



Prophecy and  
Promise

Branch 2

## Y2 Teachers' Guide

Version 1: September 2026

*This booklet is offered as a theological guide for teachers. Although the information provides some context for the whole branch, it will be most useful for teachers as they deliver the first few sessions and lessons within the branch.*

## Teachers' Guide: Y2 Prophecy and Promise

| Session 1                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>HEAR</b><br><b>Know</b> that a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message – inspired by the Holy Spirit and that Isaiah is a prophet (spoke of Jesus long before he was born).                                                                               |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Who gives us messages?<br>What do you know about the Holy Spirit? (Year 1)                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>What a prophet is, drawing on Isaiah and John the Baptist as examples<br>That a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that Isaiah and John the Baptist are prophets. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.2.</b> Know that a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that Isaiah and John the Baptist are prophets.<br><b>U2.2.3.</b> Identify Zechariah's special message about John's future (Lk 1:76).                    |

### U2.2.2 – Prophets and Prophetesses

#### 1. What is a Prophet or Prophetess?

- A **prophet (male) or prophetess (female)** is a person chosen by God to speak on His behalf.
- Their role is to **deliver God's message** to individuals, kings, or the community, especially when people stray from God's covenant.
- Prophets are **inspired by the Holy Spirit** (God's Spirit guiding their words and actions).
- Their message often has **two aspects**:
  - A **call to conversion** (repentance, turning back to God).
  - A **message of hope** (reminding people that God will keep His promises).
- Prophets often faced rejection or danger because their messages challenged injustice, idolatry, or corruption.

#### 2. Isaiah (Old Testament Prophet)

- **Historical Context:** Isaiah lived in the 8th century BC during times of political instability for Israel and Judah. The people were often tempted to trust in foreign powers rather than God.
- **Key Messages:**
  - God is holy and just; people must live faithfully.
  - Warning of consequences if Israel turned from God.
  - Comfort and hope: God would send a **Messiah** (Saviour).
- **Famous Prophecies:**
  - *"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call him Emmanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14).
  - *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light"* (Isaiah 9:2).
- **Theological Significance:** Isaiah prepared people to expect a Messiah who would bring peace, justice, and salvation — fulfilled in Jesus.

#### 3. John the Baptist (New Testament Prophet)

- **Historical Context:** John lived at the time of Roman rule, when many Jews were longing for freedom and waiting for the Messiah.
- **His Mission:**

- To **prepare the way for the Lord** (echoing Isaiah 40:3: *"A voice cries out in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord."*).
- He preached a **baptism of repentance** — inviting people to turn away from sin and start afresh with God.
- He lived simply (camel hair clothing, eating locusts and honey) as a sign of humility and dependence on God.
- **Key Message:**
  - *"One more powerful than I is coming"* (Mark 1:7).
  - John pointed away from himself and towards Jesus as the Messiah.
- **Theological Significance:** John is the **last of the prophets** and the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. He recognises Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

#### 4. Why Prophets Matter in Teaching

- Prophets teach us that God continues to speak through history.
- They show that **God chooses ordinary people** to carry extraordinary messages.
- Prophets model **courage, obedience, and hope** in the face of uncertainty.
- They prepare the way for the ultimate prophet, priest, and king: **Jesus Christ**.

#### U2.2.3 – Zechariah's Special Message (Luke 1:76)

##### 1. Context of Luke 1:76

- Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, had been struck mute when he doubted the angel Gabriel's message about his wife Elizabeth having a son (Luke 1:18–20).
- When John was born and named, Zechariah's speech was restored. He responded with a hymn of praise known as the **Benedictus** (Luke 1:68–79).
- Within this hymn, Zechariah speaks prophetically about John's mission:  
*"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways."*

##### 2. Meaning of Zechariah's Message

- **John's Identity:** From birth, John is recognised as a prophet chosen by God.
- **His Mission:**
  - To "prepare the way of the Lord" — getting people ready for Jesus.
  - To call people to repentance so they could welcome the Messiah with open hearts.
- **Theological Significance:**
  - John fulfils Isaiah's prophecy of a forerunner preparing the path for God's coming (Isaiah 40:3).
  - He is given a **unique place in salvation history** as the one who bridges Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfilment.
- **Link to Jesus:** By pointing to Jesus, John shows that salvation comes not through himself but through the one who follows.

##### 3. Classroom Links

- Children can compare **Isaiah, John, and Zechariah's prophecy**:
  - Isaiah foretold a Messiah.
  - John prepared the way for Jesus.
  - Zechariah named John's mission before he was even grown.
- Pupils might reflect on how God has a plan for everyone's life, just as He had for John.
- Connect to Advent: just as John prepared people for Jesus' first coming, Christians prepare for his coming at Christmas and at the end of time.

