



Prophecy and
Promise

Branch 2

Y4 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: Y4 Prophecy and Promise

Session 1	
Learning Focus	HEAR Know that Elijah was a prophet and that he calls the people of Israel to return to God.
Recall and Retrieval	Know that the Old Testament includes stories about God. Know what a prophet is.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know What a prophet is. Who Prophet Elijah was and that he called the people of Israel to return to God. That the story of Elijah can be found in the book of Kings in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17-19). Understand the importance of the historical context to appreciate the literal sense of biblical stories. Retell the miracle of the flour and the oil and understand that this miracle shows God's generosity towards the poor widow.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.2. Show some understanding of the cultural and religious context of Elijah's time and why people needed to be reminded of God's covenant.

U4.2.2. – Elijah: Context and Covenant

1. Cultural and Religious Context of Elijah's Time

- **Historical setting:** 9th century BC during the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in the northern kingdom of Israel.
- **Religious crisis:**
 - Jezebel promoted worship of **Baal**, a Canaanite storm and fertility god.
 - Many Israelites began to mix or replace covenant worship of Yahweh with Baal worship (*idolatry*).
 - The covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19–20) demanded exclusive worship of Yahweh, but this was being broken.
- **Cultural pressure:** Baal worship was attractive because people believed Baal controlled rain and fertility — crucial in a farming society. In times of drought, loyalty to Yahweh was tested.
- **Prophetic role:** Prophets like Elijah reminded Israel that true blessing comes only from God, not false gods. Elijah's mission was to **call people back to covenant faithfulness**.

2. Unpacking 1 Kings 17–19

1 Kings 17 – Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

- **Event:** Elijah proclaims a drought (a direct challenge to Baal, the storm god). God sustains him through a widow's hospitality.
- **Miracle:** God multiplies flour and oil for the widow, and Elijah raises her son from death.
- **Theological point:** Yahweh, not Baal, provides life and sustenance. God works even through the poor and outsiders.

1 Kings 18 – Contest on Mount Carmel

- **Event:** Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal. Each prepares a sacrifice, and the true God is the one who answers by fire.

- **Outcome:** Baal's prophets fail; Yahweh answers with fire, consuming Elijah's offering. The people cry out, *"The Lord indeed is God!"*
- **Theological point:** Demonstrates the **power of Yahweh** and exposes the futility of idol worship. It is a covenant renewal moment for Israel.

1 Kings 19 – Elijah on Mount Horeb (Sinai)

- **Event:** After fleeing Jezebel, Elijah is discouraged and hides in a cave. He encounters God not in wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a "gentle whisper" (v.12).
- **Theological point:** God's presence is not always shown in dramatic displays of power but in stillness and intimacy.
- **Covenant reminder:** Mount Horeb (Sinai) recalls the giving of the covenant to Moses. Elijah's encounter there renews his mission to call Israel back to God.

3. Why People Needed to be Reminded of the Covenant

- **Idolatry:** Baal worship led people away from exclusive devotion to God.
- **Identity crisis:** Israel was meant to be God's chosen people; idolatry threatened that identity.
- **Dependence:** In drought and difficulty, Israel was tempted to rely on Baal instead of Yahweh.
- **Prophetic reminder:** Elijah's miracles, confrontation, and personal renewal all served to remind Israel that God alone is faithful and life-giving.

Teacher Summary

Elijah lived in a time when Israel was abandoning God's covenant for Baal worship under King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Through dramatic signs (the drought, miracles with the widow, fire on Mount Carmel) and through his personal renewal on Mount Horeb, Elijah reminded the people that **only Yahweh is God** and that covenant faithfulness is the source of true life. His story teaches that God's presence can be both powerful and gentle, and that leaders are called to guide people back to faith when they stray.

Session 2	
Learning Focus	HEAR / BELIEVE Know that John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus.
Recall and Retrieval	Know who John the Baptist is. Describe why people needed to be reminded of God's covenant.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Know that when John the Baptist came, people had been waiting centuries for the prophecy to be fulfilled. For Christians, the prophets awaken an expectation of the coming of the Messiah in people's hearts.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.1. Describe what a prophet is, drawing on Elijah as an example. U4.2.1. Describe what a prophet is, drawing on John the Baptist as an example. Make links between Elijah and John the Baptist.

U4.2.1 – What is a Prophet?

1. General Definition of a Prophet

- A **prophet** in the Bible is not mainly someone who predicts the future.
- A prophet is a person called and sent by God to:
 - o Speak God's truth to the people.
 - o Call people back to **faithfulness to the covenant**.
 - o Challenge injustice, idolatry, and unfaithfulness.
 - o Offer hope and guidance, especially in times of crisis.
- Prophets often faced opposition because their message challenged kings, leaders, and society.

