



Prophecy and
Promise

Branch 2

Y3 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: Y3 Prophecy and Promise

Session 1	
Learning Focus	HEAR Recognise that Sunday is a holy day for Christians, making simple links between the story of Creation (Gen 1:1-2:4) and Sunday as a day of rest.
Recall and Retrieval	Know the story of Creation (Gen 1:1-2:4) Know what happens at Mass
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Why Christians go to Mass on Sunday. How Catholics celebrate Mass.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.1. Recognise that Sunday is a holy day for Christians, making simple links between the story of Creation (Gen 1:1-2:4) and Sunday as a day of rest.

U3.2.1. – Why Sunday is a Holy Day for Christians

1. Creation and the Sabbath (Genesis 1:1–2:4)

- The Bible describes God creating the world in **six days**. On the **seventh day**, God “rested” (Genesis 2:2).
- God blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, meaning it was set apart for worship and rest.
- This became the **Sabbath day** in Jewish tradition (Saturday). It was a time to stop working, give thanks, and remember God as Creator.
- **Theological meaning:**
 - God’s rest shows that life is not just about work or production, but about relationship with God.
 - Humans are invited to share in God’s rest, which gives dignity and balance to life.

2. Why Christians Celebrate on Sunday (The Lord’s Day)

- The early Church changed the day of worship from **Saturday to Sunday** because:
 - Jesus rose from the dead on a **Sunday morning** (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2).
 - This day became known as “**the first day of the week**” and also “**the Lord’s Day.**”
- For Christians, Sunday is not just about remembering creation but also about celebrating the **new creation** that began with Jesus’ Resurrection.
- The Resurrection shows that sin and death are defeated, and God’s kingdom has broken into the world.
- Therefore, Sunday became the **weekly Easter** — a day of joy, thanksgiving, and worship.

3. Why Catholics Go to Mass on Sunday

- **Biblical commandment:** The Ten Commandments say, “*Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy*” (Exodus 20:8). Christians see Sunday Mass as the way to keep this command.
- **Worship as community:** Catholics believe Sunday is the day when the whole Church gathers, just as the first Christians did (Acts 20:7).
- **Eucharist:** At Mass, Catholics hear the Word of God and celebrate the Eucharist, receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. This strengthens them for the week ahead.

- **Thanksgiving:** The word “Eucharist” means *thanksgiving*. At Mass, Catholics give thanks for creation, salvation, and the new life of the Resurrection.
- **Rest and Renewal:** Sunday is a day to step back from work and ordinary activities, focusing instead on God, family, and community.

4. Theological Meaning of Sunday

- **Day of Creation:** Reminds Christians that God is the source of all life.
- **Day of Resurrection:** Celebrates Christ’s victory over sin and death.
- **Day of the Church:** The Christian community gathers as one family to worship.
- **Day of Rest:** An echo of God’s rest, giving space for prayer, joy, and renewal.

5. Simple Links for Pupils

- God rested on the seventh day → we rest to spend time with God.
- God made the day holy → we keep Sunday holy through worship.
- Jesus rose on a Sunday → this is why Mass is on Sunday, the Lord’s Day.
- At Mass, we give thanks to God, hear the Bible, and celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection.

Teacher Summary

Sunday is holy for Christians because it unites **two great moments**: the **Sabbath rest of Creation** (Genesis 1–2) and the **Resurrection of Jesus** on Easter Sunday. Catholics go to Mass on Sundays because it is the day of the Lord’s Resurrection, the fulfilment of the covenant, and the heart of Christian worship. Sunday rest and worship remind Christians that life is God’s gift and that their ultimate purpose is communion with Him.

