



# GENEROSITY IN CREATIVE PRAYER: ADVENT

A COLLECTION OF  
GENEROSITY PRAYER  
STATIONS FOR USE  
THROUGHOUT THE  
CHRISTIAN YEAR



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# Generosity in Creative Prayer

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## About this Resource

Prayer stations are prayer activities that can be set up and used anywhere – at home, at work, at church or outdoors. They are typically interactive, inviting people to read/listen/reflect and then respond. They enable us to connect with God in creative ways, often allowing the sensory experiences of sight and touch to inspire our prayer and nurture our spiritual lives.

Prayer stations are usually based on a theme, encouraging us to reflect on a particular topic. This collection are based on generosity, enabling us to connect and reflect prayerfully on how we can grow in Christlike generosity.

In this edition, you will find a collection of generosity themed prayer stations suitable for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. There are other editions of this resource for use during other seasons of the Christian year.

# How to use this booklet

Each prayer station in this booklet comes with a cover page and an activity guide - you are welcome to print the activity guides to be part of your prayer stations, and would recommend laminating them.

# About the contributors

This resource has been compiled by members of the Generous Giving teams in the Dioceses of York and Liverpool.

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# Prayer Stations



# The Wonder of the Stars

## YOU WILL NEED:

Large piece of fabric  
String  
Table  
Clothes pegs  
Paper or cardboard  
or foil stars  
Marker pens



*He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.  
Psalm 147.4*

## The Display

- Put up a large piece of fabric, and drape pieces of string across it.
- Cut out a large star to have in the middle, as well as the prayer activity guide.
- Put a small table to the side of this with the pens and star-shaped paper or cardboard.

**Tip:** You could buy these pre-cut as star parcel tags.



## Activity

Ask people to reflect on God's creation of the stars - cast your minds to the wonders and the depth of the universe.

Encourage people to wonder how we can each be a gift of God to those around us, and add their star to the string as we take our place in the gift of the universe.



# The Wonder of the Stars

*He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.  
Psalm 147.4*

Reflect on God's creation of the stars

Cast your minds to the wonders and the depth of the universe.

Think about how they shine and the beauty they give to us.

Think about the infinite possibilities of their number, and that  
God knows each by name.

**Write your name or your prayer on one of the  
stars and use a clothes peg to add it to the string.**

God gifts to us our very lives, and knows each of us by name.

*How does it feel to be a gift from God?*

*How might you become a gift of God to others?*



# Tree of Jesse

## YOU WILL NEED:

Prayer tree  
Luggage labels  
(these could be shaped like leaves)  
String  
Character cards  
Small baskets  
Bible



## Display

- Place your prayer tree in a space which suits your church.
- Put a table next to it, and place a collection of leaf-shaped luggage labels in the small baskets - on one side write the character's name and the other their connected bible verse.
- Place a few bibles on the table so that people can read the verses if they choose.

## Activity

Ask people to reflect on the stories of each of the biblical characters, specifically on the way they expressed generosity in their lives.



# Tree of Jesse: Characters

Below is a suggested list of biblical characters with related bible verses to write on your tags for the Generosity Tree of Jesse. There are many other examples so feel free to add your own!

## **David: 2 Samuel 24.18-25**

Theme: offering to God things that cost us something.

## **David: 1 Chronicles 29.10-14**

Theme: all things come from God.

## **Samuel: 1 Samuel 3.1-21**

Theme: giving our lives to God.

## **Israelites: Deuteronomy 26.1-15**

Theme: giving the very best we can offer.

## **Ruth: Ruth 1.6-22**

Theme: generosity in relationships.

## **Abraham and Sarah: Genesis 18.1-8**

Theme: generosity in hospitality.