2. Elijah as an Example of a Prophet

- **Historical context:** 9th century BC, during the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, when many Israelites worshipped Baal.
- **Role:**
 - o Proclaimed a drought to show Yahweh, not Baal, controlled nature (1 Kings 17).
 - o Worked miracles to reveal God's power (widow of Zarephath, raising her son).
 - o Confronted the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), reminding Israel of the covenant.
 - o Encountered God on Mount Horeb in the "gentle whisper" (1 Kings 19).
- **Prophetic qualities:** Courageous, obedient to God, willing to stand alone against powerful rulers.

3. John the Baptist as an Example of a Prophet

- **Historical context:** First century AD, under Roman occupation, when many Jews were longing for the Messiah.
- **Role:**
 - o Preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4).
 - o Called people to return to God, preparing the way for the Messiah.
 - o Challenged injustice, even criticising King Herod's immoral behaviour.
 - o Pointed clearly to Jesus: "*Behold, the Lamb of God*" (John 1:29).

- **Prophetic qualities:** Lived simply in the desert, spoke fearlessly, prepared people’s hearts for God’s coming kingdom.

4. Links Between Elijah and John the Baptist

- **Similar role:** Both called God’s people to repentance and back to covenant faithfulness.
- **Boldness:** Both confronted kings — Elijah with Ahab and Jezebel; John with Herod.
- **Lifestyle:** Both lived in the wilderness, relying on God’s provision.
- **Recognition:** The Gospels present John as fulfilling the prophecy that Elijah would return before the Messiah (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 11:14).
- **Pointing forward:** Elijah pointed Israel back to Yahweh; John pointed Israel forward to Jesus as the Messiah.

Teacher Summary

A prophet is someone chosen by God to speak His truth, call people back to the covenant, and challenge injustice. Elijah shows this in the Old Testament by confronting Baal worship and reminding Israel that only Yahweh is God. John the Baptist shows this in the New Testament by preparing the way for Jesus, preaching repentance, and boldly proclaiming the Lamb of God. Both lived with courage and faith, and John is seen as the “new Elijah,” fulfilling the prophecy that Elijah’s spirit would return before the Messiah came.

Session 3	
Learning Focus	HEAR Know about the preaching of John the Baptist and compare the description of him in Mark and Matthew’s Gospels.
Recall and Retrieval	Describe what a prophet is, drawing on Elijah and John the Baptist as examples. A glass of wine is sometimes set for Elijah at a modern Passover meal. (Branch 6 Year 3)
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know Know that there are similarities in Mark and Matthew’s account of John the Baptist. Know how to compare John the Baptist in Mark and Matthew’s Gospel accounts. Know there are similarities of the appearance of John the Baptist in St Mark and St Matthew’s Gospel accounts. Know that both Gospel writers draw on the prophet Isaiah
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.3. Compare the description of John the Baptist in Mark 1:1-8 and Matthew’s 3:1-12 accounts and describe the beliefs about John the Baptist the Gospel writers show. U4.2.4. Make links with the words of Isaiah 40:3, the preaching of John the Baptist.

U4.2.3. – John the Baptist in Mark 1:1–8 and Matthew 3:1–12

Mark 1:1–8

- **Context:** Mark opens his Gospel with John the Baptist, showing he is central to the beginning of the “Good News.”
- **Description:** John wears camel’s hair with a leather belt — deliberately echoing Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), making him recognisable as a prophet. He eats locusts and wild honey — a desert diet, showing simplicity and dependence on God.

- **Message:** John preaches “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” Baptism here is symbolic, preparing people’s hearts for the true cleansing that will come through Jesus.
- **Role:** John insists he is not the Messiah: “One more powerful than I is coming... I have baptised with water, but he will baptise with the Holy Spirit.”
- **Belief shown:** John is the *forerunner* of Christ. His humility and focus on repentance highlight that his mission is to prepare the people, not to bring salvation himself.

Matthew 3:1–12

- **Context:** Matthew also places John at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, but with stronger links to prophecy and judgement.
- **Description:** Similar wilderness clothing and diet to Mark, again evoking Elijah. Location: Judean desert, where Israel historically met God.
- **Message:** John preaches, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.*” This adds urgency - God’s reign is breaking into history.
- **Audience:** Great crowds come from Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. John challenges not just ordinary people but religious leaders — Pharisees and Sadducees — calling them a “brood of vipers.”
- **Warnings:** John uses sharp images of judgement:
 - o “The axe is already at the root of the trees.”
 - o “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down.”
 - o The Messiah will gather wheat but burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.
- **Belief shown:** John is not only preparing people for Jesus but also calling for deep, personal change. He insists that belonging to Abraham’s family is not enough; true repentance must be shown in deeds.