Session 2	
Learning Focus	HEAR Give a simple description of how Catholics celebrate the Mass.
Recall and Retrieval	Know about the Liturgy of the Word
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Catholics gather to celebrate Mass where they listen to the words of holy scripture (the Liturgy of the Word) and meet Jesus in Holy Communion (the Liturgy of the Eucharist).
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.2. Give a simple description of how Catholics celebrate the Mass

U3.2.2. – How Catholics Celebrate the Mass

1. The Mass as the Central Act of Worship

- The Mass is the **highest form of Catholic worship**, where the community gathers to hear God’s Word and share in the Eucharist.
- Catholics believe the Eucharist is the **real presence of Jesus** — body and blood, soul and divinity.
- The Mass is both a **sacrifice** (re-presenting Christ’s sacrifice on the cross) and a **meal** (sharing in the Last Supper).

2. Structure of the Mass

Introductory Rites

- **Gathering:** The community assembles, often with an opening hymn.
- **Sign of the Cross:** Marks the Mass as prayer to the Trinity.
- **Penitential Act:** Catholics confess their sins together, asking for God's mercy.
- **Gloria:** A hymn of praise (not used in Lent or Advent).
- **Opening Prayer (Collect):** Priest gathers the prayers of the community.

Liturgy of the Word

- Focus: **Hearing God's Word** in Scripture.
- **First Reading:** Usually from the Old Testament (showing God's covenant with Israel).
- **Psalms:** Sung or recited response to God's Word.
- **Second Reading:** Usually from the New Testament letters.
- **Gospel Acclamation:** "Alleluia" (except in Lent) to honour the Gospel.
- **Gospel Reading:** Words and deeds of Jesus proclaimed by the priest or deacon.
- **Homily:** The priest explains the readings and applies them to daily life.
- **Creed:** Profession of faith (Nicene or Apostles' Creed).
- **Prayers of the Faithful:** Community prays for the Church, the world, and those in need.

Theological meaning: In the Liturgy of the Word, Christ is **truly present** in the Scriptures proclaimed and explained.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Focus: **Thanksgiving and sharing in Christ's sacrifice.**
- **Preparation of the Gifts:** Bread and wine are brought to the altar.
- **Eucharistic Prayer:** The heart of the Mass. Includes:
 - **Preface:** Prayer of thanksgiving.
 - **Sanctus:** "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord..." sung with the angels.
 - **Epiclesis:** Priest calls down the Holy Spirit to sanctify bread and wine.
 - **Words of Institution:** Priest repeats Jesus' words from the Last Supper: *"This is my Body... This is my Blood."* Catholics believe bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ (**transubstantiation**).
 - **Memorial Acclamation:** Community proclaims Christ's death and Resurrection.
- **Communion Rite:**
 - **Our Father:** Prayer Jesus taught his disciples.
 - **Sign of Peace:** Sharing peace with one another.
 - **Breaking of the Bread:** Priest breaks the consecrated host.
 - **Communion:** Catholics receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
- **Concluding Prayer:** Thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist.

Theological meaning: The Eucharist is both the **sacrifice of Christ on the Cross made present** and a **sacred meal** in which believers share.

Concluding Rites

- **Final Blessing:** Priest blesses the people.
- **Dismissal:** "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." The community is sent out to live the Gospel.

3. Teacher Summary

- The Mass has **two main parts**:
 - **Liturgy of the Word**: God speaks to the people through Scripture.
 - **Liturgy of the Eucharist**: Catholics share in Christ's sacrifice and receive his Body and Blood.
- The Mass makes present both the **teaching of Christ** (Word) and the **saving sacrifice of Christ** (Eucharist).
- For Catholics, Sunday Mass is the heart of Christian life — gathering the community, renewing faith, and receiving Christ himself.

Session 3	
Learning Focus	LIVE Give simple descriptions of some special prayers, signs, and actions performed in church and at Mass using religious language, focusing on the Liturgy of the Word.
Recall and Retrieval	Recall some symbols and actions familiar to us, linked to the Mass
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know How Catholics use some signs, actions, prayers, and symbols to celebrate Mass, e.g., the sign of the cross, bells, the Kyrie Eleison prayer, etc. Hear some of the responses Catholics say at Mass, focusing on the Liturgy of the Word.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.3. Give simple descriptions of some special prayers, signs, and actions performed in church and at Mass using religious language, focusing on the Liturgy of the Word.

