

'Joy to the World!' Advent Calendar **Secondary**

Experience the joy of Jesus birth expressed in art and videos from across the globe using this online advent calendar.

This link will take you to the Advent calendar.

[Advent Calendar 2025 \(Secondary\)](#)

Or you can go via our [Diocese of Guildford website here.](#)

In the event that the direct links stops working the one on the website will still work.

Online Advent Calendar 2025

This joy at the birth of Jesus is shared by Christians across the world. In our Advent calendar for 2025, we will explore how Christians across the world tell this universal story in words and images, with some fun for families to share at the weekends! Across this time, we have used some video resources created by Compassion, a Christian child-sponsorship charity, who have created beautifully sensitive and joyfully cultural retellings of the Nativity, which we hope might bring back memories of students' own Primary school Nativity plays! We use these alongside images from the same part of the world, so you might wish to choose to focus on either, or use both, depending on the time available and the context of your school. We often revisit the same questions exploring how different global contexts might influence how the story is shown and ponder whether this matters in maintaining the integrity of the story. We hope that you enjoy seeing how others celebrate; perhaps you will get some new ideas for your celebrations this year. Feliz Navidad!!

When you click on the door you will find:



an image;



some wondering questions;



a video of the nativity story, song or celebration;

The calendar ends on the last day of term.



On the next pages are grids showing the content for each day. You may wish to select questions according to the age and experiences of your pupils. At the end of this document, you will find the images that we have used and the sources.

Using the Advent Calendar for collective worship in schools






The calendar would work well in class collective worship. You might wish to ask a pupil to lead this

There is a separate calendar for primary pupils.

For each day to properly be an act of collective worship, spend a few moments together reflecting or praying about the things you've discussed.

The questions are designed to establish some connections with the everyday lives of your pupils, so should help you to make this time appropriate and inclusive for all.

Date	 Place / Culture	 Video from YouTube	 Wondering Questions
Mon 1 st ^d	Joy the world Introduction	Masaka Kids Africana Dancing Christmas Time https://youtu.be/HctyEziLn5c?si=LY9JHMwMwpQlompK	<p>Joy to the World!</p> <p>When the angels visited the shepherds to tell them that Jesus had been born they said '<i>Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people.</i>' Luke 2:10</p> <p>This joy at the birth of Jesus is shared by Christians across the world. In this Advent calendar we will explore how Christians have painted the story of Jesus birth and how they express joy through diverse Christmas celebrations. The story is the same, the joy is the same, but the settings are very different.</p> <p>Look carefully at the picture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder how similar this version of the Nativity is to other images you have seen? • I wonder what surprises you – or which sections you might have questions about? • What might you want to ask the artist who created this piece of art? <p>As you watch the video together, how do these Ugandan children express their joy at the good news of the birth of Jesus?</p>
Tue 2 nd	Indonesia	Compassion Indonesian Nativity https://youtu.be/jJdhAsaDnbc?si=ixhekGMW8E2-p1Dn	<p>Watch the video together, retold by children in Nias, Indonesia</p> <p>I wonder how well you think this cultural retelling captures the joy of the Christmas story?</p> <p>How does this retelling demonstrate Christian belief in 'Immanuel – God with us'?</p> <p>I wonder what's the same in the Biblical narrative, and what's different – and why?</p> <p>Do you think the differences matter?</p> <p>Now look at the image – I wonder what connections you might find with the video?</p>
Wed 3 rd ^h	New Zealand Māori	Star News Bethlehem - YouTube St Paul's Auckland	<p>New Zealand</p> <p>Look at the image, showing Mary wearing a traditional Māori necklace called a hei-tiki.</p> <p>I wonder what might surprise you about this image of Mary and Jesus?</p> <p>I wonder what else you can see in this image that might connect with Māori traditions?</p> <p>How does this image demonstrate Christian belief in 'Immanuel – God with us'?</p>

