

The Useful Application of Advent

John and Michelle are Advertising and Marketing students at university, and have to do a joint presentation in front of examiners for one of the modules. John walks hesitantly on to stage, looking over his shoulder. They are late starting, and Michelle still isn't there.

John: *(apologising to audience)* I'm sure she'll be here any minute...

(Michelle rushes on to stage, John goes over to her, they "whisper" urgently to one-another)

Michelle: *(to John, but loud enough for all to hear)* I'm so sorry, I couldn't get here any sooner, my train was late, and I've only just got the email with your notes for today, and I've not had a moment to look them

John: Have you done the slides?

Michelle: I thought you were doing them! We'll just have to pull this together the best we can...

(both step forward to the front of the stage)

John: *(addressing the audience)* Hello. For our Marketing Presentation exam we have chosen to promote Advent.

Michelle: Yes, we've done our market research and would like to share with you the core themes and values of Advent and how these can be used in the run-up to Christmas to promote this holiday season...You won't be surprised to hear that the number one key component of Advent is...

(said in unison)

Michelle: Chocolate

John: Jesus

Michelle and John: *(looking at each other, horrified at this difference in approach)* What??!

(pulling themselves together and carrying on as best they can)

Michelle: The word "Advent" means...

(said in unison)

Michelle: "Advertising Event"

John: "the arrival"

Michelle: Er, yes, "the arrival" of great marketing and advertising opportunities...

John: In the first week we will focus on love...

Michelle: ...of chocolate, which is the most popular form of confectionary in Britain. The British Chocolate market was worth £2.23billion last year (2008).

John: ...showing just how much God loves us. And it is because of this that we can have hope...

Michelle: ...that the sale of Advent Calendars will keep increasing, as people enjoy opening a new window each day to reveal...

John: ...Jesus, the light of the world...

Michelle: ...or perhaps Zac Efron from High School Musical, hidden behind a milk chocolate square... here on this chart we can look at some statistics...

(puts a chart up on the screen using the PowerPoint remote control)

Michelle: As you can see, this shows the increase of chocolate sales during the Christmas festive season

(John takes remote away from Michelle and clicks on to next chart)

John: And this chart shows the increased levels of peace of mind and contentment as people focus on the coming of Jesus and the hope and joy this brings...

Michelle: ...the joy of knowing that Advent means increased chocolate sales are guaranteed...

John: ...and that when that last window is opened on the 25th, we can celebrate the arrival of Jesus...

Michelle: ...and an excess amount of food in every home, including yet more chocolate, as between 35 and 40% of a whole year's worth of chocolate sales occur in one concentrated period over Christmas (*Cadbury 2006*).

John: *(clicks on remote to another PowerPoint slide)* So as you can see, the four Sunday's of Advent –love, hope, light, and joy, all lead to one thing...

Michelle: No!

(John goes to click to another PowerPoint slide, Michelle tries to take remote control away from John, they fight over it, and end up breaking it – this is a prop moment – the real remote needs to end up safely in someone's pocket, while some ready-broken plastic gets thrown on the floor)

Michelle: We hope you have enjoyed our presentation and can go away from here today with a clear understanding of the useful application and meaning of Advent

(either whoever still has the real remote needs to subtly click to final slide, or train someone on the computer to do this at the right time... final PowerPoint slide triumphantly reads Jesus! With sound effect of "Ta da!" and a picture of a nativity scene. Michelle sees this and slumps in dismay, sighing)