

Assembly: The Light of Christmas

Leader: *Sign of the Cross*

A constant feature of Christmas is light. We see coloured lights on trees, in the shops, on the streets. Many who see Christmas lights will hardly remember that the reason for the lights is Jesus Christ, the light of the world. The opposite of light is darkness. The darkness of the world is sin, anger, hatred, division, violence, greed and selfishness of every kind. Jesus came to point another way. He said, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.*" (John 8:12) He came to offer us the gift of light so that we may bring that light to others. However, we need to be open to change if Christ – the light of the world is to find a welcome in our Christmas. This Christmas, will you allow the infant Jesus to make a change in your life? Listen to the following story of a teacher who is driving home from work after a busy day in school and then a reflection written by one of her Year 14 pupils.

Teacher: One evening, at the beginning of December, I was driving home from school full of all the events of that day. I was thinking of all the school work I had to complete before the holidays – lessons still to teach, exams to set and mark, reports to write, meetings to attend, charity hampers to organize, religious services to arrange. I was worried too about having time to clean my house before putting up the decorations, how I would find time to write and mail the Christmas Cards, buy presents for my family and friends, sort the clothes needed for Christmas parties, food shopping for Christmas Day and many other concerns that are common around this time of year. Just as all these thoughts were whizzing around in my head, a song came on the radio. It was American

singer/song-writer Lauren Daigle – and she was singing '*Light of the World.*' I hadn't heard it before. I listened intently as the words sank into me. In the song Lauren sings of a Jesus who is a song for the suffering, the miracle that people are waiting for, the love come down, the hope in people's lives. Jesus is the light for all who hunger, for all those who are in pain, for all those who are suffering. Suddenly, the 'bigger picture' became very clear. Christmas is not about exams and reports, decorations and parties, food, clothes or presents. It is about celebrating Jesus coming into our world and giving us his light to share with others. Slowly, I realized that I was so caught up in all my business that I was missing the most important thing. Christmas is about showing others that love exists, that hope exists, that Jesus lives. It's about being a light for those who are disillusioned, scared, or in pain? For the rest of the journey home I thought about this. The next morning, I decided to play Lauren's song '*Light of the World*' for my Year 14 Religion class and then ask them to write about how they could be a light for others this Christmas. This is what one of them said.

Year 14 Pupil: When I think of Christmas, the first thing that comes to mind is bright lights and singing. Presents, food, parties and a jolly, round man in a red suit also come to mind. When I reflect a bit more, I think it has definitely a lot to do with light – the light coming from the presence of a tiny baby in a manger – Jesus – God with us. In our modern world, Christmas means loads of different things. But most of all, I think Christmas is a time of year when people soften and drop their outer mask a wee bit. They become truly human. People everywhere feel linked together as true brothers and sisters - a real family. This allows a change to take place that is both personal and global. As

people, when we say 'Yes' to Jesus at Christmas, we allow his light to shine through us. This is God's work, not ours. We are simply a means through which God acts. For example, when I choose to show kindness and compassion to a classmate, I allow God's light to shine in a way that reminds people in the world that love and goodness exist. When I spend my break-time helping a first year class run a cake sale to raise money for St Vincent de Paul, I allow God's light to shine and show people in the world that hope exists. At lunch, when I sit with my friend who lost her mum during the year and listen to her talk about her sense of loss and loneliness, I remind her that she is not alone. When I smile at the migrant family that have moved in next door, I welcome the stranger and help them to see that life can be good again. When we allow God to work through us, we can bring hope to the confused, relief to the suffering, healing to those who need it. Our small, simple actions make way for bigger, world-wide miracles to happen. By showing compassion, kindness, concern for the poor and vulnerable, by welcoming the stranger and showing solidarity with those on the edge of life, we bring the light of Jesus to others. Christmas is not about big actions, or expensive gifts. It's about saying 'Yes' to the miracle that is a tiny baby in a manger and allowing the message of love, hope and light, to reach others.

Play song by Lauren Daigle – 'Light of the World'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLhaZIBSp0>

Leader: We will now have our prayers.

Prayer of Intercession (Read by pupils)

1. Lord Jesus, we await your coming and with joyful hearts we pray: Come, Lord Jesus. **Response: Come, Lord Jesus.**
2. Lord Jesus, you come to bring us hope and courage. We pray that we may bring hope to the downhearted and friendship to the stranger.
Response: May we bring hope to the downhearted and friendship to the stranger.
3. Lord Jesus, you come as a reflection of God's love. We pray that our actions of justice and care reflect this same love.
Response: May our actions of justice and care reflect God's great love.
4. Lord Jesus, you come to show us ways of compassion and mercy. We pray that this Christmas, we will reach out to all people in our society with that same spirit of compassion and mercy.
Response: May we reach out to all people in our society with the same spirit of compassion and mercy.

Leader: I invite everyone to say together the Advent Prayer.

Advent Prayer

God of light and hope, Look upon us in love
And fill us with the Spirit of Jesus that we may
love you and serve you in your kingdom.
Protect us this Advent;
Help us to focus on the things that really matter,
as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who is the light of the world,
And who lives and reigns with You and the Holy
Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: *Sign of the Cross*