U3.2.3. – Special Prayers, Signs, and Actions in the Liturgy of the Word

1. The Sign of the Cross before the Gospel

- **When**: Just before the Gospel is read, the community makes a small cross on the **forehead, lips, and heart**.
- **Action**: With the thumb, Catholics trace a cross on these three places.
- **Why**: This prayerful gesture asks God to help the Word of Christ be in their **mind** (understanding), on their **lips** (proclaiming), and in their **hearts** (living).
- **Religious language**: This is a sign of **reverence for the Gospel**, recognising Christ is truly present in his Word.

2. Standing for the Gospel

- **When**: After the second reading, before the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.
- **Action**: The whole congregation **stands**. The priest/deacon greets the people, and everyone responds "*Glory to you, O Lord.*"
- **Why**: Standing is a sign of **respect and readiness** to listen, because the Gospel contains the very words and actions of Jesus.
- **Religious language**: Catholics treat the Gospel as the **high point of the Liturgy of the Word**.

3. The Alleluia (or Gospel Acclamation)

- **When**: Sung or said before the Gospel (except in Lent).

- **Action:** The community sings “*Alleluia*” (which means “Praise the Lord”) while standing.
- **Why:** This acclamation is a joyful welcome to Christ who speaks in the Gospel. During Lent, another acclamation is used, because Alleluia is saved for Easter.
- **Religious language:** This is an expression of **praise** and anticipation of Christ’s Word.

4. The Responsorial Psalm

- **When:** Sung or said after the first reading (from the Old Testament).
- **Action:** The cantor or reader sings/reads verses of a psalm, and the congregation joins in with the repeated response.
- **Why:** The psalms are prayers Jesus himself prayed. They help the community respond to God’s Word with praise, trust, or petition.
- **Religious language:** The psalm is a **dialogue** — God speaks in the readings, and the people answer back in prayer.

5. The Homily

- **When:** After the Gospel.
- **Action:** The priest or deacon speaks to explain the Scripture and apply it to daily life.
- **Why:** The homily helps the community understand how God’s Word is alive and active today.
- **Religious language:** The homily is a form of **teaching** (Didache), rooted in Christ’s mission to proclaim the Good News.

6. The Creed (Profession of Faith)

- **When:** After the homily on Sundays and solemnities.
- **Action:** The community recites the Nicene Creed (or sometimes Apostles’ Creed).
- **Why:** This is a statement of the Church’s faith, affirming belief in the Trinity, the Church, and salvation in Christ.
- **Religious language:** The Creed is the **public declaration of faith**, uniting all Catholics worldwide.

7. Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding Prayers)

- **When:** After the Creed.
- **Action:** Intercessions are read aloud, usually by a deacon or lay minister, with responses from the people (e.g., “*Lord, hear our prayer*”).
- **Why:** The community prays for the needs of the Church, the world, leaders, those who suffer, and the local parish.
- **Religious language:** These are **intercessory prayers**, reflecting the Church’s call to pray on behalf of all humanity.

Teacher Summary

In the **Liturgy of the Word**, Catholics:

- Use **gestures** (Sign of the Cross, standing for the Gospel) to show reverence.
- Pray with **voices** (Alleluia, Responsorial Psalm, Creed) to respond to God’s Word.
- Listen to **teaching** (homily) to understand how the Word applies to life.
- Offer **prayers of intercession** to bring the needs of the world to God.

These prayers, signs, and actions all emphasise that **Christ is truly present in the Word of God proclaimed in the assembly**.