U4.2.4 – Isaiah 40:3 and John the Baptist

Isaiah 40:3

- Original context: A prophecy of hope to exiled Israel in Babylon. God promises to lead His people home, “making straight a highway in the desert.”
- Meaning: The image of preparing a road symbolises God’s saving work and people’s call to remove obstacles to His coming.

John the Baptist’s Connection

- **The Gospels explicitly quote Isaiah 40:3** to identify John as the “voice in the wilderness.”
- **Location:** John preaches in the desert, fulfilling Isaiah’s setting.
- **Message:** John calls people to repentance — “making straight paths” in their hearts so they can welcome the Messiah.
- **Belief expressed:** John is the prophetic herald of God’s saving action, announcing that the long-awaited kingdom of God is near and fulfilled in Jesus.

Side-by-Side Chart

Aspect	Mark 1:1–8	Matthew 3:1–12	Isaiah 40:3
Context	Opens the Gospel; John is the start of the “Good News.”	Begins Jesus’ ministry with John, stressing prophecy and judgement.	Written during Israel’s exile in Babylon; promise of God’s deliverance.
Description of John	Camel’s hair, leather belt, locusts, wild honey. Evokes Elijah.	Same desert clothing and diet; location in Judea.	“A voice cries: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord.”
Message	Baptism of repentance for forgiveness. Humility: he points to one more powerful.	“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Warns of judgement with fire and axe.	Call to prepare a straight road for God’s coming.
Role	Forerunner who prepares for Christ. Emphasises repentance and humility.	Prophet of repentance and judgement. Calls for true change, not just heritage.	Voice of hope, preparing the people for God’s saving action.
Belief Shown	John is not the Messiah but the herald. Jesus will bring the Holy Spirit.	John prepares the way but warns that the Messiah will bring judgement and Spirit-fire.	God will act to save His people; obstacles must be removed.
Link	John fulfils prophecy as the herald of the Messiah.	John as the new Elijah, preparing and warning Israel.	Prophecy fulfilled in John, pointing to Jesus as the Lord coming to His people.

Teacher Summary

- Mark presents John as the humble forerunner, focused on repentance and pointing to Jesus.
- Matthew presents him as both herald and fiery prophet of judgement, stressing the urgency of change.
- Both writers link John directly to Isaiah 40:3: the “voice in the wilderness” preparing the way of the Lord.

Session 4	
Learning Focus	CELEBRATE Know that the feast of Christ the King marks the end of the Church's year and describe what is celebrated.
Recall and Retrieval	Know the Liturgical colour for Feast days. Know the key events from the Liturgical calendar.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know When the feast of Christ the King is in the Liturgical year. What is celebrated during the feast of Christ the King.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.5. Know that the feast of Christ the King marks the end of the Church's year and describe what is celebrated. D4.2.2. Talk about the type of king they think Jesus would be and give reasons for their answers.

The Feast of Christ the King

1. Historical Background

- **Established:** In 1925 by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quas Primas*.
- **Context:** Europe was between two World Wars, and dictatorships and secularism were rising. Many nations were drifting from Christian values.
- **Purpose:** The feast was created to remind the faithful that **Christ is the true ruler**, above all earthly powers, governments, or ideologies.

2. Place in the Liturgical Year

- Celebrated on the **last Sunday of Ordinary Time**, just before Advent begins.
- Marks the **end of the Church's liturgical year**. After reflecting on all of Jesus' life — his birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and sending of the Spirit — the year ends by proclaiming him **Lord of the Universe**.
- The readings focus on Christ's kingship at the end of time (eschatology = the "last things").

3. What the Feast Celebrates

- **Jesus as King of the Universe:** His authority is not limited to Israel, one nation, or one era — he reigns over all creation.
- **Kingship of Service and Sacrifice:**
 - Jesus' throne is the cross.
 - His crown is made of thorns.
 - He rules not by force but through love, humility, and giving his life for others.
- **Victory over sin and death:** Through his resurrection, Jesus is shown as the victorious King.
- **The coming kingdom:** The feast points forward to the day when Christ will return in glory, and God's kingdom will be complete — a kingdom of justice, truth, peace, and love.

