

John 1:(1-9),10-18

A promise made real

We hear again the famous prologue to John's Gospel. Jesus is the Word by whom God created the world in the beginning. He existed before John the Baptist, whose role is to point towards Jesus, the Word made flesh, as the true light.



Bible notes



The wonderful passage at the beginning of John sets the scene for the rest of his Gospel. It is commonly called the 'prologue of John' because it functions similarly to the opening scenes in a play, outlining the key players and the unseen forces and powers. The setting is the whole of creation, rather than the geographical location that Jesus takes up in his ministry on earth. The passage points to the creator God, who, in the second person of the Trinity causes the earth to exist and sustains it – 'in the beginning' is a deliberate reference to Genesis 1:1. The theme of John's Gospel is guiding people to see the God of the beginning of creation as the same God who became human and walked among them. There is also a spiritual element that is set up in verse 5 when the light overcomes the darkness. This is not only the darkness in the void before creation but also other elements that, as the rest of the Gospel declares, will be overcome by Jesus Christ. Then there is a dramatic shift (v.6) from the whole of creation to a particular person, God's messenger, John. Like Moses and the prophets, John points towards God's presence, appearing in flesh and blood on earth and not just in the spiritual realms. Not all will recognise this, however (vv.10-11).

First impressions

- What's the biggest promise you've ever made? Did you fulfil it?
- Why do we sometimes find it hard to keep promises?
- At the start of a new year, what promises from God do you want to hold tight to?



MAKE

Make a paper lantern (search the internet for instructions). Around the rim, write: 'The true light gives light to everyone'. Hang it in your window to replace your Christmas decorations. Imagine it sending beams of blessing into your neighbourhood, and pray that the blessings promised in this week's Gospel reading may become real for your neighbours and for you.

WATCH

Watch the lantern scene from *Tangled* as Flynn and Rapunzel discover light shining in the darkness. How does Jesus' light shine in your life?

DRAW

'Bless your home with an Epiphany House Blessing. Chalk the blessing for this year which is 20+C+M+B+25. As you chalk this blessing, say together, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'.

Pray



Lord Jesus, at this time of year, we think of people living in dark, difficult situations. We pray for your light to shine where people feel all alone, let your light shine on people who feel little hope. We pray for someone we know who is sad and missing somebody. Amen.

Write

Did you receive any gift Christmas vouchers? Have you used them yet? They have to be cashed in or activated in some way, otherwise we don't experience the benefit of the gift. In the same way, the beginning of John's Gospel promises us several blessings we can receive, thanks to Jesus coming into our world: 'Light', becoming 'Children of God', 'Grace', 'Truth', 'Knowing God'. Which of these are you excited about 'activating' in your life? Take a piece of card and design a gift voucher for this blessing. Now think about what you would have to do to activate this blessing and make it real.