## Teacher Summary

- **Prophets and prophetesses** are inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring God's message, often calling people to faithfulness and giving hope.
- **Isaiah**: pointed forward to the coming Messiah.
- **John the Baptist**: last and greatest prophet, preparing the way for Jesus.
- **Zechariah's message (Lk 1:76)**: John would be a prophet of the Most High, chosen before birth to prepare the way for Jesus.
- This shows God's plan unfolding through history and invites Christians today to listen for God's voice and respond with trust, like the prophets did.

| Prophet                                                | Scripture Reference                  | Message / Mission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | How it Points to Jesus                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Isaiah</b> (Old Testament prophet)                  | Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:2, Isaiah 40:3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proclaimed God's holiness and justice.</li> <li>• Gave hope of a coming Messiah. <i>"A virgin shall conceive... Emmanuel."</i></li> <li>• <i>"A voice cries in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord."</i></li> </ul>                        | Shows that Jesus is the promised Messiah: Emmanuel ( <i>God with us</i> ), the light in darkness, the one for whom the way is prepared.      |
| <b>John the Baptist</b> (New Testament prophet)        | Mark 1:1–8; Luke 3:1–18; John 1:29   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preached repentance and baptism.</li> <li>• Lived simply, calling people back to God. - Said: <i>"One more powerful than I is coming."</i></li> <li>• Pointed to Jesus as <i>"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."</i></li> </ul> | Prepared people's hearts to welcome Jesus. His role was to be the forerunner, the last and greatest prophet, bridging Old and New Testament. |
| <b>Zechariah's prophecy about John</b> (John's father) | Luke 1:76                            | At John's birth, Zechariah prophesied: <i>"You, child, will be called prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways."</i>                                                                                                                                   | Confirms John's identity and mission: chosen by God even before birth to prepare the way for Jesus, the Lord.                                |

| Session 2                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>LIVE</b><br>Using artistic expressions to create a personal response to Isaiah's picture language about light and darkness                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | What story have we heard about light and dark? (Creation Story Yr 2 Advent 1)<br>Who is the light of the world? (Year 1 Pentecost 1) Turns and Talks                                                                                                         |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>About Isaiah's picture language about light and darkness (Is 9:1-2) and make simple links with Jesus.<br>That the Church teaches that the person Isaiah spoke of was Jesus long before he came to earth. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>R2.2.2.</b> Using artistic expressions to create a personal response to Isaiah's picture language about light and darkness (Is 9:1-2).                                                                                                                    |

## 1. The Scripture (Isaiah 9:1–6)

- *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."*
- *"For a child has been born for us... Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace."*
- Message: In times of difficulty, God promises a saviour who will bring light, hope, and peace.
- Contrast of **darkness vs light** = despair vs hope, sin vs salvation, suffering vs peace.

## 2. Artistic Expressions to Explore

### a) Sieger Köder

- Known for expressive, colourful paintings rich in symbolism.
- His depictions of biblical themes often contrast shadow and bright, radiant colours.
- Pupils can be shown Köder's works (e.g., Nativity or Christ as Light) and notice:
  - The way he uses **deep shadows** to show human struggle.
  - The way **light radiates** around Christ or the Gospel moment.
- **Personal Response:** Pupils can use paint or oil pastels to show their own "darkness and light" perhaps a cross, star, or child bringing brightness into a dark world.

### b) McCrimmon's Artwork (Educational Liturgical Art)

- McCrimmon's publishes modern Catholic art used in prayer resources, hymn books, and classrooms.
- Their Advent/Christmas imagery often shows bright stars, candles, or the Christ Child shining in the midst of shadow.
- **Personal Response:** Pupils could design a poster or card in a McCrimmon's style: bold outlines, simple shapes, bright symbolic colours (e.g., a golden child in a manger surrounded by deep blue night).

### c) Stained Glass Windows

- Traditionally used in churches to bring light into dark buildings, stained glass itself embodies Isaiah's imagery.
- Often show the Nativity, Christ as Light, or Advent themes.
- The contrast of coloured glass against dark lead frames mirrors **light breaking into darkness**.
- **Personal Response:** Pupils can create paper "stained glass" with tissue paper or coloured cellophane to show Isaiah's words:
  - A star shining.

- A child with rays of light.
- Darkness transformed into colour.

### Teacher Summary

- Isaiah 9:1–6 uses **light and darkness** to describe the coming of the Messiah as hope for God's people.
- **Köder**: expressive, emotional light in the midst of shadow.
- **McCrimmons**: bold, clear Christian symbols of light.
- **Stained glass**: physical light shining through colour, making Isaiah's message visible.
- Pupils can respond by making their own creative expression of how Jesus brings light into the world and into their own lives.

| Session 3                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>HEAR / BELIEVE</b><br>Know that a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message – inspired by the Holy Spirit and that John the Baptist is also a prophet – the annunciation of John the Baptist.                                                                |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | What special name did we give God's messenger Issiah?<br>Use 'Prepare Ye" from Godspell. Children identify links to John the Baptist (Prior learning about the Baptism of Jesus).                                                                                      |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>What a prophet is, drawing on Isaiah and John the Baptist as examples.<br>That a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that Isaiah and John the Baptist are prophets. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.2.</b> Know that a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that Isaiah and John the Baptist are prophets.<br><b>U2.2.3.</b> Identify Zechariah's special message about John's future (Lk 1:76).                     |

### Using Jen Norton's Image of John the Baptist

#### 1. About the Artwork

- Jen Norton is a contemporary Catholic artist whose works are colourful, symbolic, and expressive.
- In her depiction of **John the Baptist**:
  - John is shown baptising in the River Jordan.
  - His figure is bold, surrounded by flowing water, often with light and colour radiating out.
  - The art captures his role as **prophet and baptiser**, preparing hearts for Jesus.