What? (Prayer, Sign, Action)	When in Mass?	Why (Meaning in Religious Language)?
Responsorial Psalm	After the First Reading	A prayer response to God's Word. The psalms are the prayers Jesus himself prayed.
Alleluia (Gospel Acclamation)	Before the Gospel (not in Lent)	Joyful praise to welcome Christ who speaks in the Gospel. "Alleluia" means "Praise the Lord."
Standing for the Gospel	When the Gospel is announced	Standing shows reverence and readiness to hear Jesus' words and actions.
Sign of the Cross on Forehead, Lips, Heart	Just before the Gospel is read	Prayer for God's Word to be in our minds (forehead), on our lips (speech), and in our hearts (lives).
The Homily	After the Gospel	Priest or deacon explains the Scriptures and applies them to daily life. A form of <i>teaching</i> (didache).
The Creed (Profession of Faith)	After the Homily on Sundays and feast days	The community declares its faith together, affirming belief in the Trinity and salvation in Christ.
Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding Prayers)	After the Creed	Intercessory prayers for the Church, the world, leaders, those in need, and the parish community.

Session 4	
Learning Focus	HEAR / BELIEVE Recognise how Joseph puts his trust in God when the angel appears.
Recall and Retrieval	Know the nativity story and that this introduces us to Joseph. Know about the Magi's visit
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That Jesus birth was foretold by the prophets. That Joseph listened to the angel and opened his heart to the Holy Spirit.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.4. Recognise how Joseph puts his trust in God when the angel appears.

U3.2.4. – Joseph's Trust in God (Matthew 1:18–25)

1. The Scripture Passage (Summary)

- Mary, betrothed to Joseph, is found to be pregnant **through the Holy Spirit**.
- Joseph is described as a **righteous man**: he plans to divorce Mary quietly to avoid shaming her.
- An **angel appears to him in a dream**, telling him:
 - "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife."
 - The child is from the Holy Spirit.
 - He will be called **Jesus** ("God saves") and will save his people from their sins.
- Joseph **trusts God**: he obeys the angel, takes Mary as his wife, and names the child Jesus.

2. How Joseph Shows Trust in God

- **Faith in God's plan**: Though the situation seemed confusing and difficult, Joseph accepted that God was at work.
- **Obedience**: He changed his own plan (to quietly separate from Mary) and followed God's command instead.
- **Courage**: By taking Mary and Jesus into his home, Joseph risked shame or gossip, but he chose faith over fear.
- **Responsibility**: By naming the child Jesus, Joseph legally claimed him as his son, showing he trusted God's promise that this child was the Saviour.

3. Why This Matters Theologically

- **Joseph as a model of trust**: He listens to God's Word and acts on it without hesitation.
- **Fulfilment of prophecy**: Matthew links this event to Isaiah 7:14: *"The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel."*
- **Role in salvation history**: Joseph protects and raises Jesus, making him part of David's family line, fulfilling God's promise of a Messiah from David's house.

4. Links for Pupils

- Joseph trusted God even when he didn't fully understand — pupils can think about times when they need to trust God in their own lives.
- His story shows that trust means both **listening** to God and **acting** on what He asks.
- Like Mary's "yes" at the Annunciation, Joseph's "yes" was essential for God's plan of salvation.

Teacher Summary

In *Matthew 1:18–25*, Joseph shows deep **trust in God** by obeying the angel's message. Instead of following his own plan, he follows God's plan, welcoming Mary and the child Jesus. His faith, obedience, and courage allowed him to play a vital role in salvation history, making him a model of trust for Christians today.

Session 5	
Learning Focus	HEAR Make links between the angel's message about Jesus and the words of the prophet Isaiah.
Recall and Retrieval	That; Messiah would be born of a virgin and would be called Immanuel (Is 7:14).
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That Jesus birth was foretold by the prophets. That Joseph listened to the angel and opened his heart to the Holy Spirit.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.5. Make links between the angel's message about Jesus and the words of the prophet Isaiah.

