58.
Oil on canvas with gold leaf. - Birmingham Museums Trust.

A Christmas Image: The Nativity

A scriptural reflection on Arthur Hughes' painting of the Nativity, for individuals or small groups.

The English Pre-Raphaelite artist Arthur Hughes (1831-1915) shows us a very young Mary when she gave birth to Jesus. Hughes' Nativity focuses on a teenager learning how to care for her brand new baby. Mary wraps the swaddling around her little boy, perhaps here for the first time. The pink-winged angels are subtly yet dramatically defined to make it clear that the two young women assisting Mary are indeed angels. Jesus is crowned with a gold nimbus to emphasise that this is no ordinary Mother and baby.

The constricted space feels cramped to recall the basic set-up and close quarters of the stable that would have sheltered animals as well as humans. Mary is kneeling in front of Jesus - one angel holds a lantern to give Mary light for the task; the other angel is holding him out while looking upwards to heaven. It is an offering up to God not just a midwife's practical assistance. The three angel heads above are all looking in different directions, they know what is happening but they each have a different...

To continue reading or download the full resource with the complete image, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Mark and the Lectionary

An exploration of how the Lectionary guides us through Mark and John in Year B, and how we can benefit from looking at the structure of the year.

At the beginning of the Lectionary for Sundays there is a series of tables that list the Gospel readings through Ordinary Time and mark out the shape of the Gospel and its themes. The Gospel readings are 'semi-continuous', that is they follow the Gospel chapter by chapter but they also miss sections out as well (hence the 'semi'). One of the challenges of proclaiming and hearing the Gospel on Sunday is that we can have little sense of that continuity:

- Does what comes before or after matter?
- How does this reading follow on from last week or lead on to next week?
- Are we aware of what is missing?

There are three Lectionary Cycles, each focussed on a synoptic Gospel: A – Matthew, B – Mark, C – Luke. The purpose of the Lectionary on the...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Preparing Children for the Scriptures

Ideas for parents, catechists and teachers to help younger children connect with the Bible more easily.

1. Make time to share the Scriptures

Scripture can become part of a regular conversation between you and your child. But it's crucial to allow for opportunities. Look for touch-points during the day or week. For most children, you can try to include the Bible as a bedtime story and for older ones who read personally at bedtime, consider buying them a children's version of the Bible appropriate to their age.

Talk about the Bible stories at important feast times (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Lent etc.). Pick up on the Bible stories that children are hearing at school through Assembly time or in their R.E. classes. All of this helps to keep Scripture alive as a topic of conversation and reflection in a family.

2. Pick up on symbols

Having symbols, pictures and reminders around your home works well to...

To continue reading or download the full resource, visit catholicbiblesunday.org

Simeon and Anna

A deeper look at the characters at Jesus' Presentation, particularly written for those in the second half of life.

A journey into the second half of life awaits us all. Not everybody goes there, even though all of us get older, and some of us get older than others. In the Bible there are many people who are called to great acts in older age, long after they thought they were even capable. God shows us time and again that age is not the problem, faithfulness of heart is all that matters.

Two such older people are Simeon and Anna whom we hear about in Luke's Gospel at the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. So this reflection looks at their roles in identifying the Messiah and for whom a long life had been the preparation. To help us to do this we will explore both the Bible texts and an icon for the Feast Day that we celebrate on 2nd February.

If you are part of a group, one person may like to light a candle to still everyone's thoughts.

One or two people may wish to read the texts aloud to the group or all...

To continue reading or download the full resource with the complete image, visit catholicbiblesunday.org



Going Further

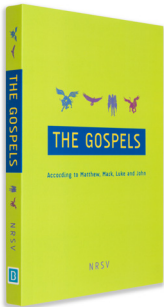
The Scripture Working Group was established in 2011 as part of the Catholic Bishops' Conference England and Wales' Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis.

The broad aims of the group are:

- To help network and support existing Catholic biblical initiatives
- To promote and encourage new forms of biblical engagement in England and Wales
- To identify areas for collaboration and strategic development nationally and internationally.