#### 2. How It Connects to Scripture

- **Isaiah (OT prophecy)**: *"A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord"* (Isaiah 40:3).
  - Norton's image shows John in the wilderness, fulfilling Isaiah's words.
- **John the Baptist's Mission (NT)**:
  - Preached repentance (Mark 1:4).
  - Pointed to Jesus as the *"Lamb of God"* (John 1:29).
  - Baptised in the Jordan to prepare people for Christ.
- **Zechariah's prophecy (Luke 1:76)**:
  - John would *"go before the Lord to prepare his ways."*
  - The art highlights John's vocation as chosen from birth for this role.

### 3. Theological Meaning in the Artwork

- **Light vs Water:**
  - o Water = cleansing, repentance, renewal.
  - o Light = Christ coming into the world; John as the one who points towards it.
- **Posture of John:**
  - o Prophetic figure — bold, calling people back to God.
  - o His hand gestures often suggest proclamation and invitation.
- **Colour Use:**
  - o Vibrant blues and golds = divine presence and hope.
  - o Earthy tones = wilderness, humility.

### Teacher Summary

Jen Norton's image of John the Baptist visually expresses his role as prophet of the Most High, preparing the way of the Lord. The use of water, light, and vibrant colour captures the spirit of Isaiah's prophecy, John's preaching, and Zechariah's promise. By linking art and scripture, children can see how John's mission connects Old Testament prophecy to the New Testament fulfilment in Jesus.

| Session 4                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Focus                                     | <b>HEAR</b><br>Retell with increasing detail the accounts from the Annunciation of Jesus.                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | What did John the prophet John the Baptist say about Jesus?                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>Know that the Christian Bible is split into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.<br>Retell, with increasing detail, one of the religious accounts from the Annunciation |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.1.</b> Retell, with increasing detail, one of the religious accounts from the Annunciation and the birth of John the Baptist and of the Annunciation and the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. (Luke 1: 26-31, 38).          |

### What is Visio Divina?

- *Visio divina* means "**divine seeing**" in Latin.
- It is similar to *lectio divina* (prayerful reading of Scripture), but instead of words, it uses **sacred images** (art, icons, stained glass, illustrations) as a way to pray and reflect.
- The practice involves looking slowly and carefully at an image, asking: *What is God showing me through this artwork?*
- Steps often include:
  1. **Look** at the image carefully and notice details.
  2. **Reflect** on what the image makes you think or feel.
  3. **Pray** by speaking to God about what you see or feel.
  4. **Rest** in God's presence and allow His Word to touch your heart.

### How Visio Divina Helps Children Understand Bible Stories

#### 1. Engages the Senses

- Children are often visual learners. Art helps them enter into a story by **seeing it unfold**.

- Colours, shapes, and facial expressions can help them grasp emotions and meaning more deeply than words alone.
- 2. Encourages Wonder and Imagination**
    - Children notice details adults might overlook (e.g., an angel's hand gesture, the brightness of a star, or the look on Mary's face).
    - This sparks curiosity: *Why did the artist show it this way? What does that tell us about God's message?*
  - 3. Makes Bible Stories Relatable**
    - Artistic depictions (like Sieger Köder, Jen Norton, stained glass, or children's book illustrations) bring biblical characters to life in ways that feel real and approachable.
    - Children can connect their own emotions (fear, joy, trust) with those they see in the artwork.
  - 4. Deepens Spiritual Reflection**
    - Rather than just learning "facts" about the Bible, Visio divina invites children to **pray with the story**.
    - They begin to ask: *What is God saying to me through this story? How can I live like Mary, Joseph, or John the Baptist?*
  - 5. Creates Space for Dialogue**
    - Children can share what they see and feel in an image.
    - Different pupils may notice different things, which shows that Scripture and God's message speak to each person uniquely.

#### Teacher Summary

- **Visio divina** = prayerful looking at sacred art.
- It slows children down, helping them move beyond simply *hearing* a Bible story to *experiencing* it through sight, imagination, and prayer.
- It nurtures **understanding, empathy, and faith** — encouraging them to see the story not just as something from the past, but as God's living Word speaking to them today.

### U2.2.1. – The Annunciations and Births in Luke's Gospel (John the Baptist and Jesus)

- 1. Structure of Luke's Gospel (Chapters 1–2)**
  - Luke tells two stories side by side: the births of **John the Baptist** and **Jesus**.
  - This is deliberate — he shows that both are part of God's plan.
  - But he makes clear: **John is the prophet who prepares the way, Jesus is the Messiah who fulfils the promises.**
- 2. Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25, 57–66)**

#### Annunciation to Zechariah

- Zechariah was a priest; his wife Elizabeth was elderly and had no children.
- While Zechariah was serving in the Temple, the **angel Gabriel** appeared.
- Gabriel announced they would have a son, **John**, who would be a **prophet** preparing the way for the Lord.
- Zechariah **doubted** because of their age, and as a result he was made mute until the child's birth.

#### Birth of John

- When John was born, relatives wanted him named after his father.
- Elizabeth insisted on "John" (as Gabriel had commanded).
- When Zechariah confirmed the name, his speech returned, and he praised God.
- People recognised John as a child with a special destiny.

