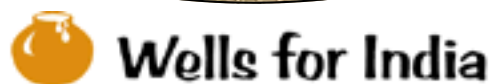


# Advent 2007

## Family life in Rajasthan



Bringing water and dignity to the poorest people of rural Rajasthan

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## Advent 2007

### Family Life in Rajasthan

*Rajasthan is roughly the same size as the United Kingdom and has a population of 60 million. 15 million people in Rajasthan live below the \$1 US a day poverty line.*

*In 2007 **Wells for India** are celebrating 20 years of working in Rajasthan. In this time we have worked in 673 villages, benefiting 939,000 people. However we still have a long way to go to realize our dream of reaching all the remotest communities, with the most basic of life's necessities, water.*

*The Advent material links the weekly Advent themes with the lives of some of those families in Rajasthan. The material uses information from Om Prakash our Programme Manager in India. Over 17 years Om has developed a vital and effective link with the villages where we work through our partners. The stories about people and the villages are taken from Om's reports and from the visit that a group from the UK made in January 07.*

*God's Son was born into a family living in a rural village in an occupied country. Jesus grew up surrounded by poverty, injustice and hardship. His first hand experiences influenced his message and his ministry.*

#### **The four Advent themes are:**

1. Men faced with migration - Psalm 122 v. 1, 8 and 9
2. The role of mothers - Psalm 72 v. 6 and 7
3. Embracing the vulnerable - Psalm 146 v. 8 and 9
4. Light for the future - Psalm 80 v. 5,6 and 8



## Advent 1 Year A

**Theme:** Migration

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 122 v. 1, 8 and 9

*I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to God's house'*

*For my family and companions sake, I pray for your prosperity. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do you good.*

### Reflection:

*Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do you good.*

- Drought is cruel .....drought makes people and livestock thirsty.....drought parches the land.....drought strangles the crops.....drought starves the livestock.....
- For Ambalal, a young man of 30, there was only one way forward in order for his family to survive the drought.....he would have to migrate to work in the mines, leaving his family behind in the village..... The separation might be for months, or even years.
- Separation for survival....deprived of the love of his family.....denied the opportunity to watch his children laugh and play ..forced to labour as an economic refugee at the bidding of his hard employer.
- Ambalal is one of many who are forced to migrate from villages in Rajasthan in times of drought.
- Back home in his village a life-line was thrown to his family....his well was improved..water harvesting structures were built on his land.....a reliable source of water was secured.....
- Ambalal's family life and his farm regenerated.....he no longer depends on migration for work.
- Ambalal can watch his children grow to adults and his crops and livestock flourish....

*For my family and companions sake, I pray for your prosperity.*

### PRAYER CARD:

*photocopy for distribution*

### Prayer

At the lighting of the first candle of Advent.

#### Advent 1

*We pray for those who are separated from their loved ones by war, poverty or natural disaster. May those who are lonely away from home feel the strength of your presence, and those who stay behind courage and serenity, until the day comes when they are reunited.*

*Amen*



**Wells for India**

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### Leaving home to find work

Seasonal migration has always been part of Rajasthan life, but this is increasing as most able-bodied men depart for the local towns seeking work when the agriculture fails.

This leaves women to keep village life going and to care for the sick and elderly.

In Rajasthan 67% of households have migrant workers.

In Malawari village following a project done by Wells for India through our partners RBKS the rate of migration fell from 85% to 10%.

In the Thar Desert we met some women who were suffering. The men were away, and a teenage boy had died from a fever. The women said 'There are no men here to bury the boy, the funeral cannot take place'.

## Advent mobile

### Leader's notes:

- Photocopy the village hut outline on to white card - a copy for each child
- Each child can cut around the outline of the hut - DO NOT CUT OUT THE DOORWAY!
- Make a hole at the top of the roof for thread to hang the mobile. Insert thread and make a loop for hanging.
- Decorate the roof with PVA glue + straw to give the appearance of thatch.
- Paint or colour the walls brown to give the appearance of mud, or white with decorations
- Make 4 holes along the bottom at marked positions for the water pots, *matkas*, to be hung by threads.
- Photocopy the sheet of water pots etc. 1 for each child on white card.
- Each week a *matka* can be decorated and added to the mobile by thread through the hole.
- Suggested decorations for the water pots:

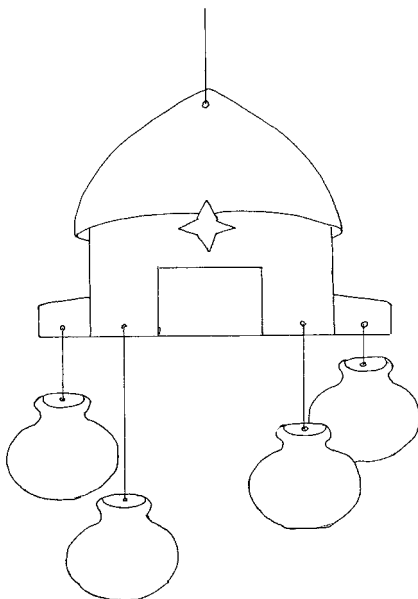
Week 1: A picture of their own family

Week 2: A picture of rain and a well

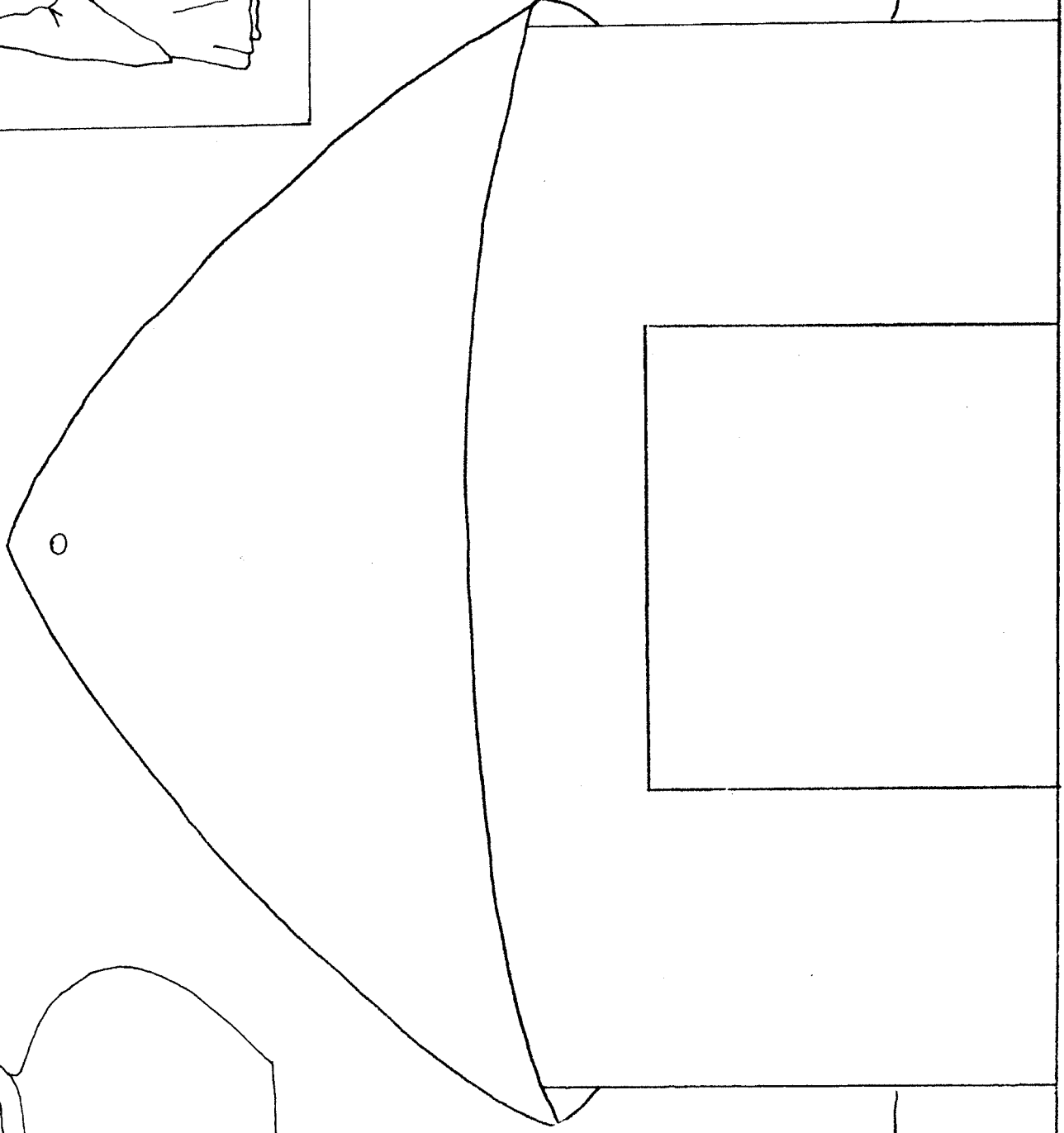