## **Moses: Exodus 18.13-23**

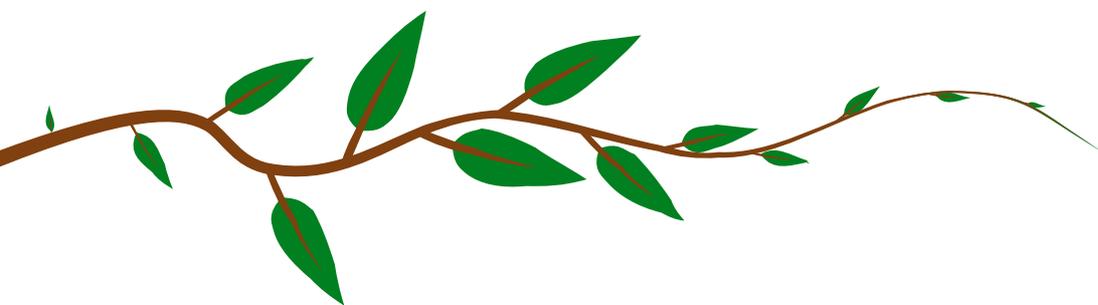
Theme: servant leadership.

## **John the Baptist: Matthew 3.1-12**

Theme: humility, call to give to God's work.

## **Mary: Luke 1.39-56**

Theme: generosity of spirit, offering whole self to God.