### Theology of John's Birth

- John is chosen by God even before birth.
- His miraculous birth links to Old Testament stories (e.g., Abraham and Sarah, Hannah and Samuel), showing continuity with Israel's history.
  - John is important — but only as the one who prepares the way. He is not the Saviour.

### 3. Annunciation and Birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26–38, 2:1–20)

#### Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26–31, 38)

- The angel Gabriel appears to **Mary**, a young woman in Nazareth.
- Gabriel tells her she will conceive and bear a son, **Jesus**, who will be the **Son of the Most High**.
- Mary asks how this can happen since she is a virgin.
- Gabriel explains it will be by the power of the **Holy Spirit**.
- Mary responds with faith: *"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."* (This is called her **fiat**, or "yes" to God).

#### Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1–20)

- Jesus is born in **Bethlehem**, laid in a manger because there was no room in the inn.
- Angels announce his birth to shepherds in the fields, saying: *"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth."*
- The shepherds visit and worship him, showing the Good News is for ordinary, humble people.
- Mary treasures all these things in her heart, reflecting deeply on God's plan.

### Theology of Jesus' Birth

- Unlike John, Jesus is not just a prophet — he is **Son of God** and **Messiah**.
- His birth through the Holy Spirit shows he is divine as well as human.
- Born in poverty and announced to shepherds, Jesus shows God's love is for the lowly, not just the powerful.
- The angels' song proclaims that his birth brings **peace and salvation** to all people.

### 4. Parallels in Luke's Account

| John the Baptist                                                 | Jesus                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Announced to <b>Zechariah</b> , an elderly priest in the Temple. | Announced to <b>Mary</b> , a humble young woman in Nazareth. |
| Parents are old and barren → miraculous but natural conception.  | Virgin conception → miracle of the Holy Spirit.              |
| John = prophet, prepares the way.                                | Jesus = Messiah, Son of God, fulfils the way.                |
| Zechariah doubts → made mute.                                    | Mary believes → says yes (fiat).                             |
| Birth greeted with wonder.                                       | Birth announced by angels, worshipped by shepherds.          |

### 5. Theological Message of the Two Stories Together

- Luke shows that God is faithful to His promises: miracles still happen, just as in the Old Testament.
- John is great because he is God's prophet. But Jesus is greater — he is God himself, come to save his people.
- The contrast between Zechariah's doubt and Mary's trust teaches Christians the importance of **faith and openness** to God.

- The humble circumstances of Jesus' birth highlight the radical message of Luke's Gospel: God comes to the lowly, the poor, and the outsiders.

### Teacher Summary

- **Prophets** (like John) prepare people for God.
- **The Messiah** (Jesus) is God's Son who brings salvation.
- Luke carefully tells the two stories side by side to show that while John is important, Jesus is greater.
- The annunciations highlight two different responses: Zechariah doubts, Mary trusts.
- The births show God's plan unfolding — hope, salvation, and light breaking into the world.

| Session 5                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Focus                                     | <b>CELEBRATE</b><br>Know that the Church teaches that Mary is the mother of God who prays for them and with them – The Magnificat                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Who was Mary? Can you remember any of her story?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>That the Church teaches that Mary is the mother of God who prays for them and with them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.5. Recognise</b> that the Church teaches that Mary is the mother of God who prays for them and with them.<br><b>R2.2.1.</b> Talking about Mary's prayer, the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-50, 53) and how they can make the world fairer. For example, how they could fill the hungry with good things in Advent <sup>147</sup> or what choices they could make in Advent to support local and global communities in need and to care for Creation (CST). (RVE) |

### U2.2.5. – Mary as Mother of God Who Prays for and with the Church

#### 1. Mary as Mother of God

- The Church calls Mary "**Mother of God**" (*Theotokos* in Greek).
- This title was affirmed at the **Council of Ephesus (431 AD)** to protect the truth that:
  - o Jesus is fully God and fully human.
  - o Mary gave birth to Jesus, so she is truly the Mother of God (not just the mother of his humanity).
- This title honours Mary, but it is mainly about affirming **who Jesus is**.

#### 2. Mary's Role in Prayer

- Catholics believe Mary continues to pray for the Church.
- She is seen as a **powerful intercessor** — someone who prays *with* and *for* Christians to God.
- Catholics pray with Mary through prayers like the **Hail Mary** and the **Rosary**, asking her to join their prayers with hers.

#### 3. Mary as Model of Faith

- Mary is the first disciple: she trusted God completely at the Annunciation.
- Her "yes" to God is a model for Christians to follow in their own lives.

### R2.2.1. – Mary's Prayer: The Magnificat (Luke 1:46–50, 53)

#### Mary's Prayer: The Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55)

## 1. The Context

- Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth after the Annunciation.
- Elizabeth greets her with joy, recognising Mary as the "mother of my Lord."
- Mary responds with this great prayer of praise and thanksgiving — known as the **Magnificat**.
- It is called the "Magnificat" because of its first word in Latin: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum* ("My soul magnifies the Lord").

## 2. Structure of the Magnificat

The prayer has two main parts:

### a) Praise for God's greatness (vv.46–50):

- Mary rejoices because God has looked kindly on her, a humble servant.
- She recognises that "all generations will call me blessed" — pointing to her unique role in salvation.
- She praises God's mercy, which extends from generation to generation.