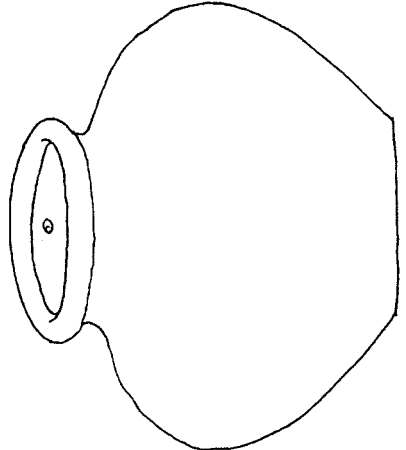
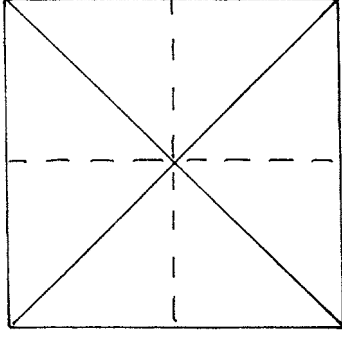
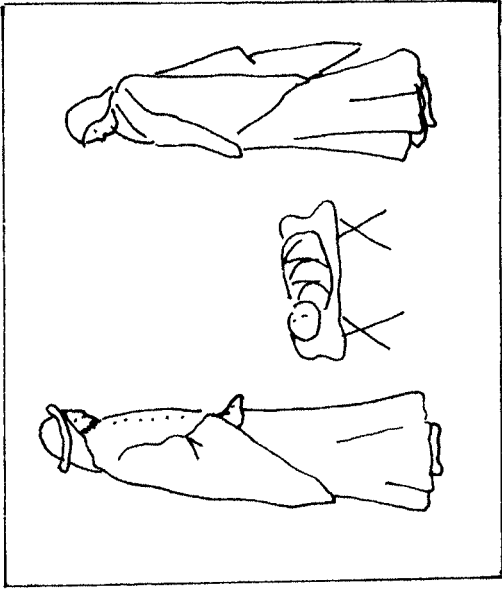
Week 3: A picture of bangles and jewellery, or rangoli patterns