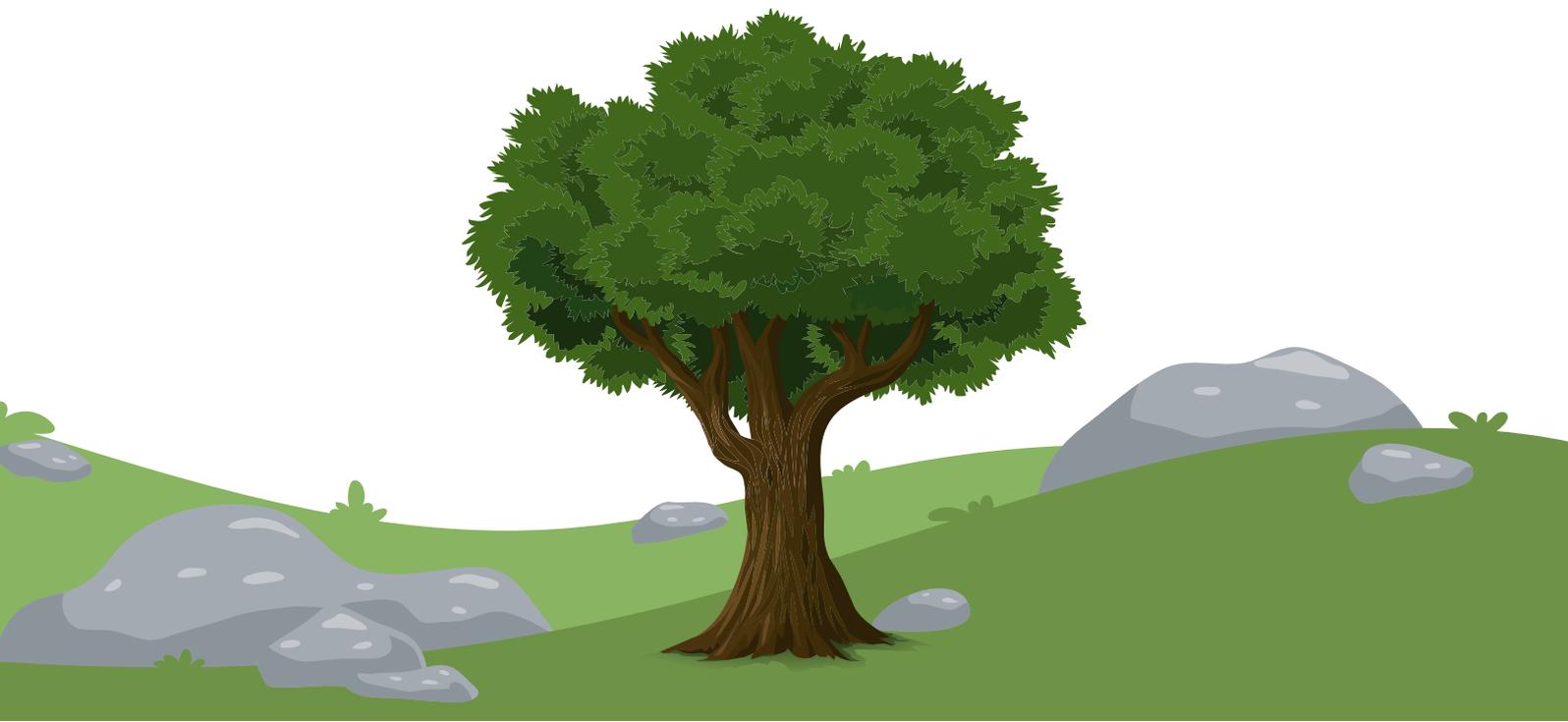
# Generosity: Tree of Jesse

Our lives are shaped, influenced and nurtured by those gone before us. As we prepare for the gift of the infant Jesus, Advent is a wonderful opportunity to look back at biblical ancestors and the stories they had to tell, reflecting on how they inspire us today.

In this Jesse Tree, we are reflecting on how generosity in many forms was lived out through a series of biblical characters, before the birth of Jesus.

As you take each character card, read the related bible verse and place it on the tree.

Thank God for these stories of generosity, and prayerfully reflect on how they might influence your life this week.





# Memories of God's goodness

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Coloured chalk
- Table Salt
- Paper
- Funnel (if you have one)
- Glass Jar & Lid
- Super Glue (to seal the jar, adult use only)
- Ribbon



*I have shown you in all things that by working hard in this way we must help the weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus himself said, **'There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.'** Acts 20:35*

## Display

- Lay out coloured chalk and a small rolling pin to help crush it into powder.
- Have jars available - or one large jar to make a jar for the whole church.

## Activity

- Create a jar of memories which are represented by different colour chalk.
- Reflect on the different colours and what they represent to you.

# Memories of God's goodness

1. Crush a coloured piece of chalk until it resembles powder.
2. Mix with an equal amount of table salt.
3. Pour your mix into a jar and repeat with another colour.

Once you have completed each colour, seal the lid of the jar with glue and add a ribbon to finish off the activity.



## Green Chalk

A time when you have known God provided for you



## White Chalk

A time when you gave out of obedience to Jesus' invitation



## Blue Chalk

A time you were generous towards someone who was sad.



## Pink Chalk

A time you gave to celebrate



## Yellow Chalk

A time you gave to show your gratitude

In the book of Acts, Paul is teaching and instructs us to remember what Jesus said about being generous to others, "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving." By making fun memory jars we can be reminded of God's goodness and generosity.

# The Traditions of St Lucia

The feast of St Lucia on 13th December is celebrated in Scandinavia, and in particular, Sweden. The tradition dates back to the original story of Lucia, who delivered food to the persecuted Christians. According to the legends, St Lucia would secretly bring food to the Christians hiding in Roman catacombs under the city. Lighting her way with candles in a wreath on her head.

The name Lucy is derived from the Latin word lux, meaning light, and it is the light that is the focus of the celebrations.

The festival celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good overcoming evil and the renewal of life, and it is meant to bring hope and light during the darkest time of the year.



Photograph by Claudia Gründer

As well as being the 'bearer of light', St Lucia's main offering was food. Part of the tradition of sharing food is the giving of gingerbread cookies and saffron buns to people .

Throughout Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus , we need to remember all that God has given to us , and that we too need to "give" as a sign of generosity. What is given to us, is for us to then give away in generosity to our brothers and sisters.

# The Traditions of St Lucia

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Copies of the reflection sheet laminated
- Copies of the Activity sheet laminated.
- Tables to work on suitable for all ages
- A selection of either homemade/shop bought gingerbread biscuits
- Ready mixed icing
- Paper plates
- Bowls/spoons
- Wipes
- Hand sanitiser
- Small bags to take away the biscuits
- Printed copies of the Saffron bun & gingerbread recipes to takeaway



## Display:

Make space for people to decorate biscuits on plates with different colour icing, and bags for taking away.

