

**Meaningful Chocolate 2018  
Resources for Advent  
for Schools and Churches**

**Assembly Title 2:**

**It's all about the wait**

**KS3-4**

(ages 11-16)

**NOTES**

**to accompany Powerpoint presentation**

**Aim:** To explore the idea of “waiting” and “waiting for Christmas”

**These notes include:**

1. An exploration of how ‘waiting’ is most often seen as negative.
2. Some examples of queues – you can make these illustrations your own and if you need to put fresh photos on the presentation, we suggest [www.freeimages.com](http://www.freeimages.com).
3. A challenge to think about why we have to wait for Christmas.
4. A reflection on why waiting is good for us.
5. A challenge to reflect on the Christmas story throughout Advent.

**The PowerPoint** to go with these notes can be downloaded from [www.meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/pages/resources](http://www.meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/pages/resources)

**Technical:**

Please familiarise yourself with the presentation beforehand and make any adjustments necessary. The fonts used are Arial or Helvetica.

**How to use the Real Advent Calendar**

You can use the Real Advent Calendar in form time to go through the Christmas story day by day with your class. Each day, ask a student to open a window and get a pupil to read from the story book and take the chocolate.

You can lead into a daily prayer or reflection based on each day. For example, on the first day, you can reflect that Joseph and Mary were to have the massive responsibility of being the parents of Jesus. You could then pray for all parents, guardians, carers and parent figures in the world that God is with them as they bring up a new and unique life.

There are only 25 days in the calendar so in classes of 25 plus, you may get pupils to read a prayer so that they too take part. You may even want to give them a piece of chocolate too.

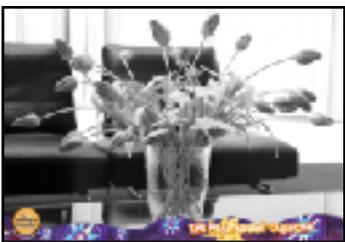
If your class has an advent calendar each, then they can all share the journey together at the start of each day. Remember to reflect on preparation and waiting as we all make the journey towards Christmas.



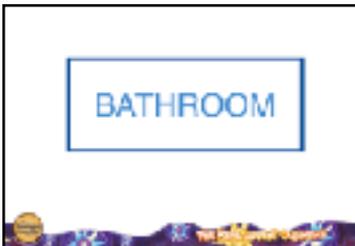
Think about it. The word **waiting**. It's a very negative word right? Somehow we've got it into our heads that waiting is a bad thing.

Just think about it. What's the first thing that comes into your head? It's far more likely to be negative than positive. And I guess it will almost always involve a queue.

These are several of my worst ideas of queues (and probably in this order):



The doctors or the dentists. I hate waiting. It's the studied concentration of not engaging eye contact with anyone and trying to sit in those squashy seats and not make a rude sound when you move. Probably the worst is the dentist – it's the posters of teeth around the walls and the guilt induced by all the adverts for the right toothbrush.



Queuing for the bathroom! When a whole family is getting ready in the morning, it can be frustrating to say the least!



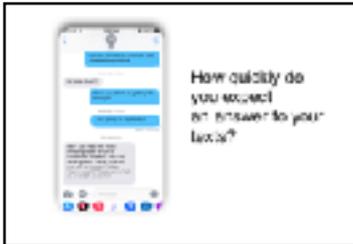
The Airport or the train station and electronic timetables. You cannot be relaxed with the constant 'flip' of updating electronic times! They just give me a sore neck and a sense of panic.



And roadworks on bank holidays. Don't get me started on those miles of 50 mph signs and orange cones and NO machinery or workmen in sight.



And now we have to wait for Christmas. The local supermarkets have already cleared away the Halloween stuff and stocked their shelves with Christmas food and household 'must-haves'. I'll bet you've already heard Christmas music in the background. WE'VE GOT A WHOLE MONTH OF THIS!!! A whole month ridiculously full of activities. And we call it *waiting for Christmas*?



We live in an instant culture – everything now. From (almost) instant food to instant communications and song downloads, we expect things to happen fast. For example: when you send a text message, how quickly do you expect to get an answer? Especially when you know the message has been read! Why can't we just download Christmas and get it over with?

Modern life seems to be a major rush towards the future. So I want to press PAUSE and give you some really helpful advice about waiting.



First, time isn't a vacuum. **What we are waiting for is not always as important as what happens to us while we are waiting.**

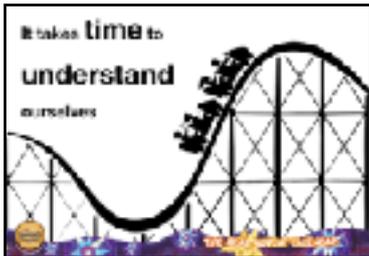
Some of us will be clear about our life goals. We are already focused and certain about life's journey but lots of us, maybe most of us, don't know what we are or want to do in life.



Second. **It takes time to know what's important in your life.** We all get caught up in activities and opportunities but time is like a filter or a sieve. Time filters out the things that are temporary – they naturally get left behind because we can't do everything.



**It takes time to do life well.** That's No 3. Just be patient and work away at what is in front of you, however boring it might be. Perseverance develops lots of muscles – not just physical but emotional and spiritual. Time and development go together. The slog, if you face up to it, makes you stronger to get through hard stuff in the future.



No 4 is **It takes time to understand ourselves.** Don't be fooled into thinking that the answers lie in the big things that happen in life. They define us by the way we react but the highs and lows are nowhere near as valuable as the character forming slog of life in-between.



No 5 **Waiting is a friend, not an enemy.** When you struggle for something it makes you a better person. You are able to see beyond yourself and understand other's battles and sympathise with them.



No 6 – **Waiting shouldn't be about what you are missing out on.** Our culture has this habit of looking at what we haven't got and saying 'life would be alright if I... had a boyfriend/girlfriend, or had a job, was good at maths, had more money, etc. **Don't waste time on the 'if only's'.** Look at what you have and treat it as an opportunity.

I've been challenged to think about the month *leading up* to Christmas. Christians have a special name for this Season (it's called ADVENT) and it's the countdown to Jesus' coming. I guess many of us will have Advent Calendars but I wonder if we've actually realised that it's not just a foretaste of Christmas but something much more meaningful. And I would challenge you to think about it.

The crazy thing is that Boxing Day comes and it's as though the month of December didn't actually happen. We say we're preparing for Christmas but do we spend the pre-Christmas month of Advent thinking more about ourselves than anyone else? Have we looked beyond ourselves and sympathised with those who are ill or lonely, our parents or even our teachers who are working hard to teach despite the growing pressure and excitement? Have we spent each day thinking a little about the story at the heart of Christmas and how Jesus came to share God's love? Have we made an effort to be more loving and charitable ourselves as Christmas approaches?



**The beauty of Advent is the wait. It's a reflective place where you meet the Jesus of Christmas and are invited to participate in the mystery of His birth.**

With that in mind, I want to challenge us all, me included. I have made my own Christmas countdown which I'm going to share with you. It's a personal challenge to give time to those who dread Christmas, give time to those who are ill and lonely, and to be reminded of the Christmas Story and to tell others about it. I would love to hear that you've made it your own or have thought up something completely different and I would love to hear any stories as a result.



So here it is – your own personal 24-day Mission to read the Christmas story, pray for those in need, do good to those around you. I'm hoping that you will transform this month by



taking up the challenge and giving others joy, hope and justice. Enjoy!