U3.2.5. – The Angel's Message and Isaiah's Prophecy

1. The Angel's Message to Joseph (Matthew 1:20–21)

- The angel tells Joseph in a dream:
 - *"Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife."*
 - The child is from the **Holy Spirit**.
 - Mary will bear a son, and Joseph is to name him **Jesus** (*which means "God saves"*).
 - Jesus will **save his people from their sins**.

8. Isaiah's Prophecy (Isaiah 7:14)

- *"The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel."*
- Originally spoken by Isaiah to King Ahaz (8th century BC), offering hope of God's presence with his people in a time of crisis.
- **Emmanuel** means *"God is with us."*

3. How Matthew Links the Two

- Matthew directly quotes Isaiah 7:14 after recounting the angel's message.
- He shows that Jesus' birth **fulfils Old Testament prophecy**:
 - **Virgin birth**: Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit.
 - **Emmanuel**: Jesus is "God with us," present in human history.
 - **Saviour**: The angel's command to name him *Jesus* highlights his mission — to save from sin.
- The prophecy gives **continuity**: God's promises to Israel are completed in Jesus.

4. Theological Meaning

- **Jesus as Emmanuel**: Not just a sign of God's presence, but God Himself living among his people.
- **Jesus as Saviour**: His name shows his mission — salvation through his life, death, and resurrection.
- **Fulfilment of prophecy**: The angel's words confirm Jesus is the Messiah long-awaited by Israel, from the line of David (through Joseph's acceptance).

5. Pupil-Friendly Links

- Isaiah promised: "God will be with us." The angel says: "Jesus is that promise come true."
- Jesus is **both** Emmanuel (God with us) and Jesus (God saves).
- Advent and Christmas remind Christians that God keeps his promises.

Teacher Summary

The angel's message to Joseph (Matthew 1:18–25) directly fulfils Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah promised a child called **Emmanuel** — a sign that God is with his people. The angel reveals that this child is Jesus, born of the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, who will save people from their sins. Together, these show that Jesus is both **God with us** and the **Saviour**, the fulfilment of God's promises in the Old Testament.

Isaiah's Prophecy (Isaiah 7:14)	Angel's Message to Joseph (Matthew 1:20–23)	Link / Fulfilment
<i>"The virgin shall conceive and bear a son..."</i>	<i>"The child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son."</i>	Mary, a virgin, conceives by the Holy Spirit — fulfilment of Isaiah's sign.
<i>"...and shall name him Emmanuel."</i>	<i>"You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."</i>	Jesus = "God saves." Emmanuel = "God with us." Both names show his mission and identity.
Meaning of Emmanuel = "God with us."	<i>"They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us."</i>	Jesus is the presence of God living among his people.
Given as a sign of hope to Israel in a time of crisis (8th century BC).	Declared to Joseph as the fulfilment of God's promise, bringing salvation.	Shows God is faithful — promises in the Old Testament are completed in Jesus.

Session 6	
Learning Focus	CELEBRATE Recall that angels bring God's message in the gospels of St Matthew and St Luke.
Recall and Retrieval	Revisit Luke 1:26-38.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That Jesus birth was foretold by the prophets. That Joseph listened to the angel and opened his heart to the Holy Spirit.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U3.2.6. Recall that angels bring God's message in the gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. D3.2.3. Talking, asking, and answering questions about Joseph and Mary trusting in God.

U3.2.6. – Angels Bringing God's Message (Matthew and Luke)

1. Role of Angels in Scripture

- The word *angel* means "messenger."
- In the Bible, angels are spiritual beings who act as messengers of God's will, guiding and protecting people.
- In the **Infancy Narratives** (Matthew and Luke), angels prepare Joseph and Mary for their special roles in God's plan.

2. In St Matthew's Gospel

- **Joseph's dream (Matt 1:18–25):**
 - The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.
 - Explains the child is from the Holy Spirit.
 - Commands Joseph to name the child Jesus.
- **Later messages (Matt 2:13, 19–20):**
 - Angel warns Joseph to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus.
 - Angel later tells Joseph it is safe to return.
- **Message:** Angels reassure Joseph, guide him to protect the Holy Family, and help fulfil the prophecies.