Thur 4 th	Poland	Pip the beach cat Krakow Nativity Scene competition https://youtu.be/IHQeYFbVQAw?si=uoa7YMR13coVe6SK	Today is the first Thursday of December; in Krakow (Poland), people will be holding their Szopki (<i>shop-ki</i>) (Christmas Crib celebration) on this day. The buildings are meant to look like Krakow, so Jesus is shown as 'Immanuel - God with us' in Krakow. Watch the video first, to see some of these nativity scenes. How well do you think the szopki express the message at the heart of Christmas? I wonder how creating a szopki blends cultural traditions with the Nativity story? I wonder what you might want to add to each scene – and why? Or what you might include in a szopki based on your cultural location?
Fri 5 th	South American Countries of Mexico and Bolivia	Compassion Bolivian Nativity https://youtu.be/GZWXrWfZwWc?si=wGfjgtRSCQTlkdg-	Watch the video together, retold by children from Bolivia I wonder how well you think this cultural retelling captures the joy of the Christmas story? How does this retelling demonstrate Christian belief in 'Immanuel – God with us'? I wonder what's the same in the Biblical narrative, and what's different – and why? Do you think the differences matter? I wonder which things Mary might have 'stored in her heart'? Now look at the image – I wonder what connections you might find with the video?
Sat 6 th	Joy Across the Globe	Dunkan Yare Jingle bells in 20 languages https://youtu.be/1LkcpS-Surk?si=8NzSPsk-Z1pUYqIT	Look at the image first. I wonder how would you describe this? Is it a piece of religious / sacred art? Or a Christmas decoration? Or maybe even a memento of a visit to the Holy Land (it's made of olive wood) I wonder how you might decide whether something is sacred or not? As you listen to the song, which is a familiar song all about bells, I wonder if you can pick out any words that you know? Is this a religious or secular song? How do you know this? Which of the 20 countries have you visited, or would like to visit?
Sun 7 th	United States of America	Ice Nativity Scene Texas #AMAZING NATIVITY ICE SCULPTURE #shorts #nativity	The video for today is of a Nativity sculpture made entirely out of ice! Watch the video together first. I wonder which of the individual sculptures was the most difficult to create? I wonder if you think its lack of permanence makes a difference to the relative value of the art? I wonder what you might want to immortalise in ice if you could? Now look at the image: I wonder why some Nativity scenes show Bethlehem in snow, like this image?

Mon 8 th	Kenya	Compassion Kenyan nativity https://youtu.be/KX_5dPONEWw?si=qB9mXnf0kJWAcVy1	Watch the video together, retold by children in Kenya I wonder how well you think this cultural retelling captures the joy of the Christmas story? How does this retelling demonstrate Christian belief in 'Immanuel – God with us'? I wonder what's the same in the Biblical narrative, and what's different – and why? Do you think the differences matter? Now look at the image – I wonder what connections you might find with the video?
Tue 9 th	India	South Tube Kanyakumari Christmas Crib https://youtu.be/TFBEk1-rYIs?si=kt0y1mXncf5c72ab	The video for today is of a huge Christmas crib. It shows Bible stories from creation to the birth of Jesus. As you watch, see how many you can spot..... [you can find the answers on the teacher overview document!] Some questions to ponder: I wonder why the creators of this experience chose to include so many other Bible stories rather than just focussing on the Nativity? I wonder how this might help people to understand connections big ideas in Christianity? I wonder if you think there are any stories missing - and why? I wonder how this might impact on peoples' understanding of the Christian beliefs about 'Immanuel - God with us'? Old Testament stories we spotted: Creation and the garden of Eden; Abraham & the stars in the sky; Joseph being put in the well by his brothers; Joseph in prison; Joseph and the Pharaoh; Moses in the basket; The 10 plagues that God sent on Egypt; Moses crosses the Red Sea; Manna in the desert (with real Indian wildlife!); The fiery furnace; Daniel in the lions' den
Wed 10 th	Wales	Dai Wooldridge Shepherds part 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBCiRzQGNCw	This video is from Welsh poet, and Christian, Dai Woolridge. I wonder how this retelling differs from those you have viewed so far? Who do Dai and his friend represent in the Nativity account? I wonder what he changed to create this retelling of the story? How does this communicate Christian belief in 'Immanuel - God with us'? I wonder what you think about this retelling? Now look at the image, created by Welsh artist Martin Crampin, as a icon for St. Nicholas' Greek Orthodox Church in Cardiff. I wonder how this modern icon honours the traditions of the past?
Thur	United States of America	Centerville Canyons Nativity Shadow Play - YouTube	Watch the video together - although it's a play without words, the words of the song are significant in the way that this retelling works.

