



Diocese of Bristol

Families growing faith at home

Church@Home is a fantastic all-age resource that has been created to encourage and help families enjoy a time of worship, explore the Bible, pray together and grow in their faith in the comfort of their own homes.

Church@Home provides a fun, engaging and easy-to-follow session every Sunday using a Bible reading selected from the Church of England Lectionary. Each session lasts approximately twenty minutes and provides age-related material for toddlers to teenagers to accommodate everyone in the family. Thought-provoking questions, fun activities and crafts bring the Bible story to life as well as creative prayer ideas to help families focus, learn and grow in their faith together. Additional teaching and craft suggestions are also provided for families with very young children.

Church@Home can also be used as a fun way to help families connect with other families on Sunday mornings too during this time of distancing. Invite everyone to begin **Church@Home** at the same time and perhaps set up a WhatsApp group where families can share what they have done, or discuss the topic further together.

If your family or families in your church are using **Church@Home** please let us know. We would like to keep in contact, find out how you are doing as well as hear how **Church@Home** is helping families grow in their faith, so that we can share and inspire others during this time of distancing.

daniel.jones@bristoldiocese.org

Thank you 



Sunday 20 December 2020
4th Sunday of Advent

Holy gift Luke 1: 26-38

Time to focus...

Find a place where the family can all sit comfortably - around the table, on the lounge floor etc. As you gather, if possible, light a candle to mark the beginning of your worship time. Quietly stare at the candle, watching the flames flicker and glow.

Set the scene...

Advent is the season when Christians all over the world prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ - Christmas! Churches traditionally light candles on an Advent wreath at the beginning of worship during Advent. There are five candles on an Advent wreath and today is the fourth Sunday in Advent. Each candle represent a different theme from the Nativity story and the fourth candle symbolises Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Watch the story...

Enjoy this funny retelling of the [Nativity](#) told by children and acted out by adults.

Explore the story...

How would you describe an announcement? An announcement is sharing an important message isn't it? For example, Mum or Dad announcing that dinner is ready, sometimes big adverts announce a special product or a sign telling you about a special sale. Or the Prime Minister making an announcement about something important on television - we've heard a lot of them recently haven't we?

In the Bible reading today, a very important announcement is given. One of God's angels visits a little town in Nazareth and tells a young woman, Mary, that she will give birth to a son. The angel told Mary about her special baby and that she would be blessed and that the Lord was with her. Mary named her baby Jesus, which means, Immanuel (God with us). The angel visiting Mary happened a very long ago and yet Christians still celebrate the birth of Jesus today. Why? Jesus was no ordinary baby. Jesus grew up to show the world how to love God and each other, but God also sent His one and only son to rescue us and restore our relationships with Him:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life - **John 3:16**

This year when you look at your Christmas tree, or opening your presents, remember that long ago an angel announced to Mary that her baby would be special, a very special 'holy gift' and that he would be known forever as Jesus, the saviour of the world.

End with a prayer...

Heavenly Father, we thank you for Christmas and that we remember and celebrate the birth of your one and only Son. Help us to show your love for others as you show love for us every single day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Sunday 20 December 2020
4th Sunday of Advent

Holy gift

Creative ideas / toddlers to teenagers

0-5s...

Worship: It's almost Christmas! "[What a glorious night](#)"

Craft activity: This simple festive craft can be displayed in a window or tree during Christmas. Find a simple star template online (examples [here](#)) and cut out enough stars for everyone in the household. Invite everyone to write one-line prayers of thanks on one side. Decorate the other side of the prayer stars with colour, glitter etc. punch a hole in the top of each one and attach a piece of thread so that they can be hung on the Christmas tree or in a window - thread them together so that they go across the window.

5-11s...

Worship: Praise God because it is "[Feelin' like Christmas](#)"

Craft activity: check out the 0-5s above for a great activity that is great fun for a wide range of ages.

Bible Chat Mat: For fun exploring the true meaning of Christmas together, click on this [link](#) for a fantastic colouring-in sheet from 'Bath & Wells Diocese'.

Creative prayer: On the next page is another great festive prayer idea that uses a nativity scene >>>



11-18s...



1) What news have you received that you found really hard to believe?

2) Why do you think God used an angel to tell Mary and not a human?

3) Is there anything in this reading that you find extra-ordinary?



Ask God to help you when you struggle to believe in him..



Be more open to God speaking to you in extra-ordinary ways.

"For nothing will be impossible with God" - Luke 1:37

Nativity Prayer

For this prayer you will need a nativity scene - it works best with 3D figurines but if you do not have any, this link to a [paper Nativity](#) the you can print and colour in will also work well. You will need: A stable, Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, animals, wise men and baby Jesus.

Place the pieces of a 3D nativity scene randomly in the middle of your family and remind them that each piece plays a special part in the Christmas story. Each piece can also remind us of things to pray for today. As each piece of the nativity story is taken up to a table/shelf to create the Nativity it will offer a focus for you to pray (bring them up in this order).

- **The Stable:** Thank God for our homes and where we live. Pray for the homeless and those in need.
- **Mary & Joseph:** Thank God for parents, carers and those who look after us, pray for those who don't have parents or have lost them recently.
- **Angels:** Thank God for the angels who brought messages to help show the way to the baby Jesus. Pray for all those who help us to meet Jesus like parents, grandparents, the vicar, children's group leaders and teachers.
- **Shepherds:** Thank God for all those who look after animals and the land like farmers. Pray for farmers in other countries where farming is hard.
- **Animals:** Thank God for all animals, especially our pets and the joy they bring us.
- **Wise Men:** Thank God for the wise men who brought gifts to Jesus to help us understand who he was. Pray for all those who help us to learn and understand things especially teachers and people in education.
- **Baby Jesus:** Thank God for the special birth of Jesus, his life, his stories, teaching, miracles, his sacrifice and for helping us to know God more.