4. Scripture Connections

- **Old Testament:** The image of the shepherd-king (e.g., David in 2 Samuel 5; Psalm 23) prepares the way for Christ as the Good Shepherd.
- **New Testament:**
 - Luke 23:35–43 (Christ on the cross, the "Good Thief" asking, "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*")
 - John 18:36 (Jesus before Pilate: "*My kingdom is not of this world.*")

- Matthew 25:31–46 (Final judgement: Christ the King separates sheep and goats, highlighting kingdom values of service to others).

5. Theological Themes

- **Christ's authority:** He is the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant — the promised eternal king (2 Samuel 7).
- **Universal kingship:** Christ is not only King of Christians, but of all peoples and nations.
- **Servant kingship:** His rule is radically different from earthly kings — centred on humility, love, and justice.
- **End of time focus:** The feast looks ahead to Christ's return in glory (Parousia), when God's kingdom will be fully realised.

6. Modern Significance

- Reminds Christians that **their ultimate loyalty is to Christ**, not to political leaders, wealth, or ideologies.
- Encourages living by kingdom values in daily life: truth, peace, justice, forgiveness, and service.
- Challenges the Church to witness to Christ's reign in the world today, especially in the face of violence, division, or injustice.

Teacher Summary

The Feast of Christ the King concludes the liturgical year by proclaiming Jesus as **Lord of all creation**, whose kingdom is one of truth, justice, peace, and love. Instituted in 1925 to counter rising secularism and nationalism, it continues to remind Christians today that Christ's kingship is unique: he rules not through power and domination but through service, sacrifice, and love. The feast is both a celebration of his present reign and a hope-filled looking forward to his coming in glory at the end of time.

D4.2.2 – Talking About the Type of King Jesus Would Be

Key Ideas for Pupils

- Jesus would not be a king like others in history who had power, palaces, or armies.
- His kingship is shown in:
 - **Service:** He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1–17).
 - **Sacrifice:** He gave his life on the cross for all people.
 - **Love:** He welcomed the poor, sick, and outcast.
 - **Peace:** He taught forgiveness and reconciliation, not war.
- Titles often used in Church: Jesus is the **Servant King** and the **Good Shepherd King**.

Reflection Questions for Students

- *What kind of king do you think Jesus would be?*
- *How is Jesus different from kings and rulers we read about in history books?*
- *If Jesus is a king of love and service, what does that mean for us today?*

Q1: What kind of king do you think Jesus would be?

Possible answers:

- "A kind king who helps people instead of bossing them around."
- "A king who looks after poor people and sick people."
- "A king who forgives people when they do something wrong."
- "A king who doesn't need a palace or gold crown because he's already powerful in heaven."
- "A king who is more like a shepherd — looking after his sheep."

Teacher note: Children are likely to contrast Jesus' kingship with worldly power — focusing on kindness, care, and humility.

Q2: How is Jesus different from kings and rulers we read about in history books?

Possible answers:

- "Other kings had castles, crowns, and armies — Jesus didn't have any of that."
- "Jesus didn't want to fight wars — he wanted peace."
- "History kings sometimes wanted to be rich and powerful, but Jesus wanted to serve."
- "Jesus was like a servant instead of making people serve him."
- "He loved everyone, not just important people."

Teacher note: Children naturally notice contrasts between earthly and heavenly values — kings of history vs. Jesus as Servant King.

Q3: If Jesus is a king of love and service, what does that mean for us today?

Possible answers:

- "We should help people who are left out, just like Jesus helped people."
- "It means we should be kind and not think we're better than others."
- "We can be like mini shepherds, looking after friends at school."
- "It means we should share things with people who don't have much."
- "If Jesus is a king who serves, then we should serve too — like helping at home or caring for the environment."

Teacher note: Pupils can make strong links to their own context — school, family, community. Their answers will reflect the practical ways they see love and service lived out.

Teacher Summary

Pupils are likely to imagine Jesus' kingship as *the opposite of worldly kingship*: not about power or riches but about kindness, care, forgiveness, and service. They can articulate simple, concrete ways this affects them today — being kind, sharing, helping, protecting others — making the theology of "Christ the King" very real and personal.

- **U4.2.5.:** The Feast of Christ the King ends the liturgical year, celebrating Jesus as the true ruler of the universe whose kingdom is eternal and based on love, justice, and peace.
- **D4.2.2.:** Children reflect on Jesus as a different kind of king — not powerful by worldly standards, but a servant king whose reign is expressed in humility, love, and service.