11 th			<p>I wonder how this retelling of the Nativity is different to others you've viewed so far?</p> <p>I wonder what the writers have added? - and why you think they did this?</p> <p>Do you think it makes a difference to the meaning of the retelling? How?</p> <p>Today's image is created by American iconographer Kelly Latimore, and titled 'Tent City Nativity. She says about the process of creating icons: <i>'I do not wish to approach Iconography as an art form that simply follows an inherited tradition, knowledge, and practice. I want it to be a 'holy pondering', meditation, and process that potentially brings about a new way of seeing for the viewer and me.'</i></p> <p>I wonder what you think about this idea? What might the viewer see that is new in her image?</p>
Fri 12 th	Philippines	<p>Compassion Philippine nativity https://youtu.be/DS_ew1z66pg?si=N6cycTvs8u4aW8n</p>	<p>Watch the video together, retold by children in the Philippines</p> <p>I wonder how well you think this cultural retelling captures the joy of the Christmas story?</p> <p>How does this retelling demonstrate Christian belief in 'Immanuel – God with us'?</p> <p>I wonder what's the same in the Biblical narrative, and what's different – and why?</p> <p>Do you think the differences matter?</p> <p>Now look at the image – I wonder what connections you might find with the video?</p>
Sat 13 th	Christmas around the Globe	<p>Christmas around the world 2024 https://youtu.be/HFe6RrCaMzs?si=QhL3jGt3HK2ZFB5m</p>	<p>Look at the image first.</p> <p>I wonder what you find surprising in this image, created by artist Susan Ringstad Emery, who is an enrolled tribal member of Native Village of Shishmaref (Alaska)?</p> <p>I wonder how this also connects with Christians' beliefs about 'Immanuel - God with us'?</p> <p>I wonder how you might show this in your own cultural context?</p> <p>Today's video shows festive traditions from across the globe. I wonder which of these festive traditions you would like to take part in?</p> <p>I wonder what special traditions you might have in your own school?</p>
Sun 14 th	Nepal	<p>Christmas Ko Lahar - New Nepali Christmas dance song Milan Bhujel Asha Church 2024 https://youtu.be/4wEOjbBTt8Y?si=pQ7ORBSbq4yw4HfD</p>	<p>Today's image is of a Nativity set, crafted out of karma wood by Nepali artist Narayan Shilpakar.</p> <p>The owner of this nativity set writes. <i>'We commissioned this set from our Nepali friend Narayan Shilpakar, who is a professional artisan near Kathmandu, Nepal. Narayan is a Christian. The wood is a hardwood called karma wood in the Nepali language and 'hallu' in Narayan's native tongue.....Traditional Hindu art is mirrored throughout the piece in a blend of Christian and Hindu culture. Mary and Joseph have open palms facing baby Jesus, showing a sign of respect in Nepali culture; holding the</i></p>

			<p><i>palms out to someone is a way of sharing your light and spirit with them. A peaceful backdrop of trees, plants, and river completes the scene.'</i></p> <p>As you look at the image, I wonder if you can see the artist's ideas? I wonder what you think about culture influencing how an artist works? I wonder if this happens in other ways, not just through art?</p> <p>The video is a song from a Nepali-speaking church in Kentucky, USA. I wonder how this song might express Christmas joy? I wonder how traditional movements might have influenced the dance moves in the video?</p>
Mon 15 th	England	<p>All Saints Peckham Nativity on the overground https://youtu.be/f66Olrelhrc?si=gBuX0_89zhJW_yfMp</p>	<p>Nativity on the Overground This version of the Nativity was filmed at London overground stations from Clapham to Peckham Rye.</p> <p>I wonder why the creators of this video chose to recreate the Nativity account in this way? I wonder what how the words in different languages might be significant? I wonder how this version of the Nativity had an impact on people on the platforms? I wonder what a Nativity 'flashmob' like this might look like in your neighbourhood?!</p> <p>Now look at the image carefully. This is the oldest piece of art in our calendar, dating from c.1480 and is part of a much larger tapestry, showing 4 scenes from the Nativity account. I wonder why it's been so important to artists across the ages, and across the world, to show the Nativity in so many different ways?</p>
Tue 16 th	Ireland	<p>Kilkenny Ireland RTE https://youtu.be/K-KFKMWZ8sk?si=YR9RIJzNmyi8uzDy</p>	<p>Look at the stone carving carefully before using the pondering questions together. Does this tell the Nativity story in the same way as other art you have seen? I wonder if there's a reason why each character is located where they are in the carving? Can you see a Cross in the carving – why do you think that the sculptor included this?</p> <p>The video today was created by residents of Kilkenny, retelling the Nativity story. It beautifully shows diverse parts of the city and its culture as residents read the story from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.</p>

