

Classroom Prayer Focus:

Prayer focus cloths are still **green** which is the colour for the Liturgical season of Ordinary Time until the season of Advent begins on Sunday 1st December when they are changed to **purple**.

November - the month of the Holy Souls.

Pray the Eternal Rest for family and friends who have died and for those who have no one to pray for them. At this time of year, prayers can also be said for those who are bereaved. A popular method for remembering those who have died is in the form of a book or a basket in which to place the names of those who have died on shaped paper, e.g. crosses, flowers etc. These can be placed upon the prayer area and offered up during prayer. Alternatively, names can be written on brightly coloured strips of paper and hung from strings.

Advent is the first season in the Liturgical Year. It starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day (25 December). An Advent Wreath can be part of the prayer focus with the appropriate number of candles being lit during prayer time. During the first two weeks, the Scripture readings focus on the Christian belief that Christ will come again and how we need to be ready for that. Words and phrases like 'Awake' and 'Be Ready' can be placed within the prayer area. The second two weeks focus on Advent as a time during which we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. As a season of preparation, it is also a time when we reflect upon how we live our lives, and we seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which enables us to start afresh. An appropriate act of contrition or Examen could be placed within the prayer focus. 'When Is He Coming?' and 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel are appropriate hymns to sing at this time.

Prayer areas could include a figure of Mary to show her in contemplation about the forthcoming birth of her son.

Gradually build up the Nativity scene but the figure of baby Jesus should only be included towards the end of term. Ideally, after a Mass where the figure has been blessed. You may also include images or items which relate to your Advent fundraising. [Cycle of Prayer | Advent-Christmas \(liturgyoffice.org.uk\)](https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/cycle-of-prayer-advent-christmas)

November: The month of the Holy Souls

November is the special month of prayer in the church's year which is dedicated to the Holy Souls. The Holy Souls are all those who have died and especially those members of the Church 'who have died and gone before us marked with the sign of faith.' Our prayers will be personal in terms of remembrance of all our own particular family and friends but they are all so communal in that we pray for anyone who has died and particularly those who have no one to pray for them. In the midst of the grief and sorrow for the loss that we might feel for those who have died, we offer up prayers that the Holy Souls will enter into Heaven and be with God. Purgatory is the period of time into which the Holy Souls may enter to be purified before moving into the joy and perfection of heaven.

November 2 is the Solemnity of All Saints. On this day we celebrate and pray for and to all the saints both known and unknown throughout history. We give thanks for their lives and in our prayers we ask them to continue to pray with us and for us. November 3 is the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (The Holy Souls) and on this day we pray and commemorate all those who have died. In this way the Communion of Saints is joined together in prayer: the prayers of those on earth with the Holy Souls in purgatory and all those who are in Heaven. This belief in the Communion of Saints is expressed in the Confiteor, the Creed said at every Sunday Mass as part of the Penitential Act. It is also part of the Eucharistic prayer in Mass.

During the Month of November, special Masses will be said, parishes will have lists of names of those to be prayed for, and the Blessing of Graves will take place. Some schools take the opportunity to help parishes to tidy up the cemetery for such occasions.

Remembrance Sunday (Sunday nearest to 11 November) is a public day of recognition for all those who have died as a result of conflict in any part of the world. People of all faiths and none come together to give thanks for the sacrifice made by countless others.

Some schools have marked this with a remembrance wall where the school and parish community are invited to tie photos and prayers on e.g. ribbons or flags of family members who have died onto the school gates/fence. You could also create a prayer tree within school.

Bambinelli Sunday 14 December

"And the word became flesh and dwelt among us" John 1:14

The tradition follows that the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) is Bambinelli Sunday when all the children bring their Bambinelli's (Baby Jesus figures) from their Nativity scenes to St. Peter's square to be blessed by the Pope. Pope Francis said of Bambinelli Sunday 'when you gather in your homes in prayer before the manger, looking at the Child Jesus, you will feel amazement at the great mystery of God made man; and the Holy Spirit will give your heart the humility, tenderness and goodness of Jesus. This is the true Christmas! May this be so for you and for your families.' Why not make a Bambinelli in class for children to take home!



Pope Leo's Exhortation DILEXI TE – On Love for the Poor

Pope Leo XIV urges Christians to base their faith on genuine love, recognising Christ's presence especially in the poor and marginalised, and to show this love through real acts of kindness, fairness, and care that bring hope and dignity to those who are suffering.

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html

Pope's Prayer Intentions

November: For the prevention of suicide

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

December: For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Dates for the Diary*

November 2025

Mon 3	The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)
Tue 4	Memorial of St. Charles Borromeo, Bishop
Sat 8	Memorial in Oxfordshire of Blessed George Napier, Priest, Martyr
Sun 9	Remembrance Day. Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica.
Mon 10	Memorial of St. Leo the Great, Pope, Doctor of the Church
Tues 11	Memorial of St. Martin of Tours, Bishop
Wed 12	Memorial of St. Josaphat, Bishop, Martyr
Sun 16	World Day of the Poor
Fri 21	Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sat 22	Memorial of St. Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr
Sun 23	National Youth Sunday & Solemnity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Mon 24	Memorial of St. Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest, and Companions, Martyrs
Tue 25	Optional memorial of St. Catherine of Alexandra
Sun 30 th	FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 2025

Mon 1	Feast of St. Edmund Campion, Priest, Martyr
Wed 3	Memorial of St. Francis Xavier. Priest
Thur 4	Optional Memorial of St. John Damascene, Priest, Doctor of the Church
Fri 5	Feast of St. Birinus, Bishop
Sat 6	Optional Memorial of St. Nicholas, Bishop
Sun 7	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Mon 8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Wed 10	Memorial in Staffordshire of St. Edmund Gennings, Priest, Martyr
Fri 12	Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Sat 13	Memorial of St. Lucy, Virgin, Martyr
Sun 14	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**For a complete list of dates, readings and colours please refer to the Archdiocese of Birmingham Ordo 2025. You may order a new Ordo from John F Neale Publishing (John@johnfneale.co.uk)*

CAFOD, Mission Together

CAFOD:

DILEXI TE: See CAFOD's explanation of DILEXI TE – On love for the poor here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/dilexi-te-explained>

Advent Resources: Resources for both Primary and Secondary can be found here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/education>

LiveSimply: Is your school a LiveSimply school? Within the Archdiocese of Birmingham we are asking all schools to work towards achieving the LiveSimply award which aligns with our mission of 'Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope, with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice' Find out more here: <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/livesimply-award>

Mission Together:

All Saints & All Souls: The education team at Mission Together have created relevant resources here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/>

Digital Advent Calendar and Resources: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/advent-and-christmas/>