To find out more about the work of the group, find additional resources and links to resourcing websites, and to sign up to our email newsletter, please visit thewordofthelord.co.uk

Scriptural Resources from Bible Society

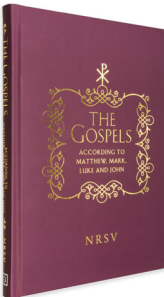


It is a good idea to have a small Gospel, a pocket-sized Gospel that you can carry around with you, and to read a short passage from it at any time of the day. At any time in the day I take the Gospel out of my pocket and read a little something, a short passage. There we find Jesus, Who speaks to us, in the Gospel!

Pope Francis, 16 March 2014

A small, portable pocket-sized edition of the Gospels that make an ideal give-away to young people. Includes an extra colour section on the background and meaning of the Gospels to help new readers understand the context around Scriptures.

Price: £4.99



The Gospels Gift edition

A classically beautiful, large-sized edition of the Gospels. An elegant gift for those receiving sacraments of Initiation, Marriage or Ordination to the Diaconate, and an appropriate edition for use in Funeral liturgies.

Price: £12.99

Find these, and many more scriptural resources at biblesociety.org.uk/shop

word

on the go»

A brand new digital resource to help busy Catholics like you to get more out of the Bible.

wordonthego.org includes 3 minute video stories of Catholics who try out various forms of engaging with the Bible and share the benefits.

We meet Louise and her dog Hagrid who reflects on passages from the Gospels while she's out walking him every day. Kate from Nottingham reads the Bible when commuting to work in London. The Poulter family break out the popcorn for a regular Bible movie night with their three children. Carmel from South London created a weekly drop-in Bible study group in her parish, while Oscar, a Polish student at London University - listens to Scripture while going for a run. Claire and her two kids made a Jesse Tree at Christmas and learnt about the Bible characters and symbols that are part of Jesus' life journey. Simon, a Disability Worker read about his namesake 'Simon Peter' in the Gospels and is keen to read more...

Word on the Go helps Catholics like you to build the Bible into your busy life, deepening your faith and spirituality and motivating you to want to continue exploring Scripture – in whatever form and whenever you can make the time.

Word on the Go encourages us Catholics to engage with the Bible through a range of pathways. None of the activities we suggest are boring, time-consuming or difficult! Why not give it a go with **Word on the Go**.

word on the go» GO



Everyday Life

The Bible is a collection of practical wisdom and of stories about God's presence in the daily lives of many people. As a result, you might be surprised how easily Scripture applies to your own life.



Your story

The Bible is packed with an amazing range of people, each with their own life stories and perspectives on the world. Reflecting on how God spoke through them - and to them - can help us connect Scripture with our own lives today.



Getting Started

Getting started with Scripture isn't as hard as you might think. With an easy-to-read translation, engaging with the Bible can be as simple as reflecting for just five minutes on one sentence or passage.



Prayer

Scripture isn't just the greatest story ever told, it's also a fantastic prayer book. Praying with the Word is a powerful way of tuning in to God. And it needn't be a headache - there are many simple ways that you can use the Bible to pray.



Signs & seasons

Catholics have always recognised how words, actions and symbols all speak powerfully to the soul. By embracing the Church's signs and seasons, we can easily bring the message of Scripture to life in our daily lives.



Get Creative

Throughout Christian history, Scripture has been the source of inspiration for many works of art, architecture, and music. As a result, the creative world can be a simple and enjoyable way to start exploring the Bible.



The Big picture

The Bible belongs to the whole Church. Benefiting from the wisdom of other Catholics – saints and scholars, popes and parishioners – will help you to see the bigger picture and appreciate the message of Scripture more deeply.



A 'crash course' on Scripture

If you feel like you would appreciate some guidance before diving into the Bible, we've put together a short 'crash course' for you. In this section, you'll find seven key points to help you get the most out of your time with Scripture.

For more information contact Fleur Dorrell – fleur.dorrell@biblesociety.org.uk

Welcome the Word

prepared by



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Liturgy
Office
ENGLAND
& WALES