3. In St Luke's Gospel

- **Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26–38):**
 - Angel Gabriel tells Mary she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to Jesus, the Son of God.
 - Mary responds with trust: *"Let it be to me according to your word."*
- **Angels and the shepherds (Luke 2:8–14):**
 - An angel announces Jesus' birth to the shepherds: *"To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."*
 - A choir of angels praises God: *"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth."*
- **Message:** Angels announce the Good News of salvation to both Mary and the lowly (shepherds), showing God's message is for everyone.

Teacher Summary

- In **Matthew**, angels guide and protect Joseph and the Holy Family.
- In **Luke**, angels announce the Good News to Mary and the shepherds.
- Together, these gospels show angels as God's messengers who bring reassurance, guidance, and joy.

D3.2.3. – Talking about Joseph and Mary Trusting in God

Questions for Pupils

1. *What did the angel ask Mary to do? How did she answer?*
(She said "yes" to God, even though it was surprising.)
2. *What did the angel tell Joseph in his dream?*
(Not to be afraid, and to look after Mary and Jesus.)
3. *How did Joseph show he trusted God?*
(He did what the angel told him and cared for his family.)
4. *Do you think it was easy or hard for Mary and Joseph to trust God? Why?*
(Helps children think about feelings like being scared or brave.)
5. *When have you trusted someone, even if you didn't know what would happen?*
(Links to their own life — trusting parents, teachers, or friends.)
6. *How can we show we trust God today?*
(Praying, listening, helping others, being kind, not being afraid.)

Likely Responses

- "Mary trusted God because she said yes."
- "Joseph trusted God because he listened to the angel."
- "It might have been scary, but they believed God was with them."
- "I trust my mum and dad when they tell me what's best."
- "We can trust God by praying when we're worried."

Teacher Note: At this age, pupils need concrete examples and links to their own experiences of trust. They can understand Mary's and Joseph's trust best when connected to everyday situations (listening to parents, teachers, or friends).

Matthew 1:18–25 – The Annunciation to Joseph

1. "The Dream of Saint Joseph" – Anton Raphael Mengs (1773)

- **Critique:** Neoclassical style with strong, clean lines and serene lighting. Joseph appears calm, reclining, while an angel leans over him with authority and grace.
- **Meaning:** Shows Joseph as a man of obedience — he listens attentively even in sleep. The quietness of the scene highlights God's guidance coming in dreams, with Joseph as a model of faith and trust.

2. "The Dream of St Joseph" – Georges de La Tour (c. 1640)

- **Critique:** Painted in the Baroque period, using chiaroscuro (contrast of light and dark). The angel is softly illuminated, while Joseph, older and weathered, leans in closely to listen.
- **Meaning:** Emphasises intimacy and trust — Joseph is portrayed as deeply humble and attentive. The candlelight suggests divine illumination breaking into human darkness.

Luke 1:26–38 – The Annunciation to Mary

3. “The Annunciation” – Fra Angelico (c. 1438–1447)

- **Critique:** Early Renaissance fresco with delicate use of perspective and gentle figures. Mary sits modestly with folded arms, while Gabriel bows respectfully, both framed by an architectural space that feels almost monastic.
- **Meaning:** Highlights Mary’s humility and obedience (*fiat* — “let it be done to me”). The garden setting symbolises purity, while the angel’s posture shows reverence to Mary as the chosen Mother of God.

4. “The Annunciation” – Henry Ossawa Tanner (1898)

- **Critique:** A modern, realist interpretation. Mary appears as a young girl in simple robes in her bedroom, startled yet thoughtful, with the angel represented as a vertical beam of dazzling light rather than a winged figure.
- **Meaning:** Stresses Mary’s humanity and vulnerability — she is real, young, and deeply reflective. The abstract angel-light suggests God’s presence as pure spirit. Tanner’s work bridges the divine mystery with human reality.