Wed 17 th	Derbyshire & the Lake District	Grasmere Primary School https://youtu.be/URsGpU2XA3Y?si=yQ1cJAWEOwkTQ86W	<p>This charming video is a longer retelling of the whole Nativity, at 17.29. If Gabriel visited Mary in February 2020... and if Mary and Joseph sought peace in Grasmere (in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which some of you might remember!) how might the Nativity story unfold? The children of Grasmere School have written and created this modern, Lake District version of a timeless tale. Enjoy!!</p> <p>Some questions to ponder: I wonder what's the same in the Biblical narrative, and what's different – and why? Do you think the differences matter? I wonder how this retelling might demonstrate the Christian belief in 'Immanuel - God with us'? I wonder what memories this retelling might evoke for you? I wonder how the Nativity story might have brought hope to this community during the pandemic? Now look at the image – I wonder what connections you might find with the video?</p>
Thur 18 th	Joy to the World!	Masaka Kids Africana Dancing Feliz Navidad - Merry Christmas https://youtu.be/c7swkiMsCwc?si=D84px0_1qpkmsUQu	<p>The African Countries of Cameroon and Uganda As you watch this video together, which words in this joyful song really stand out for you? Thinking about all the images we have seen and the words we have heard since 1st December, I wonder which you think have best expressed Joy to the World? I wonder if they have helped us to understand a bit more why this story is so special to people all across the globe? I wonder what messages of joy you think the world needs this Christmas time? The image is part of a series commissioned by the Mafa people, viewed by the artist as if the events had taken place in a village in Cameroon. I wonder how this shows beliefs about the incarnation of Jesus as 'Immanuel - God with us'?</p>
Fri 19 th	Diocese of Guildford	Video of the schools artwork	<p>The Diocese of Guildford The theme of our school Christmas Art Exhibition this year is <i>Joy to the World!</i> If your school contributed a piece of art, you may like to start by talking about it together. Then watch the video which shows all the artwork. I wonder where you noticed joy in the artwork in the video? I wonder if you all noticed the same things? I wonder if any of the artwork focussed on Jesus bringing joy to the whole world? Which countries and cultures did you see represented?</p>









			<p>The Diocese of Guildford Education Team wish you all a very Joyful and Happy Christmas!</p> <p>You can see these pieces of art for yourself at Guildford Cathedral, where they are on display until 2nd February 2026. The cathedral is free to visit. However, we advise that you check the cathedral diary in case there is a service or event taking place when you intend to visit. Guildford Cathedral - Cathedral Diary</p>
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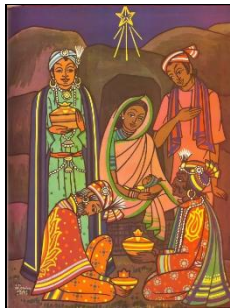
We recommend that teachers watch the videos using the links above before the pupils open the advent calendar to make sure that they are suitable for your pupils. We reserve the right to change the videos because, our experience is that people release new Christmas materials in December, so if we come across something exciting, we may insert that video!

We hope you have a joyful time wondering about the images and videos in this calendar together.

Jane and Rachel

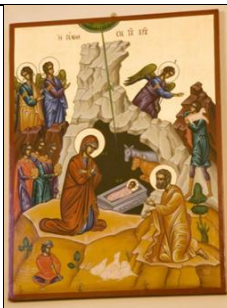
Images and source

1 st Introduction	2 nd Indonesia	3 rd New Zealand	4 th Poland
 <p>Kenyan Unknown https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56354</p>	 <p>Gede Sukana Kariana Indonesia The Jesus Question Tracing the identity of Jesus through history, art, and pop culture</p>	 <p>Ku Bailey Māori Madona and Child Paintings of the Nativity From Around the World – BAME Anglican https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56568</p>	 <p>Polish Folk Art called Wycinanki Made from cutting paper http://www.internativities.com/wycinanki-nativity/</p>
5 th Mexico	6 th Bethlehem	7 th United States America	8 th Kenya
 <p>Mary Jane Miller Mexico https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=59674https://freebibleimages.org/photos/elijah-widow/</p>	 <p>Nativity bell from Etsy</p>	 <p>Mikhail Zarovny has roots in Ukraine and Russia</p>	 <p>Elimo Njau The Jesus Question Tracing the identity of Jesus through history, art, and pop culture</p>
9 th India	10 th England	11 th United States of America	12 th Philippines



Sister Claire

[Global Christian Worship - Christmas Story Art from India \(Sr. Claire set 2\)](#)

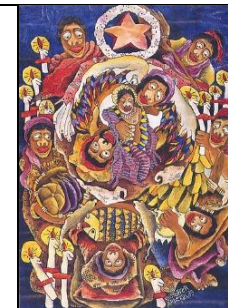


14th Nepal



Kelly Latimore

[Tent City Nativity – Kelly Latimore Icons](#)



Kristoffer Ardeña

[Nativity Paintings from around the World | The Jesus Question](#)

Info about this piece: [Christmas, Day 11: Maligayang Pasko! \(Merry Christmas\) – Art & Theology](#)

13th Arctic



USA

Native Nativity Susan Ringstad

[Native Nativity - Susan Ringstad Emery](#)



Nativity scene from Nepal

Narayan Shilpakar

[Nepal 357. Karma Wood Holy Family - WORLD NATIVITY](#)

15th England



Medieval tapestry

[Art in the Christian Tradition:](#)

16th Ireland



Gerard Dillon

<https://www.whytes.ie/art/nativity/152386/>

17th England

18th Cameroon

19th The Diocese of Guildford



Dinah Roe Kendall

[Nativity Paintings from around the World | The Jesus Question](#)



Jesus Mafa Project

[Art in the Christian Tradition:](#)

Will be added after 1st December