Week 4: A picture of a heart or a candle

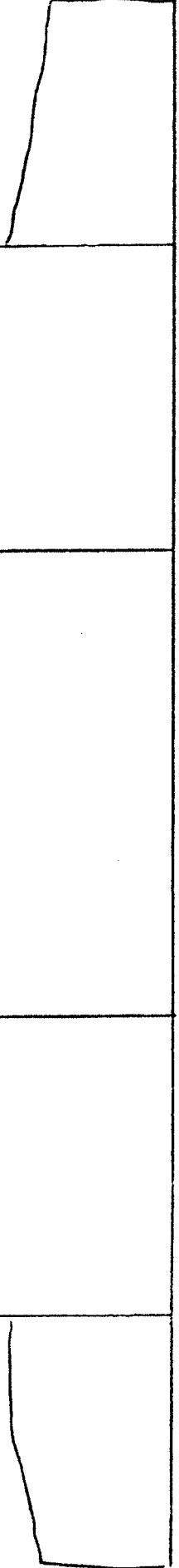
- In week 3 make the 3D star. Cut out the star outline. Score and fold along the dotted lines. Decorate with glitter pens.
- In week 4 colour the picture of the Nativity, cut it out and stick in the doorway of the hut and stick the star on the roof.



# ADVENT MOBILE

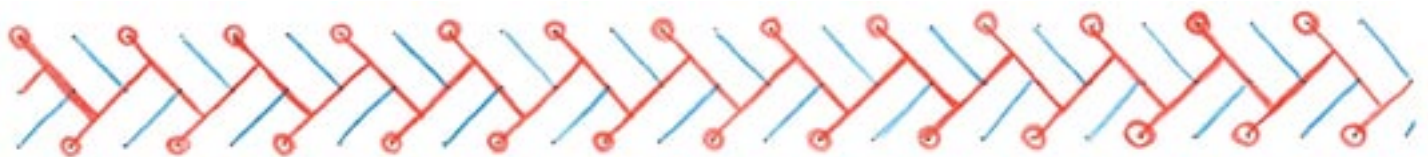
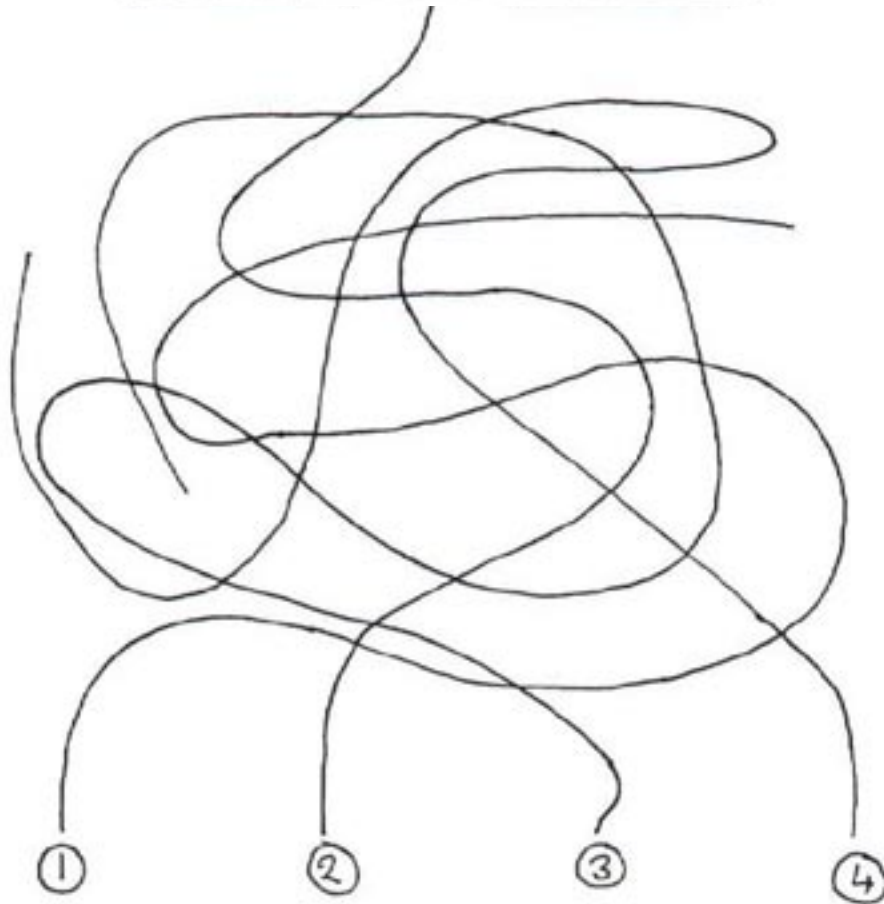
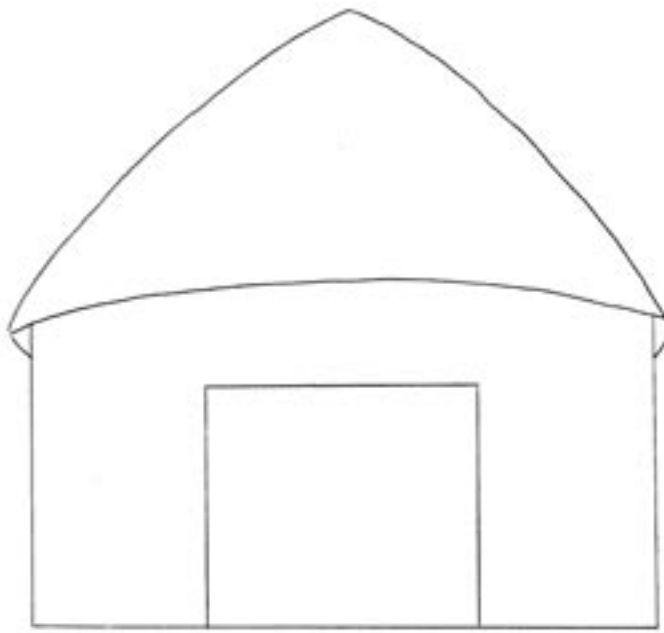


- Photocopy:**  
1 star  
1 hut  
1 nativity  
4 pots for each child



# Can you help Amabalal find his way home?

How about drawing his family who are waiting for him, and colouring in his house too, to welcome him.



