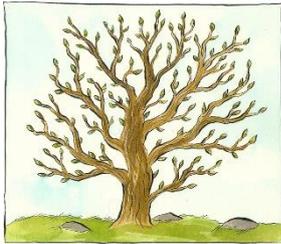


Advent Sunday – 28th November 2021

Read Luke 21.25-36

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

This reading from St Luke's gospel tells us what Jesus said to his disciples just before he was arrested. The religious leaders were trying to trap Jesus; it was a difficult and dangerous time. When you first read this passage it seems to be full of threatening images – roaring seas, confusion and danger.



But then Jesus talks about signs of hope – buds on the trees, summer coming, the kingdom of God near at hand. Jesus is telling his disciples that even though things look bad, there will be good things afterwards. Jesus is giving them hope for better times ahead.

Can you think of a time when you were looking forward to something good or exciting? What were the signs that something good was going to happen? Did you count off the days until the happy event?

This is the beginning of the season of Advent in the church. It's a time when we get ready for the great celebration of Christmas. Do you know how long Advent lasts? (You can work out how many days and weeks there are until Christmas Day.) How are you counting off the days of Advent? Do you have an Advent calendar to help you? Christmas is a season of joy and hope because the birth of Jesus reminds us of God's love for us. God loves us so much that he sent his son to be a human being and live among us.

The last 18 months have been a very difficult time for the whole world. The COVID pandemic affected all of us – lockdowns, school closures, illness, and death. But there have also been signs of hope. Scientists worked very hard to produce a vaccination quickly, doctors and nurses looked after people in hospital, and many people helped neighbours who had to isolate.

One of the symbols of this hope was the rainbow. Did you put a rainbow in the window of your house? The rainbow is often used in the Bible as a symbol of the link between God and people. It is a symbol of love and hope.



Activities

- Plant cress pots as a sign of hope. You will need: small plant pots (yoghurt pots are ideal), cotton wool, cress seeds. Put cotton wool into the pots and soak gently with water. Sprinkle cress seeds onto the cotton wool and gently press down. Keep the pots in a light, warm place. Within two days you should see cress appearing. After five to seven days, it may be tall enough to cut and enjoy on a sandwich – or

however you choose! How does it feel to see the cross growing? Where might you see tiny signs of hope today?

- Make a rainbow picture and write the word “Hope” under it. You could use felt pens, or coloured paper, or coloured wool to make your picture. You could even make a model rainbow out of rolls of paper or twigs covered in wool. Look at your rainbow when you say your prayers – you could use the prayer below each day.

Prayer

Dear God,

for some today, life seems good;

for some today, life seems hard;

for some today, life seems confusing.

But for all today, you give us hope -

hope that we are forgiven and loved. Amen.

This year we'll prepare for Christmas by making space to