Artistic Representations of Christ the King – themes explored:

1. Large Statue of Christ the King (outdoors, arms outstretched)

- **Imagery:** Jesus wears a crown, with arms open wide.
- **Theme:** Majesty and welcome — Christ is shown as ruler over all creation, with the sky and earth beneath him.
- **Message:** His kingship is not distant or domineering but embracing; arms wide suggest invitation, blessing, and openness.
- **Theological emphasis:** Christ is King of the Universe, but also a shepherd who draws all people into his care.

2. Modern, colourful painting (bold blue, central Christ, people gathered)

- **Imagery:** Christ is central, clothed in bright blue, surrounded by groups of people in everyday clothing.
- **Theme:** Christ as King among the people — not remote, but present in daily life.

- **Message:** His kingship is about service, inclusion, and justice. He is king because he is with his people, sharing their struggles and joys.
- **Theological emphasis:** The “Servant King,” who rules through compassion and closeness, not wealth or power.

3. Stained glass window (Christ crowned, staff in hand)

- **Imagery:** Christ wears regal robes and crown, carrying a sceptre (symbol of authority).
- **Theme:** Traditional image of kingship, highlighting dignity, power, and authority.
- **Message:** Jesus fulfils the promise of the Davidic king — he is the eternal ruler whose authority comes from God.
- **Theological emphasis:** Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises, uniting priestly and kingly roles.

4. Stained glass (enthroned Christ with crown, angels below)

- **Imagery:** Christ sits on a throne, crowned, holding open scrolls or gestures of teaching, with angels beneath.
- **Theme:** Christ in glory, reigning in heaven, adored by angels.
- **Message:** His kingdom is eternal and heavenly, a vision of Christ as judge and ruler at the end of time.
- **Theological emphasis:** The eschatological king — pointing to Christ’s reign at the end of the world, when his kingdom of justice and peace will be complete.

Overall Summary

- **Statue:** Christ’s universal kingship, welcoming and embracing all.
- **Modern painting:** Christ the King as close to the people, the Servant King.
- **Traditional stained glass (with sceptre):** Christ as regal ruler, fulfilment of David’s line.
- **Stained glass enthroned:** Christ in heavenly glory, king of eternity.

Together, these artworks show the richness of the feast of **Christ the King** — his reign is both universal and intimate, servant-like and majestic, present now among us and fulfilled in glory at the end of time.

Session 5	
Learning Focus	LIVE Know how some artists have depicted Jesus Christ as King.
Recall and Retrieval	Know when the Church's Liturgical year ends.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That religious art work is used to celebrate the feast of Christ the King. That different artists make different choices in how they choose to present their religious art work.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	D4.2.3. Respond to a variety of artistic ways Christ the King is portrayed. D4.2.3. Suggest reasons for the artists' choices, give reasons for their personal preference and compare their ideas with others .

Children are creating their own pieces of art to reflect the theme of Christ the King – use the teacher notes above on the 4 pieces of art in the scheme of work and their theological representation of the feast.

Session 6	
Learning Focus	BELIEVE/LIVE Know how Christians prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent.
Recall and Retrieval	Know what is symbolic about the Advent wreath.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That the Church teaches that in the Advent liturgies, Christians pray for the second coming of Jesus alongside preparing for Christmas. Different ways how Christians prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	Describe and give reasons for the different ways Christians prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent.

Advent: Preparing for the Coming of Christ

1. Spiritual Preparation

- **Prayer:** Christians set aside extra time for prayer and reflection.
 - **Reason:** Advent is a season of waiting and expectation; prayer deepens their relationship with God and helps them focus on Christ rather than distractions.
- **Scripture Readings:** Passages from Isaiah (prophecies of the Messiah) and the Gospels (John the Baptist, Mary) are read.
 - **Reason:** These remind Christians of God's promises and prepare their hearts for Christ's birth and second coming.

2. Liturgical Preparation

- **Advent Wreath:**
 - o Four candles (three purple, one pink) are lit each Sunday.
 - o **Reason:** Symbolises light coming into the world through Christ. The growing light shows hope building week by week.
- **Liturgical Colour – Purple:**
 - o Used in churches to signify penance, preparation, and waiting.
 - o **Reason:** Reminds Christians to repent and be ready for Christ's coming.
- **Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday):**
 - o Rose-coloured vestments are worn.
 - o **Reason:** Marks a joyful pause, reminding Christians to rejoice because the Lord is near.

3. Practical and Community Preparation

- **Charity and Good Works:** Many Christians give to the poor or support Advent charities.
 - o **Reason:** Preparing for Christ means living out his teaching of service and love, especially for those in need.
- **Reconciliation (Confession):** Catholics often receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent.
 - o **Reason:** Cleansing from sin helps them be spiritually ready to welcome Christ.