## Activity:

- Think about how Jesus came as a gift from God. Decorate the gingerbread biscuits and give them as a gift to somebody. Encourage people to reflect on their own generosity to others.





## St Lucia - Biscuit activity

Choose a Gingerbread biscuit to decorate, while you are decorating it, think about...

Who could you give this away to, as an act of generosity?

When you have finished decorating, please take the recipe card for the St Lucia Saffron buns or gingerbread. You could make these together as a family & then give them away to friends and neighbours.

Remember St Lucia and her acts of kindness and generosity.

*Who will you choose to give them away to?*



*Do not forget to do good to others and share with them what you have. These are the sacrifices that please God.  
Hebrews 13:16*



## INGREDIENTS

- 100g salted butter
- 3 tbsp golden syrup
- 100g dark muscovado sugar
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 225g plain flour
- 50g icing sugar

# Recipe: Gingerbread

## STEP 1

Heat the butter, syrup and sugar together in a small pan until melted, stirring occasionally. Set aside to cool slightly.

## STEP 2

Mix together the bicarb, ginger, cinnamon & flour in a large bowl. Pour in the buttery syrup mixture, stir to combine, then use your hands to bring together to form a dough. Add up to 1 tbsp of milk to combine if needed. The dough will be soft at this point, but it'll firm up in the fridge.

## STEP 3

Put the dough on a sheet of baking parchment, shape into a rectangle, & lay another sheet of parchment on top of it. Roll the dough out to a thickness of ½cm. Transfer to a baking sheet to keep it flat, leaving the parchment in place, then chill in the fridge for 1 hr.

## STEP 4

Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5, line a large baking sheet with more baking parchment. Remove the dough from the fridge, cut out shapes using cookie cutters

## STEP 5

Place the shapes, spread apart, on the lined baking sheet, and bake for 10-12 mins. (Depending on the size of the cutters you use, they might need a few minutes more or less cooking in the oven). Leave to cool completely on the baking sheet.

## STEP 6

Meanwhile, mix the icing sugar with 1-2 tbsp water – create a consistency that's thick and pipeable, not too thin or it will run. Decorate the cooled biscuits with the icing using a piping bag with a thin nozzle.



# Recipe:

## St Lucia Buns

### STEP 1

Put the milk in a small pan gently heat until it's steaming. Use a pestle and mortar to grind the saffron into a powder. Add this to the pan of milk along with the butter. Swirl to melt the butter, then set aside until lukewarm.

### STEP 2

In a large bowl, mix the flour, caster sugar, 1 tsp salt & yeast together. Make a well in the middle of the bowl, pour in the milk mixture along with the egg. Mix together to form a sticky dough, then turn out onto the work surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (this will take about 10 mins) or use a dough hook in mixer. Put the dough into a lightly oiled bowl and cover with oiled cling film. Set the bowl in a warm part of the house and allow to rise for about 1 hr until doubled in size.

### STEP 3

Knock back the dough and divide into 12 equal portions. Keep the pieces covered with the oiled cling film while you make the rolls – this will stop the dough from drying out. Working with 1 piece of dough at a time, roll out into a 30cm-long strand. Roll up one end into the middle, turn over and roll the other end into the middle. This will form the dough into an S-shape. Place the buns on a large (or 2 smaller) parchment-lined baking tray. Once all the buns are made, lightly cover with oiled cling film and prove until almost doubled in size. While the buns prove, heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6.

### STEP 4

When ready to bake, brush the buns with beaten egg and press a currant into the centre of each spiral. Put the trays in the oven and bake for around 15 mins. Allow to cool before serving. These are best eaten on the day they are made but will keep for a couple of days.

### INGREDIENTS

- 300ml whole milk
- 0.5g pack saffron
- 75g unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 500g strong white bread flour
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 7g sachet fast-action yeast
- 1 large egg, beaten, plus extra for egg wash
- a little oil, for greasing
- 24 currants



# St Lucia Lights

Throughout Sweden on 13th December the feast of St Lucia or festival of lights takes place. Lucia symbolises light and you will find “Lucy lights” lit in most homes.