Overall Theological Themes

- In **Matthew’s depictions**, Joseph is a model of **quiet trust and obedience**, receiving God’s message through an angel in a dream. His role secures Jesus’ identity as Son of David.
- In **Luke’s depictions**, Mary is portrayed as the **humble handmaid of the Lord**, freely accepting her role in salvation history.
- Both sets of images highlight the courage of Joseph and Mary in saying yes to God’s plan, even in uncertainty.

Scene	Suggested Contemporary Work / Artist	Critique / Observations	Meaning & Theological Emphasis
Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26–38)	<i>Annunciation</i> by Raphael Soyer (1980) (Smithsonian American Art Museum)	This is a modern (late 20th century) realist work. Unlike older idealised images, Soyer’s version feels more grounded in everyday life. The figures have weight, the space is domestic, and there is less symbolism clutter.	Emphasises Mary’s humanity and the “ordinary world” into which God enters. The divine message comes into everyday life. It helps viewers imagine how God’s promise enters into their own world.
Annunciation to Mary (alternate contemporary)	<i>Annunciation</i> by Olga Suvorova	Suvorova’s oil canvas mixes classical costume with a modern painterly style. The light, form, and presence feel fresh, bridging tradition and contemporary sensibility.	Calls attention to continuity: the same message to Mary in every era. Her style invites the viewer to see Mary’s consent (<i>fiat</i>) as a powerful act in any age.

Scene	Suggested Contemporary Work / Artist	Critique / Observations	Meaning & Theological Emphasis
Annunciation to Joseph (Matthew 1:18–25 – symbolic / interpretive)	(Contemporary conceptual art) — e.g. a modern installation or painting interpreting Joseph’s dream, even if not well-known	Because there are fewer canonical contemporary depictions of Joseph’s annunciation, artists often choose to symbolize the event (shadows, dreams, a figure asleep, light entering a dark room). The critique depends on how well the symbolism conveys obedience, trust, and God’s intervention.	Such artworks highlight Joseph’s interior response. A modern piece might emphasise silence, listening, or vulnerability in dream — reminding viewers that many calls from God come quietly and require faith.
Annunciation to Mary (more abstract / symbolic modern work)	(Artist: contemporary Christian / sacred art circles) e.g. <i>The Annunciation</i> by Mike Meyers or Adam Pomeroy (modern interpretations) (Tumblr)	These works often reimagine Mary in contemporary dress or settings, sometimes with minimal backgrounds and strong colour contrast. The entries are more symbolic, less detailed.	Helps viewers today see Mary as relatable and accessible. The modern setting signals that God continues to speak into the present-day world.

Session 7	
Learning Focus	BELIEVE / CELEBRATE / LIVE Comparing and making simple links between the signs used in Advent and Christmas and their meaning for Christians
Recall and Retrieval	Recall how Christians prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Know, and make simple links between the signs used in Advent and Christmas and their meaning for Christians
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	D3.2.4. Comparing and making simple links between the signs used in Advent and Christmas and their meaning for Christians.

Sign	Description	Meaning for Christians	Link between Advent & Christmas
Advent Wreath	A circular evergreen wreath with 4 candles (3 purple, 1 pink) and sometimes a central white candle for Christmas Day. One candle is lit each Sunday of Advent.	The circle = God's eternity and endless love. Evergreens = hope and life in winter. Candles = light of Christ coming into the world. Pink candle (3rd week, Gaudete Sunday) = joy. White candle = Christ has come.	Helps Christians prepare in Advent by waiting with hope and light for Jesus, fulfilled at Christmas with the birth of Christ (white candle).
Nativity Scene (Crib)	Figures of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, angels, animals, and sometimes the Magi. First made popular by St Francis of Assisi.	Reminds Christians of the humble birth of Jesus — God becoming human (Incarnation). Shows all are welcome: shepherds (poor) and kings (wise men).	In Advent, the crib may be set up gradually (without Jesus until Christmas). At Christmas, Jesus is placed in the crib, showing he is Emmanuel, "God with us."
Christmas Star	Star placed on top of a Christmas tree or shown in Nativity scenes.	Symbolises the star of Bethlehem that guided the wise men to Jesus (Matthew 2:1–12). Represents Jesus as the Light who guides people to God.	Advent is about waiting for guidance and hope. At Christmas, the star shows Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise — the true Light of the world.
Christmas Tree	Evergreen tree decorated with lights, ornaments, and often a star or angel on top.	Evergreen = eternal life with God. Lights = Jesus as the Light of the World. Angel/star = the announcement of Christ's birth or guidance of the Magi.	In Advent, the tree is decorated gradually in preparation. At Christmas, the tree shines brightly to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth.

