

The Next Messenger

Among some Buddhists, the expectation that Maitreya, the Buddha to come, will be born leads to excited hopefulness: perhaps world peace will come, perhaps enlightenment will dawn for all those who walk the path.

In Hindu traditions, the tenth Avatar or appearance of Vishnu is yet to come. When the earth is needy and the time is right, the tenth avatar will appear.

In Christianity, some believers expect the return of Jesus to establish his kingdom on earth, where justice and salvation build a new Jerusalem with neither hate nor tears.

Jewish hopes for a Messiah to come and spread the healing of the nations from the leaves of the tree of life are built in to the way Jews see the world.

Speculate:

Choose eight of these 20 prompts and complete them from your own imagination or ideas.

If God sent a messenger to the earth for the start of the 21st century, I think ...

- She would be...
- She would say...
- She would approve of...
- She wouldn't like...
- She would need to prove herself by...
- She would show us...
- She would ask us...
- She wouldn't stand for...
- She would show what God is like by...
- She would use the internet to...
- She would make us all feel...
- She would teach us that...
- She would be different from all the previous messengers because...
- She wouldn't care about...
- She would be pleased to see...
- She would go to visit...
- She would be treated badly by...
- She would be hated because...
- She wouldn't have a chance because...
- The world might rejoice because...

STORY: Write one of your own, starting like this (or create your own story)

"I'm not a religious person, but the story I'm going to tell you is very spiritual. Just imagine for one minute what you would think if someone told you that God was sending a messenger to earth for the 21st century. You might laugh, or think they were mad. Well, let me tell you what has been happening to me..."

To Discuss:

- What did you notice about the different religions and their ideas about the future?
- Would God send a man, or a woman to earth today as a messenger? Why?
- If you believe there's no God, where do you think humans can get messages for a better world from?
- Is it likely that there will be a new religion in the world this century? Why / why not? What would it be like?
- In your own hopes for the future, what makes you confident? What makes you fearful? Make some lists, and compare ideas with a classmate.

God's next messenger

She would judge anyone who is unfair
She would be peaceful and listen to us
She would stop war

She would be amazing because she would do miracles
She would like to find love in the world and not liars
She would be sent by the Lord to tell us something

She would be pleased to see NSPCC and Shelter
She would be pleased to see good people who love each other
She would be pleased to find kindness

She would get a TV show, and a column in the newspaper
She would go on telly to tell the world to be friends
She would use the internet to get the word across

She would specially care for anyone who's being bullied, eg by dinner ladies
She would care for anyone who is left out
She would go on telly to tell people what it's like to be God's messenger

She would make some people cross, those who think God is just a slang word: they would not believe in her
She would stop some people doing things they want that hurt others
God's messenger would be welcome:
She would fill the world with love.

This is a collection of ideas from a group of Year 5/6 pupils who tried the 'Next Messiah' activity, writing up all their best ideas into one version. As well as being an interesting speculation, it is a kind of expression of the class's spiritual values.