### b) God's justice and reversal (vv.51–55):

- God "scatters the proud" and "brings down the powerful from their thrones."
- God "lifts up the lowly" and "fills the hungry with good things."
- God "remembers his mercy," keeping his promise to Abraham and Israel forever.

## 3. Key Themes in the Magnificat

- **Joy and Praise:** Mary begins by giving glory to God. Her joy comes not from wealth or power, but from God choosing her in her humility.
- **Humility:** Mary calls herself God's "servant" (or handmaid). She shows that greatness in God's eyes is found in humility and obedience.
- **Reversal of Values:**
  - o The proud are scattered.
  - o The rich are sent away empty.
  - o The poor and hungry are filled and lifted up.
  - o This is often called the "**Great Reversal**" or **Kingdom of God values**.
- **God's Mercy and Faithfulness:** Mary recognises that God is faithful to his promises made to Abraham and his descendants. Jesus' birth fulfils these promises.

## 4. Theological Significance

- The Magnificat is a deeply **prophetic prayer** — Mary speaks not only about what God has done for her but what God will do for the whole world.
- It echoes Old Testament songs of praise (especially Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1–10).
- It reveals that Mary is not just passively receiving God's plan, but actively proclaiming God's justice and mercy.
- The Church sees the Magnificat as a vision of the **Kingdom of God**: a world where justice, peace, and love overcome sin and oppression.

## 5. The Magnificat and Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

The Magnificat is often called a "**revolutionary hymn**" because it challenges Christians to live out God's justice.

- "**Filled the hungry with good things**" (v.53):
  - o CST: *Option for the poor and vulnerable*.
  - o Pupils can reflect: How can we help feed the hungry today? (e.g., food banks, CAFOD).

- **"Brought down the powerful... lifted up the lowly" (vv.52–53):**
  - o CST: *Dignity of every human person; solidarity.*
  - o Pupils can reflect: How can we stand with people who are treated unfairly? (e.g., kindness, anti-bullying, fair trade).
- **"His mercy is for those who fear him" (v.50):**
  - o CST: *Care for creation, stewardship.*
  - o Pupils can reflect: How can we act responsibly with God's gifts? (e.g., eco-friendly Advent actions like reducing waste).

## 6. Pupil Application During Advent

- Advent is a season of waiting and preparing for Christ. The Magnificat helps pupils see that **waiting is active**, not passive.
- *How can I live the Magnificat?*
  - o Donate food to those in need.
  - o Share toys or gifts with children who might have less.
  - o Use Advent as a time to be kind, fair, and just at school and at home.
  - o Make eco-friendly Advent choices to care for creation.

## Teacher Summary

- The **Magnificat** is Mary's song of praise to God for choosing her and for acting with mercy and justice.
- It shows that God overturns human ideas of power: the poor are lifted up, the hungry are fed, and the proud are humbled.
- It connects directly to **Catholic Social Teaching**, calling Christians to work for justice and fairness.
- In Advent, pupils can live out the Magnificat through prayer, generosity, and practical choices to support the poor and care for creation.

## Making the World Fairer – Pupil Links

- **"Filling the hungry with good things":**
  - o Collect food for local food banks during Advent.
  - o Support CAFOD or other global charities.
- **"Lifting up the lowly":**
  - o Acts of kindness for lonely or vulnerable people in the community.
  - o Choosing fair trade products.
- **Care for Creation:**
  - o Reduce waste at Christmas (reuse/recycle wrapping).
  - o Make eco-friendly Advent promises (e.g., walk instead of drive, save energy).
- **Prayer and Action:**
  - o Pray the Magnificat in class.
  - o Link it with concrete Advent choices to live out Mary's vision of justice.

## Teacher Summary

- **Mary as Mother of God:** She gave birth to Jesus, fully God and fully man, and so is rightly honoured with this title. She continues to pray for and with the Church.
- **The Magnificat:** Mary's prayer of praise and justice. It teaches that God sides with the poor, lifts the humble, and fills the hungry.

- **For pupils:** Advent is a time to live out the Magnificat — making choices that support fairness, care for the poor, and respect creation.

| Session 6                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Focus                                     | <b>HEAR</b><br>Retell with increasing detail the birth of John the Baptist. Identify Zechariah's special message about John's future.                                                                                         |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Last year the pupils learnt many stories from the gospel of Luke. Can they remember the name. How many gospels are there (Year 1)                                                                                             |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>What is meant by the Acts of the Apostles.<br>That St Luke wrote a gospel containing an account of the life of Jesus and the Acts of the Apostles about the early Church. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.2.</b> Know that a prophet or prophetess communicates God's message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that Isaiah and John the Baptist are prophets.                                                                  |

## U2.2.2. – Prophets and Prophetesses

### 1. What is a Prophet or Prophetess?

- A **prophet** (man) or **prophetess** (woman) is a person chosen by God to **communicate God's message** to others.
- They don't just "predict the future" — their main role is to help people understand what God wants **in the present**.
- Prophets are **inspired by the Holy Spirit**:
  - Their words and actions are guided by God, not just their own ideas.
  - They often speak with courage, even when their message is unpopular.
- Their task is usually twofold:
  - **Challenge:** calling people to turn back to God and live rightly.
  - **Encourage:** giving hope, especially in times of suffering.