## Advent 2 Year A

**Theme:** The Mother's Role

**Bible reading:** Psalm 72 v. 6 and 7

*God shall come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth. In his time righteousness shall flourish, and peace till the moon shall be no more.*

### Reflection:

- The mother....the daily provider of water ....responsible for the well-being of her family.....the carer and support for those dependent on her.....part of a cycle of suffering shared by women and girl children in rural villages in Rajasthan.....enduring a life of constant struggle ....
- Diwaliben lives in Takari Village with her husband and family.
- The well on their land was inadequate in the dry season....there was too little drinking water for her family.....Diwaliben's valuable energy and time was spent walking several times a day, in the heat, to collect water for her family..... hard labour....hard, dry ground.....a hard life.
- Fodder for her cattle dried up....Diwaliben had to buy grass to keep them alive.....less money for her family....she would have to manage .....prices rise in dry season when food is short....
- Diwaliben's well was deepened....drinking water was in excess for her family....she could grow fodder for her cattle....Diwaliben's quality of family life improved....
- She has more time to spend with her children.....freed from their chores, her children can attend school..... She has more energy to look after the family, her home and her animals....

### Women in Rajasthan

As women in the Thar Desert go to sleep at night they suffer from the haunting mental anxiety 'Will my family have water to drink tomorrow?'

The State Government Report of 1999 stated: 'Patriarchy, discriminatory customs and values, caste-based discrimination, high illiteracy and high rates of poverty seem pervasive. (Despite all efforts towards social justice) women....continue to be perceived as burdens.'

On average women walk 5-8kms a day to fetch water for their families. This is time consuming and draining of energy. 80% of women of child bearing age suffer from anaemia, and the maternal death rate is amongst the highest in the world.

Women and girl children are caught in a cycle of malnutrition and second class status. Rajasthan has one of the lowest rates for female literacy in India. In rural areas where Wells for India works we can usually say the literacy rate is nil among women.

### PRAYER CARD:

*photocopy for distribution*

**Prayer** At the lighting of the second candle of Advent

### Advent 2

*We pray for families throughout the world who suffer from a shortage of water. We give thanks for those who work to bring water and dignity to the lives of those who have none. We ask you to give courage particularly to women who face a daily burden of drudgery and haunting anxiety. Amen*



**Wells for India**

Bringing water and dignity  
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## Word Challenge

- For children aged 7+. Arrange the children into teams.
- Photocopy the 'WELLS FOR INDIA' letter tiles below.
- Give each team a set of letter tiles, pencils, paper and scissors to cut out letter tiles.
- Have a clock handy to time the sessions of 5-10 minutes