4. Domestic/Personal Preparation

- **Advent Calendars:** Used in homes to count down the days to Christmas.
 - o **Reason:** Builds anticipation and helps children (and adults) focus daily on the waiting.
- **Nativity Scene:** Some Christians set up the crib gradually, waiting until Christmas Day to place the baby Jesus.
 - o **Reason:** A visible reminder that they are waiting for Christ's birth.

5. Theological Reasons

- **Remembering Christ's first coming:** His birth in Bethlehem — the Incarnation.
- **Preparing for Christ's second coming:** At the end of time, when God's kingdom will be complete.
- **Welcoming Christ daily:** Into their lives through prayer, love, and service.

Teacher Summary

Christians prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent through prayer, scripture, liturgy, charity, and family traditions. These practices help them repent, grow in faith, and focus on Jesus as the true centre of Christmas. The reasons are both **spiritual** (deepening relationship with God, preparing hearts) and **practical** (serving others, building community).

Session 7	
Learning Focus	BELIEVE / CELEBRATE / LIVE Know 'He will come again in glory' from the Nicene Creed.
Recall and Retrieval	Know ways that Christians prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That the Church teaches that Advent is a time of preparation for Jesus' incarnation at Christmas and for the second coming as King of the Universe. That 'He will come again in glory' from the Nicene Creed is referring to the second coming of Jesus' incarnation at Christmas. That the Church teaches that for Christians, the prophets awaken an expectation of the coming of the Messiah in people's hearts. That in Advent, the figure of John the Baptist asks Christians how they will prepare a way for Jesus in their own lives and at the end of all things.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.4. Make links with the words of Isaiah, the preaching of John the Baptist, and the season of Advent.

1. The Phrase in the Nicene Creed

- *"He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end."*
- This line is **not** about Christmas.
- It refers to the **Second Coming (Parousia)** — when Jesus will return at the end of time to establish God's kingdom in its fullness and bring final judgement.

2. The First Coming (Incarnation at Christmas)

- At Christmas, Christians celebrate Jesus' **first coming**: his birth in Bethlehem.
- This was the moment when "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14).
- Jesus came in humility, as a baby, to share our humanity and begin God's work of salvation.

3. The Second Coming (Future Event)

- The Creed points forward to when Christ will return "in glory" — not in humility as a baby, but in majesty as King and Judge.
- Unlike the first coming, the second coming will be universal and visible to all.

4. How the Two Are Linked in Advent

- Advent holds both together:
 - o **Looking back** to Christ's first coming at Christmas.
 - o **Looking forward** to his second coming in glory.
- That's why in the first weeks of Advent, the readings focus on the **end times and judgement**, before shifting closer to Christmas to focus on the nativity.

Teacher Summary

The Nicene Creed's words *"He will come again in glory"* do **not** describe Christmas but the **second coming of Christ** at the end of time. However, the season of Advent connects both: remembering Jesus' first coming (his incarnation at Bethlehem) while preparing for his second coming (his return in glory).

U4.2.4. – Linking Isaiah, John the Baptist, and Advent

1. The Words of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3)

- *“A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”*
- **Context:** Written to give hope to Israel during the exile in Babylon. The people were promised that God would lead them home and renew the covenant.
- **Meaning:** The image of a straight path symbolises removing obstacles — repentance, renewal, and readiness for God’s saving work.
- Great question! Here’s a clear **teacher subject knowledge explanation** to help you guide pupils:

Isaiah 40:3 and Advent

Original Context

- Written to the Israelites in exile in Babylon.
- It was a **message of hope**: God would lead his people home, just as a king’s servants would prepare a smooth road for his arrival.
- The people were called to **prepare their hearts** and trust in God’s saving action.

Fulfilment in the New Testament

- The Gospels (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:2–3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23) apply this verse to **John the Baptist**.
- John is the “voice in the wilderness,” calling people to repent and be ready for the coming of Jesus the Messiah.

Link to Advent

- **Theme of Preparation:** Advent is a season of preparing the way of the Lord — not by building a road, but by making our hearts ready through prayer, repentance, and love.
- **John the Baptist in Advent:** His preaching is central in the Advent liturgy (2nd and 3rd Sundays of Advent). He continues Isaiah’s call: “Make straight the paths of the Lord.”

Two Comings:

- Isaiah’s call prepares for Jesus’ **first coming** at Christmas.
- It also reminds Christians to prepare for his **second coming** in glory at the end of time.

Teacher Summary

Isaiah 40:3 links to Advent because both are about **preparing for the Lord’s coming**. Just as Isaiah called Israel to prepare for God’s saving action, and John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus’ ministry, Christians in Advent prepare to welcome Christ — at Christmas, in daily life, and at the end of time.

