

FINAL SCRIPTURE AND SUMMARY

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand.”

1 Chronicles 29:14

The beauty of generosity is that it has no boundaries; no time limits. When we give of ourselves in any way – in hospitality, in welcome, in material resources, in prayer, in love – we grow in the likeness of Christ. We reflect the sacrificial and abundant nature of God to those around us. He can multiply our giving when we entrust and wait in hope for His intervention.

God always endeavours to give us good things to be a blessing to others. May our hands and hearts be always open (not clenched tight) to receive and give goodness in faith; God will give more than we expect.

Through prayer, we can enter into God's presence. Let's ask Him to prepare our hearts to receive the gift of His Son and use this time during Advent to remove any distractions. So we can make our lives a place of warmth and openness and ensure there's "room at the inn" of our heart.



CLOSING PRAYER

In a time of silence, let us pray that we may draw closer to the one who has created all things.

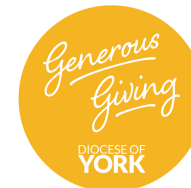
Silence is kept.

God of grace, ever creating and restoring, You breathe life into all things and embrace us with an everlasting love; help us to grow in wonder and awe, and embody a spirit of gratitude.

**May we be transformed by Your saving love, expressed in Jesus, so we can offer ourselves with extravagant generosity to accomplish Your will,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**



Bible Study for Advent



**For unto us a child is born,
to us a Son is given...**



OPENING PRAYER

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.

Let us bring our gifts to the Lord
that they may be used for His glory.

May the Spirit of God fill our hearts
as we come to meet Him in this place. Amen

Silence is kept.

“Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvellous things; His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him. The LORD has made His salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.”

Psalm 98:1,2

**God of abundance, thank You that You are the author and giver of all good things; the light and salvation in our lives. Grant us a gracious and humble heart, that we may give You glory through offering the First Fruits of our lives, and grow more into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour,
Jesus Christ. Amen.**

INTRODUCTION

During in this Advent time together, we are exploring God's generosity to us, and how we can express our gratitude by working with Him to bring His bountiful kingdom to the people around us. The word 'Advent' comes from Latin and means "coming". Its purpose is to wait with hopeful anticipation for the coming of Christ to Earth. Christmas is a season that focuses on waiting and celebrating a new and better era, when God broke into time and space and entered our world through Jesus.

Paired chat

Sometimes, walking with God requires us to wait. What, in our lives, are we waiting for at the moment? This could be significant or trivial. (Have a chat for a few minutes.)



PART ONE - 'WORTH THE WAIT'

Reflection

Christmas can remind us that God will come through and His promises will come to pass. However, as we know, God's promises do not follow our proposed timelines. The prophet Isaiah prophesied Jesus' birth nearly six hundred years before it happened. When we think of the Christmas story, do our minds go straight to baby Jesus in a manger surrounded by livestock or something else? Let's take time (5-10 minutes) to reflect on a time before Jesus was born and read the following scripture passage and explore how we can learn afresh how to wait well.

FIRST READING - Isaiah 9:6 (New International Version)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Paired chat - with an opportunity to share with the group (5-10 mins)

What hope do you think the descriptions of the coming Messiah gave to those waiting to be rescued from an oppressive regime?

Group discussion (As long as needed.)

Discuss further what each of the four names given to our Saviour means to us and how they can help us have a deeper understanding of generous God's ways.

How can these names help us to wait and trust God to bring His promises to fulfilment and appreciate His generous nature during our dark times?

PART TWO - 'TRUST THE TIMING'

After mulling over the names given to Jesus and their meaning, let's think deeper about what we can learn while we wait for God to act.

SECOND READINGS - Galatians 4:4-5 (New Living Translation)

But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

Romans 8:28 (New International Version)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.



Reflection

The Jewish people had experienced massive setbacks and countless moments of false hope. This was especially difficult during the 400 years of "silence" leading up to Jesus's birth. God had not spoken to them by a prophet from the end of Malachi in the Old Testament to the beginning of the book of Matthew in the New Testament. This proves a crucial principle. Just because God seems silent, it doesn't mean He is distant. Just because it seems like He isn't speaking, doesn't mean He is not working. God is the master of good timing.

Paired chat, leading to group discussion (As long as needed.)

What are we learning about our purpose in life and living well in the 'meantimes'?

God sacrificially gave His only Son, how do we respond to this?

PART THREE - 'THE POWER OF PEACE'

THIRD READING - Luke 2:13-14 (New International Version)

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

Reflection (As long as needed.)

This is astounding news - given by an army of angels to shepherds, who were classed as the lowest in society! We may be stressed by our circumstances, but our soul can be at peace knowing that God is graciously plotting for our good. Peace is made possible through a personal relationship with Christ - the Prince of Peace.

Group discussion (5-10 mins)

This time of year is especially about getting to know the Prince of Peace, how do we do that? Why does it make a difference?