### 2. Isaiah (Old Testament Prophet)

- Lived about 700 years before Jesus, during a time when the people of Judah were under threat from foreign nations.
- **Message:** He warned the people to be faithful to God but also gave them hope of a coming Saviour.
- **Famous Prophecies:**
  - *"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call him Emmanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14) — Christians see this fulfilled in Jesus.
  - *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light"* (Isaiah 9:2) — a prophecy of the Messiah bringing hope.
- **Theological Importance:** Isaiah points forward to Jesus, showing God's plan of salvation stretching across history.

### 3. John the Baptist (New Testament Prophet)

- Lived at the time of Jesus and is described as the **last and greatest prophet**.
- **Message:**

- Preached repentance: *"Prepare the way of the Lord"* (echoing Isaiah 40:3).
- Called people to be baptised in the River Jordan as a sign of turning back to God.
- Announced: *"One more powerful than I is coming"* (Mark 1:7).
- **Theological Importance:**
  - John prepared the people for Jesus, the Messiah.
  - He recognised Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29).
  - His role was to point beyond himself to Christ.

#### 4. Why This Matters for Pupils

- Prophets show that **God speaks through history** — and still speaks today through Scripture and the Church.
- Isaiah → pointed forward with hope.
- John → directly prepared people for Jesus.
- Both teach that God calls ordinary people to extraordinary roles, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

#### Teacher Summary

- A prophet/prophetess is someone chosen and inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak God's message.
- **Isaiah:** Old Testament prophet of hope, pointing to the Messiah.
- **John the Baptist:** New Testament prophet, preparing the way for Jesus.
- Together, they show continuity in salvation history: God's promises in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament.

| Session 7                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>BELIEVE/LIVE</b><br>Know and describe some ways that Christians prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas during the season of Advent<br>Know about some daily/weekly commitments that enable Christians to live in a way that prepares them for Jesus' coming.                                                                                                         |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Know that everyone is tempted to make bad choices (sin), but God loves and forgives all people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>That Advent is the season when Christians prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas.<br>Some ways that Christians prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas during the season of Advent<br>About some daily/weekly commitments that enable Christians to live in a way that prepares them for Jesus' coming. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.6.</b> Describe some ways that Christians prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas during the season of Advent for example, correctly using religious words and phrases to recognise the meaning given to the Advent wreath and how these might help Christians prepare for Christmas. (RVE)                                                                      |

#### U2.2.6. – How Christians Prepare for Jesus' Coming at Christmas (Advent)

##### 1. What is Advent?

- **Advent** comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival."
- It is the **four-week season** before Christmas in the Church's year.
- It is a time of:

- **Preparation** (getting ready for Christ's birth).
- **Expectation** (looking forward to Jesus' return at the end of time).
- **Reflection** (thinking about how to welcome Jesus into daily life).

## 2. Key Ways Christians Prepare During Advent

### a) Advent Wreath

- A circular wreath made of evergreen branches.
- Four candles: three purple, one pink. Sometimes a fifth white candle is added in the middle (for Christmas Day).
- **Meaning of Symbols:**
  - Circle of evergreen = God's eternal love, life without end.
  - Purple candles = prayer, penance, and preparation.
  - Pink candle = lit on the 3rd Sunday (Gaudete Sunday), meaning joy.
  - White candle = Christ candle, lit at Christmas to celebrate Jesus' birth.
- **How it helps Christians:** Each candle lit week by week reminds Christians that Jesus, the Light of the World, is coming closer.

### b) Advent Prayers and Scripture

- Christians read Bible passages about **the prophets** (e.g., Isaiah) and **John the Baptist**, who prepared the way for Jesus.
- Special prayers focus on waiting and hope, such as the **O Antiphons** sung before Christmas.
- **How it helps:** Reminds Christians of God's promises and calls them to prepare their hearts.

### c) The Jesse Tree

- A symbolic tree decorated with ornaments showing figures from Jesus' family tree (Jesse was the father of King David).
- Symbols include: Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, David's harp, the star, etc.
- **How it helps:** Teaches Christians that Jesus' birth is part of God's long plan of salvation.

### d) Acts of Service and Charity

- Inspired by Mary's *Magnificat*, Christians prepare by serving others, especially the poor.
- Examples: food bank collections, CAFOD Advent appeals, or visiting the lonely.
- **How it helps:** Putting faith into action, showing God's love to others.

### e) Advent Liturgies and Reconciliation

- In Catholic tradition, people may go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) to prepare spiritually.
- Schools and parishes may have Advent services or carol liturgies.
- **How it helps:** Cleanses the heart and renews relationships with God before Christmas.

## 3. Why Advent Matters Theologically

- Advent is about **three comings of Christ**:
  1. His birth at Bethlehem (past).
  2. His presence in our lives now (present).
  3. His return in glory at the end of time (future).
- Practices like the Advent wreath, Jesse Tree, and prayer help Christians keep this bigger picture in mind — not just the celebration of Christmas but the hope of eternal life.

## Teacher Summary

- **Advent** = season of preparation and waiting.
- **Advent wreath:** candles and evergreens symbolise God's love and Christ as the Light.