2. The Preaching of John the Baptist

- **Matthew 3:3:**
 - Matthew quotes Isaiah directly to describe John: *“This is the one who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: ‘A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”*
 - John fulfils Isaiah’s prophecy — he is the “voice” in the wilderness.
 - His message: *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near”* (Matt 3:2).
- **Mark 1:1–2:**
 - Mark begins his Gospel by quoting Isaiah: *“As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way’...”*
 - John is the messenger who prepares the way for Jesus.
- **Link:** John calls people to repentance and baptism — “making straight paths” in their lives so they can welcome the Messiah.

3. The Season of Advent

- **Theme of waiting and preparation:**
 - o Advent is a time of spiritual preparation, echoing Isaiah's call to "prepare the way."
- **John the Baptist's role in Advent:**
 - o In the liturgy, John is the key Advent figure (readings on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of Advent).
 - o Christians are reminded to repent, reflect, and prepare their hearts for Christ's coming.
- **Double focus of Advent:**
 - o Looking back to **Christ's first coming** at Bethlehem.
 - o Looking forward to **Christ's second coming** at the end of time.

Teacher Summary

- **Isaiah 40:3** promised a messenger to prepare God's people.
- **John the Baptist** fulfils this prophecy, preaching repentance and readiness for the Messiah (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:1–2).
- **Advent** takes up this theme: Christians prepare their hearts through prayer, repentance, and service, so they are ready to welcome Christ — both at Christmas and at his coming in glory.

Session 8	
Learning Focus	HEAR / CELEBRATE / LIVE Know that that ancestry of Jesus can be linked to the Jesse Tree. Know how Christians use the Jesse tree during Advent.
Recall and Retrieval	Know about the descendants of Jesus.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know That a Jesse tree represents the ancestry of Jesus using artistic symbols starting with creation and ending with the incarnation. The Jesse Tree tradition is rooted in Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." That Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. Each symbol represents a story from within this family tree and a step toward the birth of Jesus.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U4.2.6. Make links with the ancestry of Jesus and the Jesse tree.

U4.2.6 – The Ancestry of Jesus and the Jesse Tree

1. The Ancestry of Jesus

- **Jesse:**
 - o Jesse was the father of King David (1 Samuel 16).
 - o He lived in Bethlehem, making this the "city of David."
 - o By naming Jesse in prophecy, the Bible roots the Messiah in the most important royal line in Israel's history.
- **David:**
 - o Israel's greatest king, remembered as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14).

- God promised David an everlasting dynasty: *"Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever"* (2 Samuel 7:16).
- This became known as the **Davidic Covenant**, which gave rise to hope for a Messiah from David's line.
- **Messianic Promise:**
 - Even after the fall of the kingdom and the Babylonian exile, prophets like Isaiah reminded the people of God's promise: a future king would rise from Jesse's line (Isaiah 11:1).
 - Jews looked forward to this Messiah as a figure who would restore God's people.
- **The Gospels:**
 - **Matthew 1:1–17:** Traces Jesus' genealogy from Abraham, through Jesse and David, to Joseph. This shows Jesus fulfils the covenants made to Abraham (nationhood and blessing) and David (eternal kingship).
 - **Luke 3:23–38:** Traces Jesus' ancestry all the way back to Adam. This shows that Jesus is not just Messiah for Israel but **Saviour of all humanity**.

2. The Jesse Tree

- **Isaiah 11:1:** *"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."*
 - The image of a shoot from a stump symbolises hope and new beginnings.
 - Even though Israel's monarchy had been "cut down" by exile, God would bring new life through the Messiah.
 - Christians interpret this "shoot" as Jesus.
- **What is a Jesse Tree?**
 - A visual representation of Jesus' family tree, showing that his birth is the fulfilment of God's promises throughout salvation history.
 - Usually takes the form of a tree or branch, with ornaments or symbols added each day of Advent.
 - The tree begins with **creation** and ends with **Jesus' birth (the Incarnation)**.