Light is very important to us.

Light is a necessity when darkness sets in. Yet we often take light for granted not just the physical light around us but also the light that comes from within us.

While we can switch lights on, watch a beautiful sunrise, or enjoy a bright sunny day, it is important that the light of Christ lives in each of us.

In a world which can often seem dark, selfish and greedy, we have the opportunity to be a “Light”

Living out our faith and sharing the Light of Christ with others.



# St Lucia Lights

## YOU WILL NEED

- Copies of the reflection card
- Tealights
- A bucket containing sand to use for safety /used tealights
- A table covered with a black cloth
- A large white “Christ candle”
- Tealights ( or LED lights)
- Basket to hold the tealights

## The Display:

- Cover a table with a black cloth
- Light the white “Christ candle”
- Light Tealights ( or LED lights)
- Basket to hold the tealights
- You could create a small St Lucia crown from greenery with four small candles to display

## The Activity:

- Encourage people to light a tealight using the larger Christ Candle and reflect upon their own generosity. We are a light to the world.





# St Lucia Lights

This Advent focus on generosity, of sharing that light with others

*“Our acts of generosity and giving reveal God's light to the world”*

Take a tealight and light it from the Christ candle.

As you do this prayerfully reflect on your own generosity and giving.

Remembering that we are each called to carry the light of Christ to a world in need.



*Look for the opportunities to be a light in the darkness*



# Activity: Straw and Swaddling

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Copies of the Straw & swaddling cards \*appendix
- Copies of the Activity cards, laminated
- Strips of plain cloth to tie round the straw
- Basket containing straw

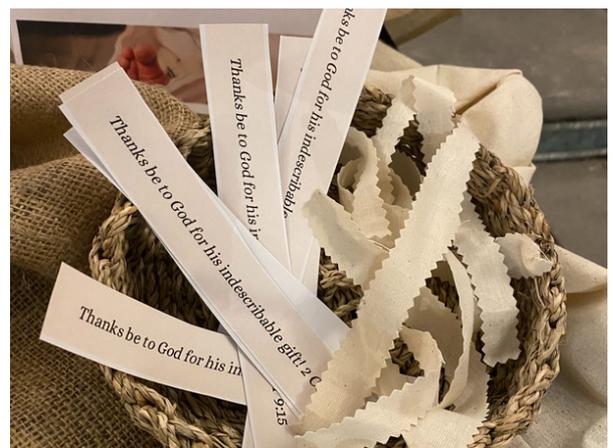


## The Display:

- Choose an appropriate focal point
- A manger from a crib scene
- A Bible open at the reading
- Straw (available in a pet shop)
- Strips of plain cloth
- A small twig style tree or use the church Christmas tree

## Activity:

- This is a space for people to reflect quietly on how Jesus came as a vulnerable child into a humble setting.
- Take a strip of cloth and tie it to some straw, looping in the bible verse.





## Activity: Straw and Swaddling

Quietly spend some time thanking God for all he gives to us, as well as what gifts we have that we can freely share with others.

When you are ready wrap a small bunch of straw in a strip of plain cloth & take a bible verse.

