



# The **HOLY FROG** Blog

Honour Others, Lower Yourself and Fully Rely On God.



## Joy to the World...No Sprouts!

**Getting a family of five into a car with only five seats, to go and collect a six foot tree from a farm a few miles away, sounds like a really difficult challenge.**

However, as one of our family Christmas traditions, this was an absolute **JOY** for many years. After 'running around the Christmas trees' we selected 'THE ONE' and all jumped



back in the car; then with the tree sticking out of the sun roof, windows wound down, CD player at max, we would sing Christmas songs all the way back home! With our children now grown up and no longer living at home, our new tradition is simply to bring out the picture you see opposite to remind us of those joyful times.

(We might still put on a CD too.)

**Joy is a feeling we all know is real,** even if we can't quite understand how it

works. We have all experienced **JOY** and know it when we see it in other's actions - squealing with delight, laughing out loud, jumping up and down or waving arms wildly in the air. **JOY is nice. JOY is fun. JOY is feeling good,** even in difficult moments. Where does **JOY** come from? Is it just for the Christmas season or is there more to think about?

**“What brings you JOY at Christmas?** I have been out and about round school this week asking this question. Some people mentioned family, food, presents or snowy weather. Others thought of decorations, ice-cream, singing carols or not eating sprouts. Some find **JOY at Christmas** in helping others in need or even going for a run on Christmas Day! All genuine moments of **JOY** to be thankful for. In the Gospel accounts of Jesus' arrival onto this earth there were plenty of references to **JOY** coming into the World. There was something about this child that made a difference to people who were in his presence.

**Mary and Joseph** were forced by the Roman authorities to make an unreasonably difficult, journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and when they arrived, exhausted from their travels, there was no room for them in the inn. Despite very basic conditions, they **were full of JOY at the birth of their newborn son.**

**The shepherds** were on duty day and night, overworked, tired, often isolated and lonely, shivering in the cold night air, and surrounded by the midnight darkness. Despite their miserable situation, Luke's account of Jesus' arrival tells us that choirs of angels suddenly appeared to shepherds and joyfully sang; **Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will**





## be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! (Luke 2:9-11)

Immediately they go to Mary and Joseph and find the infant lying in the manger, and they were excited and filled with joy as they returned to their flocks

**The Magi** (wise men, however many of them there were) set out from distant Persia and traveled by camels across the arid Syrian desert, apart from their families, scorched by the searing heat, dehydrated, buffeted by the Sirocco winds, covered with dust, and weary. Despite such a rigorous expedition and bleak outlook, they were overjoyed at seeing his star, and when they entered the house and saw the baby with his mother Mary, they were filled with awe and joy as they bowed before him.

**So WHAT?** This week in school it is likely that you will find plenty of things to celebrate, enjoy and smile at. Be thankful for these things - **make a point of saying something positive to anyone who genuinely brings you joy.** How amazing it will be to have that buzz around the school?

Sometimes you will feel under pressure, left out or pushed aside. You may be exhausted, worn out and struggling to keep up with everything in life. In these moments, joy seems far away. **God wants every person to know the joy of being in his presence.** That Joy was experienced by the angels, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Magi on that

amazing night when Jesus was born into the world; they could have missed the moment but they chose to be involved, trusted God and saw the advent of **JOY TO THE WORLD...and No Sprouts!**



Follow the link below to read more about Jesus using this advent calendar from YMCA  
<https://calendar.myadvent.net/?id=cc76a588f7b9f841a3c1494c69051953>



### Chaplain's Challenge:

1. **Ask lots of people** 'what brings you joy'? Are there any common experiences?
2. **What Christmas traditions** do you/your family follow? Why are they important to you?
3. **Search out** a story, poem, song or picture that expresses JOY. Or create your own.
4. **Read the Gospel** accounts of Jesus birth and note any references about JOY.
5. **How do you** spend time in God's presence? What difference does it make to you?

### Read and Reflect:

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11  
 But let the godly rejoice. Let them be glad in God's presence. Let them be filled with JOY.  
 Psalm 68:3

**Prayer:** Lord God, we thank you for giving us the ability to experience joy in this world. We thank you for family and friends, for celebrations and traditions that give us joy. In this week of advent, may we find moments to reflect on how Jesus' arrival on this earth brought joy to those around him even in the troubles of life. Born in humble surroundings, he gave everything for us, that we might know the joy of being in relationship with you as it is meant to be. Thank you that when we genuinely make room for you and come into your presence, we find joy. **Amen**

To chat about the blog, Christian faith, prayer requests and everything else contact:

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May we know real life lived out in faith, as individuals and as a community.