3. Jesse Tree Symbols and Their Meaning

Each symbol links a Bible story to the ancestry of Jesus:

- **Creation** – Symbol: Earth, sun, moon, stars.
 - God as Creator of all. Jesus is present from the beginning as the Word (John 1:1–3).
- **Adam and Eve** – Symbol: Tree with apple and serpent.
 - The Fall shows humanity's need for salvation. Jesus is the "new Adam" who restores life.
- **Noah** – Symbol: Ark or rainbow.
 - God saves Noah and his family from the flood. Jesus saves humanity from sin and death.
- **Abraham** – Symbol: Tent or stars.
 - God promises Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars. Jesus fulfils this by blessing all nations.
- **Jacob** – Symbol: Ladder.
 - Jacob dreams of a ladder between heaven and earth. Jesus bridges heaven and earth through the Incarnation.
- **Moses** – Symbol: Tablets of the Law or burning bush.
 - God gives Moses the Law and frees Israel from slavery. Jesus is the new lawgiver and liberator.
- **Jesse** – Symbol: Tree stump or branch.
 - Represents the family line from which the Messiah will come.
- **David** – Symbol: Harp or crown.

- David, the shepherd-king, foreshadows Christ the Good Shepherd and eternal King.
- **Prophets** – Symbol: Scroll.
 - The prophets proclaimed God’s promise of a Messiah. Jesus fulfils these prophecies.
- **Mary** – Symbol: Lily (purity) or crown of stars.
 - Mary’s “yes” makes the Incarnation possible.
- **Jesus** – Symbol: Manger, crib, or Chi-Rho (XP).
 - Jesus is the culmination of salvation history — Emmanuel, “God with us.”

4. The Tradition of the Jesse Tree

- **Medieval origins:**
 - Found in stained glass windows, manuscripts, and carvings.
 - They visually taught biblical history to people who could not read.
- **Advent practice today:**
 - Families and schools create Jesse Trees, adding one symbol per day through Advent.
 - Each symbol tells a Bible story, helping children (and adults) see how all history leads to Jesus’ birth.
- **Ending with the Incarnation:**
 - The final ornament is placed at Christmas — often baby Jesus, a crib, or star — showing Jesus as the fulfilment of God’s promises.

5. Theological Meaning

- Shows **continuity of salvation history**: from Creation → Fall → Covenants → Prophets → Christ.
- Affirms that Jesus is the **Messiah promised to Israel** and the **Saviour of the world**.
- Helps Christians reflect in Advent that the Incarnation is the climax of God’s plan of love.

Teacher Summary

The **Jesse Tree** visually represents the ancestry of Jesus, rooted in Isaiah’s prophecy of a “shoot from the stump of Jesse.” Jesse, father of David, begins the royal line that culminates in Christ, the eternal King. Each symbol on the Jesse Tree represents a person or event in salvation history, reminding Christians in Advent that the story of creation, covenant, and prophecy all lead to the Incarnation.

Session 9	
Learning Focus	LIVE Identify the meaning and representation of the Jesse tree in art around the world.
Recall and Retrieval	Know about the significance of the Jesse tree.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know How the meaning and representation of the Jesse tree connects to God's plan for salvation.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	D4.2.1. Respond to a variety of artistic ways in which the Jesse tree is portrayed. D4.2.1. Suggest reasons for the artist's choices and give reasons for their personal preference.

Jesse Tree Symbol Chart

Story / Person	Scripture Reference	Symbol	Meaning
Creation	Genesis 1–2	Earth, sun, moon, stars	God as Creator; Christ present from the beginning (John 1:1–3).
Adam and Eve	Genesis 3	Tree with apple and serpent	The Fall shows humanity's need for salvation; Jesus is the new Adam.
Noah	Genesis 6–9	Ark or rainbow	God saves Noah's family; Jesus saves humanity from sin and death.
Abraham	Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22	Tent or stars	God's covenant of descendants and blessing; fulfilled in Christ.
Jacob	Genesis 28:10–22	Ladder	Jacob's ladder connects heaven and earth; Jesus bridges heaven and earth.
Moses	Exodus 3; Exodus 20	Tablets of the Law or burning bush	God gives the Law and freedom; Jesus brings the new covenant and liberation.
Jesse	Isaiah 11:1	Tree stump or branch	Jesse is father of David; the Messiah will come from his line.
David	1 Samuel 16; 2 Samuel 7	Harp or crown	David the shepherd-king foreshadows Christ the eternal King.
Prophets	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah	Scroll	The prophets foretold the Messiah; fulfilled in Jesus.
Mary	Luke 1:26–38	Lily or crown of stars	Mary's "yes" makes the Incarnation possible.
Jesus	Luke 2:1–20; John 1:14	Manger, crib, or Chi-Rho (XP)	Jesus is Emmanuel, the fulfilment of salvation history.

Session 10	
Learning Focus	RESPOND Celebration of the Word Assessment – Knowledge capture
Recall and Retrieval	Complete a knowledge capture of the key knowledge outlined on the knowledge organiser.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Key knowledge: Pupils will know The core knowledge outlined throughout the unit.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	