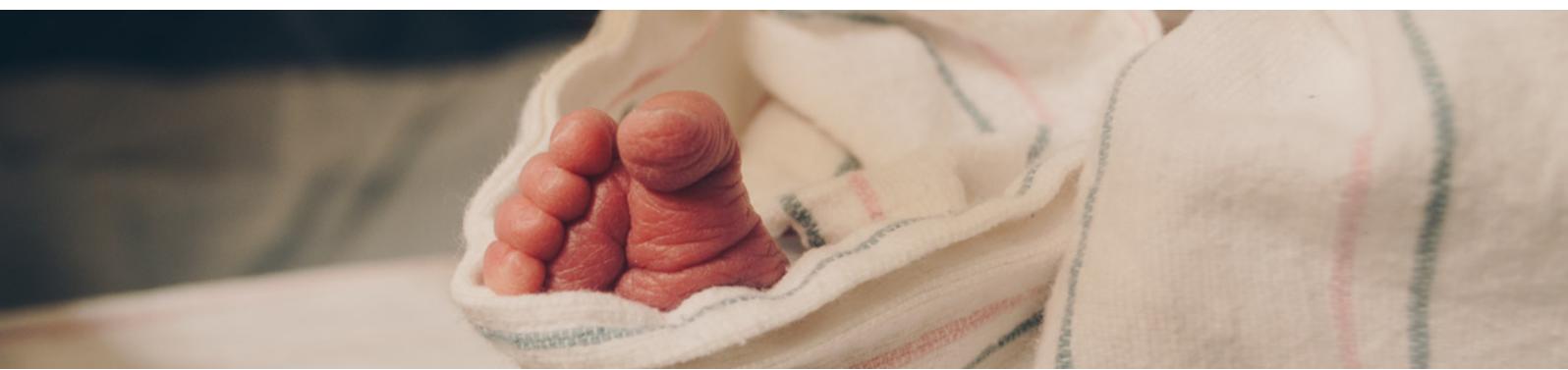
Place it on the tree or take it home for your own Christmas tree as a reminder of the reality of the Christmas story and the poverty into which Jesus was born.

But especially Gods generosity in sending Jesus, the first and the best Christmas present,

*The Gift of Hope.*

*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

**2 Corinthians 9:15**





# Straw and Swaddling

God's gifts to us, the gift of Jesus, the gift of eternal life.

Throughout advent we spend time thinking about who we will buy gifts for, and which gift will be *"Just right"*

Take a moment to think about the people on your Christmas list.

Now take some time to pray for each of them...

We encourage you to reflect on:

God's gift to each one of us this Christmas...

The gift of His son.

This gift is freely available to everyone.