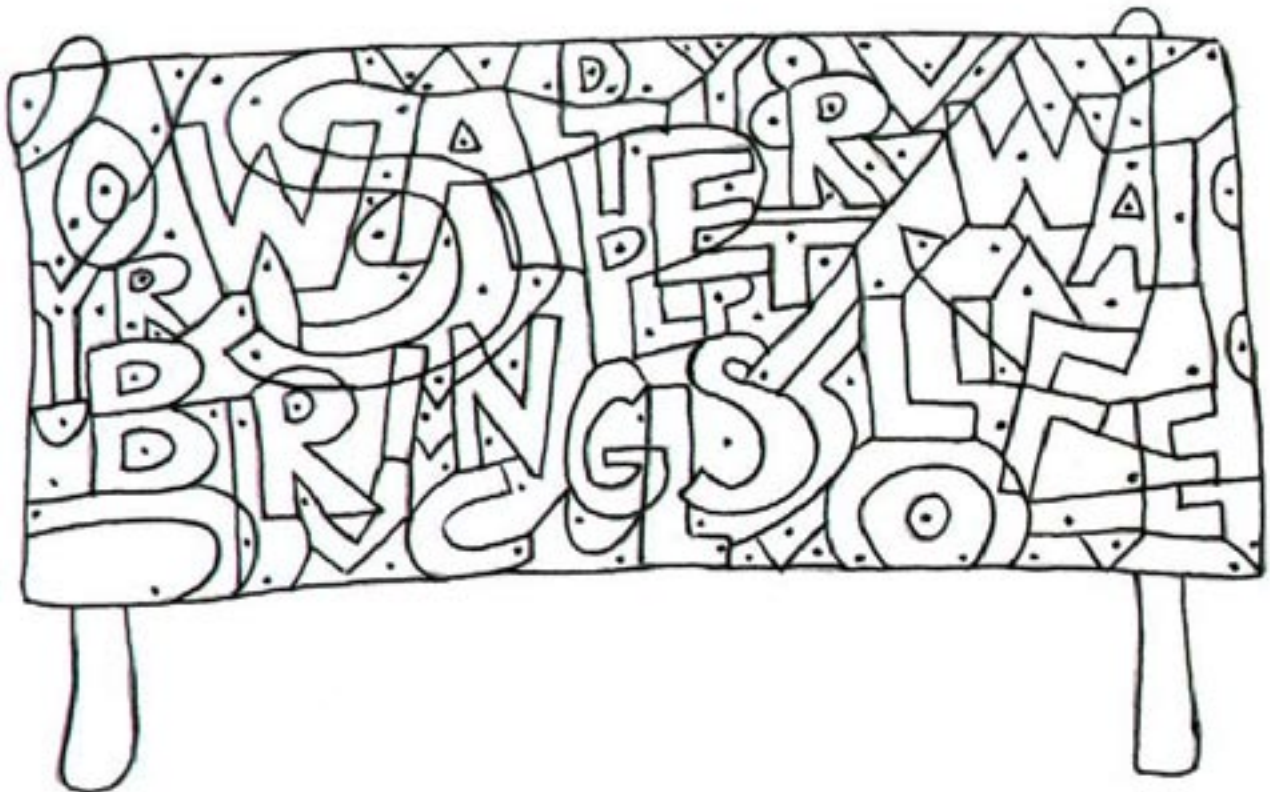
### Aim:

- To make as many words of 3 letters or more using the letter tiles. Each tile can only be used once. Start with all words beginning with 'S'. Move on to words that start with 'W' 'D' and 'F', try 'L' and 'R' (more difficult!) No names with capital letters.
- Words must be written down for checking
- Winning team has most words!

W	E	L	L	S	F	O	R
	I	N	D	I	A		

## Hidden Message!

Colour in all the dotted shapes below, to reveal something important.



## Advent 3 Year A

**Theme:** Embracing the Vulnerable

**Bible reading:** Psalm 146 v 8 and 9

*The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for strangers; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked. Come, Lord and save us.*

### Reflection:

- Widows and orphans in rural Rajasthan.....left without husbands and fathers....left without social status... left to exist on the fringe of society.
- Stripped of her ornaments, her jewellery and her dignity a widow is discarded with her children....an outcast....unwelcome at village celebrations and even at family festivities...
- The plight of widows and orphans highlights the problems of women in the rural communities... they are vulnerable....they are disempowered by the men.....they are ignored in decision- making....their voices are silent...

*Come, Lord and save us.*

- Salvation for widows, orphans and women has come through Self Help Groups in communities....women's voices have been heard....as a group they are empowered to make decisions in projects that will improve the quality of their lives...
- Women's involvement in the management and conservation of water resources means that lives and livelihoods are saved in communities...
- Dignity is restored in the lives of widows, orphans and women.

### PRAYER CARD:

*photocopy for distribution*

**Prayer** At the lighting of the third candle of Advent

#### Advent 3

*We pray for the vulnerable throughout the world, particularly for the plight of widows and orphans, and for all who live on the edges of society, both here and in Rajasthan. May your light shine in the hearts of communities so that a welcoming spirit is present.*

*Amen*



*A woman grieves in Nimbala village*



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### How can we reach out to the vulnerable?

Child marriage and *sati* are age-old customs in Rajasthan, although now illegal. The situation of widows is serious as they are frequently considered to bring bad luck, and not invited to family feasts or weddings.

We met Teeja Devi, who has 3 sons and 2 daughters. Her husband Goparam is physically disabled, and so is unable to cultivate the small area of land that he owns.

Wells for India became involved and through our partners GRAVIS, a field bund was built. When even the small amount of rain fell, the soil retained the moisture, and crops were grown.

