

CHAPTER 2:

PROPHECY AND PROMISE

Knowledge organiser

Key vocabulary	
prophet	A person anointed by God and inspired by God through the Holy Spirit to share God’s messages.
priest	A person anointed by God to make thanksgiving offerings on behalf of the people; today, it also refers to an ordained minister of the Catholic Church, who celebrates the sacraments in which all Catholics participate.
king	An anointed person who has authority, power and responsibility for people in their care; also a ruler of a country.
messianic	Relating to the Messiah.
Advent	The first season in the liturgical year, in which Christians prepare and wait for both the birth of Jesus and the Second Coming of Christ.
Amos	An early Hebrew prophet who called people back to God and warned of divine judgement on people who sinned.
Elijah	An Old Testament prophet who foretells the coming of the Messiah in the books 1 Kings and 2 Kings.
John the Baptist	A New Testament prophet who prophesied and prepared the way for Jesus as the Messiah; also the cousin of Jesus.

OPTIONS	
Ethical	Superstition is when a person places faith in magic or luck in the belief that they can influence or control events. It has existed for thousands of years and can be found all over the world. The Catholic Church teaches that superstition takes Christians away from God and directs their faith towards false ‘powers’.
Artistic expression	Christmas carols are hymns on the theme of Christmas. The lyrics of many carols are connected to prophecies in the Old Testament and are sung as a way of preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ. ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel’ is an example of this.
Lived religion	St Óscar Romero was a priest from El Salvador who spoke out against the military dictatorship and violence in the country. He preached sermons about the preferential love for the poor, which gave people hope. His prophetic voice inspires Christians today to speak out against injustice.

What are prophetic texts?

Prophets are called by God to be **God’s spokespeople on earth**. They are **inspired by the Holy Spirit** to share **God’s warnings, encouragements or predictions** with people.

- Prophetic texts all follow the same pattern: **call, message and fulfilment**.
- They have **many different themes**, for example Amos gives warnings to people from God while Jeremiah focuses on social justice. **Jeremiah** was called by God to try to convince people to end the corrupt practices happening in Israel at the time.
- Some prophetic texts use **images and parables** to help people understand God’s messages. Amos uses the image of a **plumb line** to show the standard of living that God wants people to follow.
- Some prophetic texts are **messianic**: they explain what the Messiah will be like and what he will do. An example is Isaiah predicting the coming of a ‘**suffering servant**’.
- Christians believe these predictions in the Old Testament are **fulfilled in the New Testament**, showing that God’s promises are kept. Christians believe Isaiah’s prediction of the suffering servant was fulfilled in Jesus.
- Some prophetic texts connect to Advent and the **Advent wreath**, which is a devotion used to wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus and the Second Coming of Christ.



The prophet Amos

Amos was a Hebrew prophet who was called by God in a vision. He:

- Called for people to **repent their sinful ways** by hating evil and turning to righteousness.
- Called for wealthy people to **care for those in poverty**, or risk punishment from God.
- Criticised **external religion**, as people were taking part in religious ceremonies but not acting in a loving and compassionate way.
- Warned people that **God was unhappy** with the way they were living, to try to help them understand that what they were doing was damaging their relationship with God.
- Shared God’s **promise** that people who follow God will be rewarded and enjoy God’s forgiveness and blessings.
- Talked about God’s **remnant**: the faithful few who do as God wants. God wants to build a relationship with this remnant as they are God’s chosen people.
- Showed God to be a **judge of all nations** who will fairly judge everyone on their actions.



The prophet John the Baptist

- John the Baptist is a New Testament prophet who shares the **same pattern of call, message, and fulfilment** that the Old Testament prophets did.
- He is connected to the prophet Elijah, who begins the **cycle of prophecy** that John concludes.
- John is **called from the moment of his conception**, and his father is told that he will **prepare people for the coming of the Messiah**.
- Christians believe his **message is fulfilled in Jesus**, whom John baptises in the River Jordan.

How lay people are called to be witnesses of Christ

Christians believe that Jesus carries out the roles of **priest, prophet and king**. Christians believe they too are called to be priest, prophet, and king through Baptism.

- Christians are called to be **priests** by participating in the sacraments, showing devotion to God and supporting others to do the same.
- Christians are called to be **prophets** by helping others to come to know God.
- Christians are called to be **kings** by acting as Jesus would and leading by example.