- **Scripture and prayer:** prophets, John the Baptist, O Antiphons focus attention on God's promises.
- **Jesse Tree:** shows Jesus' ancestry and God's long plan.
- **Charity and service:** living out Mary's Magnificat by helping the poor.
- These traditions help Christians **prepare spiritually and practically** to welcome Jesus at Christmas.

| Session 8                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>LIVE</b><br>Talking about how other cultures and communities prepare in Advent, for example, through art, dance, music, or celebrations such as Las Posadas. (RVE)                   |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Know some ways that Christians, and others prepare for Christmas during Advent                                                                                                          |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know:</b><br>How other cultures and communities prepare in Advent, for example, through art, dance, music, or celebrations such as Las Posadas. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>D2.2.3. Talking about</b> how other cultures and communities prepare in Advent, for example, through art, dance, music, or celebrations such as Las Posadas. (RVE)                   |

### D2.2.3. – Advent in Other Cultures and Communities

#### 1. Why is Advent celebrated differently around the world?

- The Church is **universal** — Christians live in many cultures and express their faith in different ways.
- While the **meaning of Advent is the same everywhere** (preparing for the coming of Christ), the **cultural expressions** vary through art, music, dance, and local traditions.

#### 2. Examples of Cultural Expressions of Advent

##### a) Las Posadas (Mexico and Latin America)

- **What it is:** A nine-day celebration (16–24 December) that re-enacts Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
- **How it's celebrated:**
  - People process through the streets with candles, singing songs.
  - They stop at houses asking for shelter (*posada* means "inn"), symbolising Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay.
  - The hosts refuse at first, then welcome them in for prayers, music, food, and dancing.
- **Meaning:** Helps Christians enter into the story of the Nativity, showing hospitality and care for others.

##### b) Advent Music and Song

- In many cultures, **Advent carols and hymns** are sung to express waiting and hope.
- Example: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is sung worldwide in many languages, with verses inspired by the O Antiphons.
- In African communities, choirs often include **drumming and dance**, making Advent celebrations joyful and communal.

- **Meaning:** Music and dance draw the whole community together, expressing joy and expectation of Christ's coming.

#### c) **Advent Art**

- In Eastern Europe, families may create or display **icons** of the Annunciation or Nativity during Advent.
- In Italy and Spain, people set up elaborate **Nativity scenes (presepi)**, sometimes with local figures added.
- **Meaning:** Visual art helps people imagine the story and reflect prayerfully on God entering the world.

#### d) **Advent Traditions in Europe**

- **Germany & Austria:** Advent calendars originated here, counting down the days to Christmas. Originally, they included prayers or Bible verses, now often small treats.
- **Scandinavia:** St. Lucy's Day (13 December) is celebrated with processions of children in white robes carrying candles, symbolising Christ the Light.
- **Meaning:** These practices keep alive the theme of **light breaking into darkness**.

### 3. **Theological Meaning Across Cultures**

- Whether through **processions, song, dance, or art**, all these customs share the same focus:
  - o Preparing to welcome Jesus at Christmas.
  - o Building community and reminding Christians of hospitality, joy, and hope.
  - o Keeping alive the message that Christ comes for **all peoples and nations**.

#### **Teacher Summary**

- Advent is universal but expressed differently in local cultures.
- **Las Posadas:** Mexican tradition re-enacting Mary and Joseph's journey, showing hospitality.
- **Music and dance:** Songs, drums, and movement express joy and hope.
- **Art:** Icons, Nativity scenes, and calendars visualise waiting and preparation.
- **Light traditions:** Candles (Advent wreaths, St. Lucy's Day) remind Christians that Jesus is the Light of the World.
- These cultural practices help Christians prepare their hearts and communities to welcome Christ at Christmas.

| Session 9                                          |                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Focus</b>                              | <b>BELIEVE</b><br>Listening to different traditions and interpretations of the meaning of the Advent wreath. (RVE)                                    |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | What can they remember about an advent wreath (EYFS)                                                                                                  |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>the meaning given to the Advent wreath and how these might help Christians prepare for Christmas. |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>D2.2.4.</b> Listening to different traditions and interpretations of the meaning of the Advent wreath. (RVE)                                       |

## D2.2.4. – Traditions and Interpretations of the Advent Wreath

### 1. Origins of the Advent Wreath

- The Advent wreath originated in **16th-century Germany** (Lutheran tradition).
- It was made of evergreens (symbolising eternal life) and candles (light breaking into darkness).
- Over time, it spread into Catholic, Anglican, and other Christian traditions worldwide.

### 2. Shared Christian Symbols

- **Circle:** No beginning or end → God's eternal love.
- **Evergreen branches:** Hope, eternal life even in winter.
- **Candles:** Light of Christ coming into the world.
- Wreath placed in homes and churches to focus prayer and reflection during Advent.

### 3. Catholic Tradition

- **Four candles:** three purple, one pink.
- **Purple** = penance, preparation, royalty (for the coming King).
- **Pink** = joy (lit on the 3rd Sunday, Gaudete Sunday).
- Some wreaths have a **fifth candle (white)** in the centre, the "Christ candle," lit on Christmas Eve/Day to celebrate Christ's birth.
- **Interpretation:** The wreath marks the four Sundays of Advent, each week focusing on themes like *hope, peace, joy, and love*.

### 4. Protestant Traditions

- Similar use of four candles (three purple + one pink OR four red).
- Some denominations assign specific themes to each candle, e.g.:
  - Week 1 = Prophets (hope).
  - Week 2 = Bethlehem (faith).
  - Week 3 = Shepherds (joy).
  - Week 4 = Angels (peace).
- **Interpretation:** Emphasis on biblical figures and their role in preparing for Jesus' coming.