Teacher Summary

- The **Advent wreath** points to waiting and preparing for Christ, with light building week by week.
- The **Nativity scene** shows the Incarnation and inclusiveness of God's love.
- The **Christmas star** recalls the guiding light that led people to Jesus.
- The **Christmas tree** symbolises eternal life and celebrates the joy of Christ's birth.

Together, these signs help Christians journey through Advent (waiting, preparing) into Christmas (celebration, fulfilment).

Session 8	
Learning Focus	HEAR / CELEBRATE / LIVE Responding creatively to the words of an Advent hymn, work of art, prayer, or poem that connects to the message of the angels.
Recall and Retrieval	Know how Advent hymns celebrate Jesus as the coming Messiah Know about art around the world, connecting to the prophecies of Christ's coming.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Know, and creatively to the words of an Advent hymn, work of art, prayer, or poem that connects to the message of the angels.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	R3.2.1. Responding creatively to the words of an Advent hymn, work of art, prayer, or poem that connects to the message of the angels.

Focus: The Message of the Angels in Advent and Christmas

1. The Angel's Message in Scripture

- **Luke 1:26–38:** Angel Gabriel tells Mary she will bear Jesus.
- **Matthew 1:18–25:** Angel reassures Joseph in a dream.
- **Luke 2:8–14:** Angels announce Jesus' birth to shepherds: *"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth."*
- Core theme: **angels bring hope, peace, and the Good News of salvation.**

2. Examples of Creative Resources

Advent Hymn – "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

- Connects to prophecy and the angel's announcement that God is with us.
- Pupils can:
 - Illustrate one verse.
 - Rewrite the refrain (*"Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel"*) in their own words.
 - Create simple gestures for the repeated word "Rejoice."

Work of Art – Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation*

- Shows Mary receiving the angel's message with humility.
- Pupils can:
 - Recreate the scene with their own modern twist (Mary in today's world).
 - Draw a comic strip of the conversation between Gabriel and Mary.

Prayer – The *Angelus*

- Traditional prayer remembering the angel's message to Mary.
- Pupils can:
 - Write a short personal prayer thanking God for sending Jesus, inspired by the Angelus.

Poem – Christina Rossetti's *Angels from the Realms of Glory* (also sung as a carol)

- Invites all creation to respond to the angel's message of Christ's birth.
- Pupils can:
 - Write their own "angel poem" with a message of peace and joy.
 - Perform the poem with angel wings or symbols of light.

3. Creative Classroom Response Ideas

- **Art:** Pupils paint or collage their own angel bringing a message of hope to today's world.
- **Drama:** Re-enact the angels speaking to Mary, Joseph, or the shepherds — then improvise how angels might bring a message to children today.
- **Music:** Learn and sing an Advent hymn, then create a new verse that connects the angel's message to modern life (e.g., peace in families, kindness to others).
- **Writing:** Compose "an angel's message" in 2–3 lines for their community.

Teacher Summary

The message of the angels — "*Do not be afraid,*" "*God is with us,*" "*Peace on earth*" — is at the heart of Advent and Christmas. By exploring hymns, art, prayers, or poems, pupils can creatively respond to this message and understand how it still speaks to the Church and the world today.