Advent 3

Can you crack the code and decipher the message?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
J	U	S	B	R	D	K	C	V	Q	W	E	M

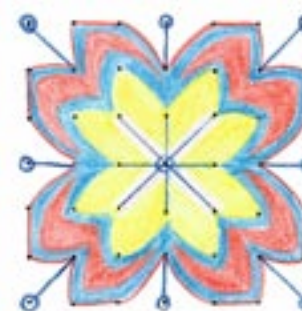
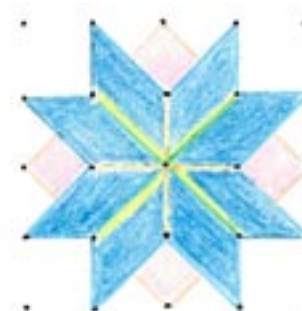
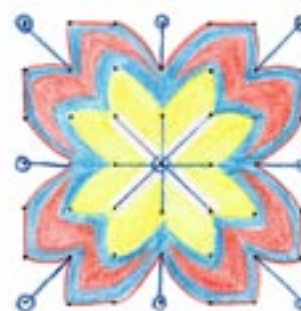
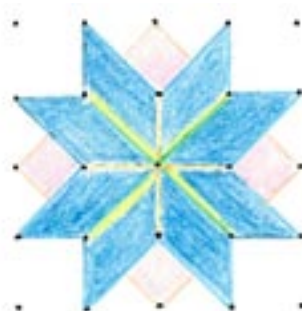
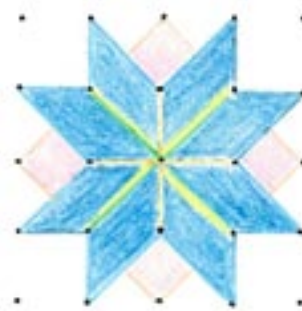
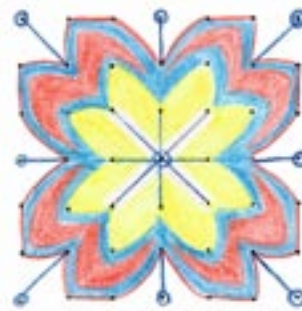
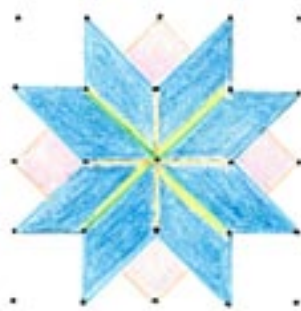
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F	L	A	T	I	N	Y	H	O	X	G	P	Z

8 22 13 12 , 15 22 5 6

- - - - , - - - -

16 19 6 3 16 9 12 2 3

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## Advent 4 Year A

**Theme:** A hope for equality

**Bible reading:** Psalm 80 v. 5,6 and 8

*O Lord of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayer of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.*

**Prayer:** At the lighting of the fourth candle of Advent

### Reflection

- Tribal families in rural Rajasthan live outside the caste system of India....they have no status....they are the untouchables ....they are despised.....they are impoverished, forgotten and shunned....they are remote, being isolated both geographically and culturally.
- Indian society does not recognise them....they are not included in government statistics...they do not 'exist'....they have little, if any, education for their children....they have little, if any, health care provision...
- The tribal families are a people that have been fed '*with the bread of tears*'; they have been given '*bowls of tears to drink*'.....

*Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.*

- The tribal families are the focus for the work of **Wells for India** supporting its partner organisations in rural Rajasthan....
- Working together, the aim is to achieve equality in family life and society, bringing water and dignity to the poorest communities.

### Advent 4

*We pray for those who live in remote places, and for those for whom opportunity and hope are rare. We pray for the coming of your peace and joy into all the most distant places of your world, in the coming of your Son. Amen*



**Wells for India**  
Bringing water and dignity  
to the poorest people of rural Rajasthan

### Tribal people

In the Jhadol area of the Aravali Hills where Wells for India works the population is over 90% tribal. These people used to make a living from the extensive forest but over the years there has been severe deforestation. The forest now covers a mere 10% of the land.

The villagers of Parevi have suffered from unpredictable rainfall, poor soil quality and lack of livelihood skills. In effect they have been trapped in their poverty. With a new project beginning the people have hope: with water harvesting measures in place and with training in livestock and horticulture skills, there is way forward. With education their children will have a future and be able to take their place in society.



Show us  
your light,  
O Lord



PSALM  
27

Decorate this bookmark  
with your own patterns and  
colours, or make your own!



The women of the desert wear colourful  
clothing.

Colour this woman's sari in bright colours. You  
could give her more bangles on her arms.