### 5. Orthodox Traditions

- The **Eastern Orthodox Church** doesn't universally use the Advent wreath, since Advent is celebrated as the **Nativity Fast** (40 days of prayer and fasting).
- Where wreaths are used (especially in Orthodox communities in the West), they may have **six candles** for the six weeks of preparation.

- **Interpretation:** The focus is less on candles and more on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to prepare for Christ's birth.

## 6. Cultural Variations

- In **Scandinavian traditions**, Advent wreaths often have **four white candles** lit at mealtimes each Sunday, with less emphasis on purple/pink colours.
- In **North America**, some communities use red candles for festivity.
- In **schools and families**, simplified wreaths (sometimes even paper ones) are used to teach children the meaning of Advent.

## 7. Theological Common Ground

Despite variations, all traditions agree that the Advent wreath:

- Symbolises **waiting and preparing** for the coming of Christ.
- Builds a sense of **progression** towards Christmas (increasing light each week).
- Reminds Christians that Jesus is the **Light of the World**.

## Teacher Summary

- **Catholic:** purple/pink candles + optional Christ candle, themes of hope, peace, joy, love.
- **Protestant:** candles often linked to prophets, Bethlehem, shepherds, angels.
- **Orthodox:** less focus on wreaths, more on fasting; sometimes six candles used.
- **Cultural variations:** candle colours and styles differ, but all emphasise waiting and Christ as light.
- The wreath is a **shared Christian symbol** of light, hope, and preparation in Advent.

| Session 10                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Focus                                     | <b>HEAR / BELIEVE</b><br>Retell, with increasing detail, the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recall and Retrieval</b>                        | Use Nativity play to recall the story of Jesus' birth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson</b> | <b>Key knowledge:</b><br><b>Pupils will know</b><br>Some of the ways that Christians prepare for Christmas during Advent<br>That Advent is the season when Christians prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Key skills/disciplinary knowledge</b>           | <b>U2.2.1.</b> Retell with increasing detail, one of the religious accounts from the Annunciation and the birth of John the Baptist and of the Annunciation and the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke.<br><b>D2.2.2.</b> Saying what they wonder about the Holy Spirit and how baby John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, and Zechariah felt. |

## U2.2.1. – Retelling the Religious Accounts in Luke

### 1. Annunciation and Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25, 57–66)

- **Annunciation:**
  - o Zechariah was a priest serving in the Temple.
  - o He and his wife Elizabeth were old and had no children.
  - o The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and said they would have a son, John.
  - o John would be filled with the **Holy Spirit even before birth** and would prepare people for the Lord.

- Zechariah doubted because of their age. As a result, he was made unable to speak until the baby was born.

– **Birth:**

- Elizabeth gave birth to John.
- Relatives wanted to name him after his father, but Elizabeth said, “He will be called John.”
- Zechariah wrote the same name on a tablet, and his speech returned.
- Zechariah praised God, and people were amazed, asking: “*What then will this child become?*”

## 2. Annunciation and Birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–20)

– **Annunciation:**

- Six months after Elizabeth conceived, the angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth to Mary, a young woman engaged to Joseph.
- Gabriel greeted her: “*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.*”
- He told Mary she would conceive and bear a son, Jesus, the Son of the Most High.
- Mary asked how this could be, since she was not married.
- Gabriel said it would be by the power of the **Holy Spirit**, and her child would be holy.
- Mary answered with faith: “*Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*”

– **Birth:**

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger because there was no room at the inn.
- Angels appeared to shepherds in the fields, announcing: “*Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth.*”
- The shepherds went to see the baby, told everyone what they had seen, and Mary treasured all these things in her heart.

### D2.2.2. – Wondering about the Holy Spirit and the Feelings of Each Person

#### The Role of the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is God’s presence and power at work.
- In these stories:
  - John is filled with the Holy Spirit even before birth.
  - Mary conceives Jesus through the Holy Spirit.
  - Zechariah is filled with the Spirit when his speech is restored.

#### Wondering Prompts for Children

– **Zechariah:**

- *I wonder how Zechariah felt when he saw the angel in the Temple?*
- *I wonder what it was like not being able to speak for so long?*
- *I wonder how he felt when his voice came back and he could praise God again?*

– **Elizabeth:**

- *I wonder how Elizabeth felt when she realised she was going to have a baby after so many years?*
- *I wonder what it was like to feel John move in her womb, filled with the Holy Spirit?*

– **Mary:**

- *I wonder how Mary felt when Gabriel said she would have God’s Son?*
- *I wonder how brave Mary had to be to say “yes” to God?*
- *I wonder how she felt when she held Jesus in her arms for the first time?*

– **Baby John the Baptist:**

- *I wonder how baby John felt when he heard Mary's voice and leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb?*
- *I wonder how John's life would be shaped by the Spirit from that moment on?*

**Teacher Summary**

- **U2.2.1.:** Luke presents parallel stories of John and Jesus to show that John prepares the way, but Jesus is the Son of God. Both annunciations highlight the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **D2.2.2.:** Wondering questions help pupils enter into the story, reflect on the Holy Spirit's role, and empathise with the feelings of Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, and John.