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**Advent Week 3**

**Guided reflection – Love**

**Teacher notes**

The traditional theme for the third week of Advent is John the Baptist.

The Gospel of Luke Chapter 1 explains how the birth of John the Baptist was intertwined with the birth of Jesus and it also tells us that John’s mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus mother, Mary, were related to one another. As they both grew up, John came to understand that his mission was to go out and announce that Jesus was the messiah for whom the people had been waiting. Just as the prophets had done before him, John the Baptist proclaimed that the messiah was not going to be the kind of military leader that the people wanted but a messiah who was going to lead them in the way of peace and love. Love will be the theme of this week’s resources.

It would be very good to have the book ‘Papa Panov’s Special Day’ for the children to look at but the link to an animated version of the story is here (this is also embedded in the PowerPoint slide): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5SYp2PvYRE>

Note: The reason why the third candle is pink is a little bit complicated (people often assume that the pink one signifies Mary but this isn’t correct – there is an explanation here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaudete_Sunday#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20candles%20surrounding,the%20third%20week%20in%20Advent>.) If you want to tell that children that the third candle is pink because the theme of this week is love then that would be fine but there is no need to tell them that if you don’t think it would be helpful.

**Reflection**

**PowerPoint Slide 1** Remind the children that in the previous two weeks of Advent, we have explored the themes of Hope and Peace. This week, we will be exploring the theme of Love. If you have made your own Advent wreath, you may wish to light the third candle and say these words (you may wish to build the words each week as the additional candles are lit):

As we watch and wait for the coming of Jesus,

We remember that he came to bring:

Hope where there is despair,

Peace where there is violence,

Love where there is hatred,

Joy where there is sorrow,

And light where there is darkness.

**PowerPoint Slide 2** Tell the children that this is an image of John the Baptist. Explain to the children that John’s mother and Jesus’ mother were cousins. When John grew up, he went out into the countryside to announce that Jesus was the messiah who the people had been waiting for. He told them that Jesus wasn’t going to be the kind of military leader that they wanted; he was going to lead them in the way of peace and love.

**PowerPoint Slide 3** Here is something that John the Baptist told people when they asked him what they should do to get ready for Jesus coming:

**PowerPoint Slide 4** We are now going to hear a story that helps to understand John the Baptist’s message about getting ready for Jesus.

**PowerPoint Slide 5** Can you remember what Jesus told Papa Panov in his dream? (That he would visit him but he wouldn’t tell him who he was?)

**PowerPoint Slide 6** Recap the people who came to visit Papa Panov and what he did for them.(street sweeper – warmed him up with coffee;young woman with baby –gave baby shoes; beggars – gave soup and bread).

**PowerPoint Slide 7** When it grew dark at the end of the day, Papa Panov was sad because he thought that Jesus hadn’t come to visit him after all. Was he right? What did he suddenly realise?

**PowerPoint Slide 8** Jesus told Papa Panov that he is present in everyone who is in need and that’s why John the Baptist told people that we can get ready to meet him by giving the things that we don’t need to those who need them more. **This is what it means to show love in the world.**

**PowerPoint Slide 9** We have learned that love is something that grows in the world when we show kindness towards others. How can we show kindness in our daily lives so that love grows in our school?

**Prayer and reflection**

I’d like you to just close your eyes and think about the things that we’ve talked about. Jesus tells us that whenever we do something for someone in need, his love is present. In this season of Advent, how can you make love grow in our school? Perhaps think of one thing that you could be determined to do.

I’m going to finish with a prayer now and if you would like to, you can make it your prayer by saying amen at the end.

Dear God

Help me to remember that Jesus came to earth to spread

A message of love for those who are most in need.

Give me the courage to show kindness to others

So that love may grow in my heart and in the world.

Amen