# Appendix



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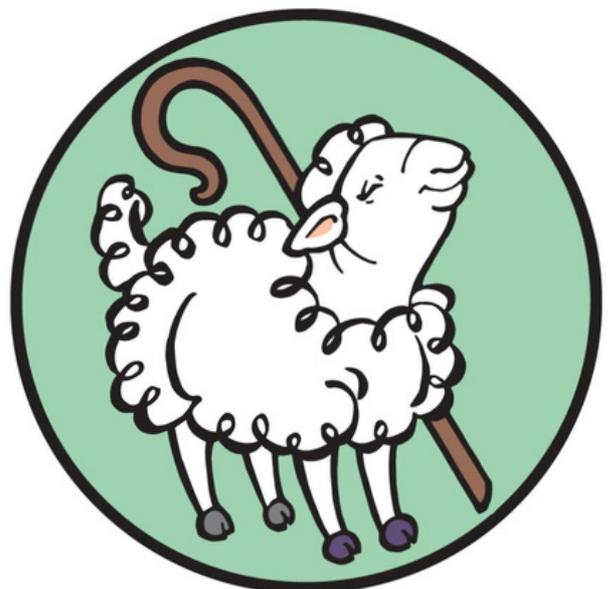
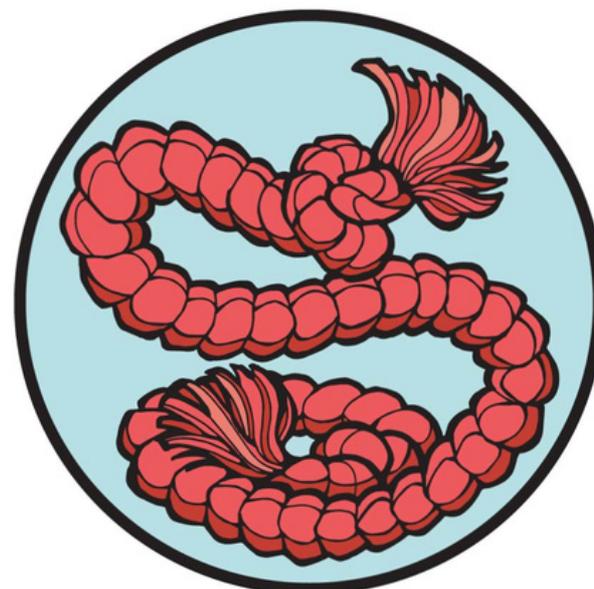
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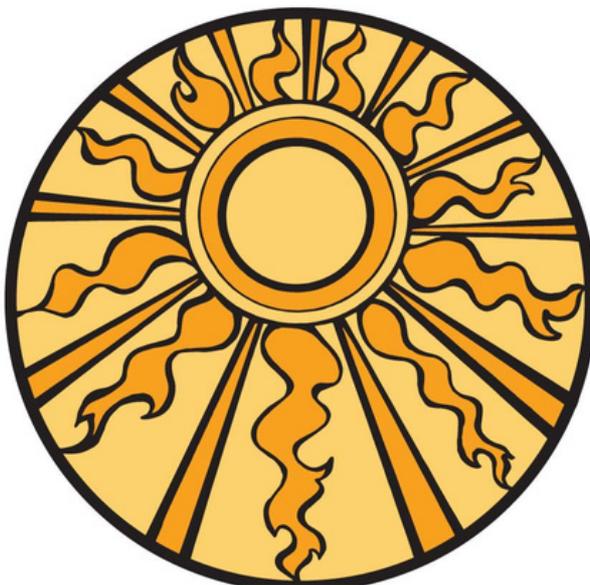
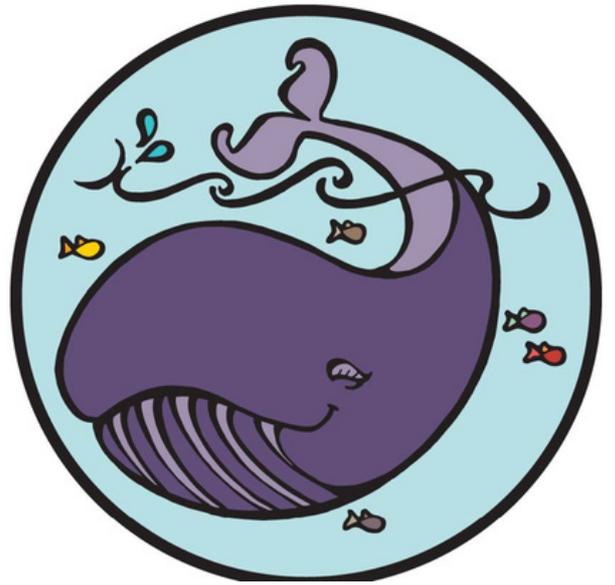
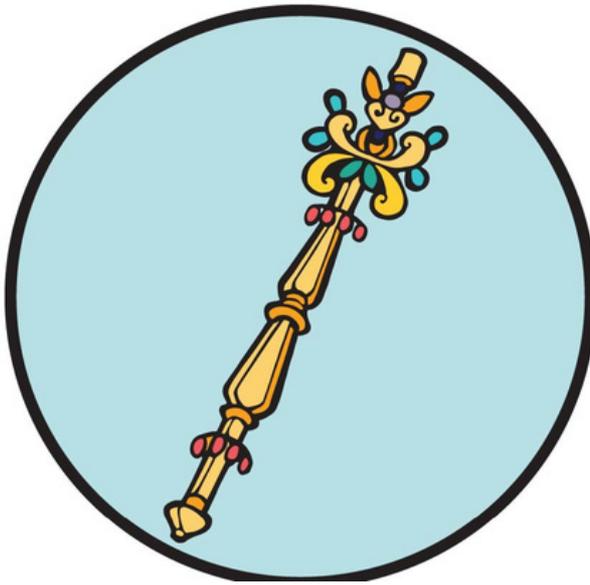
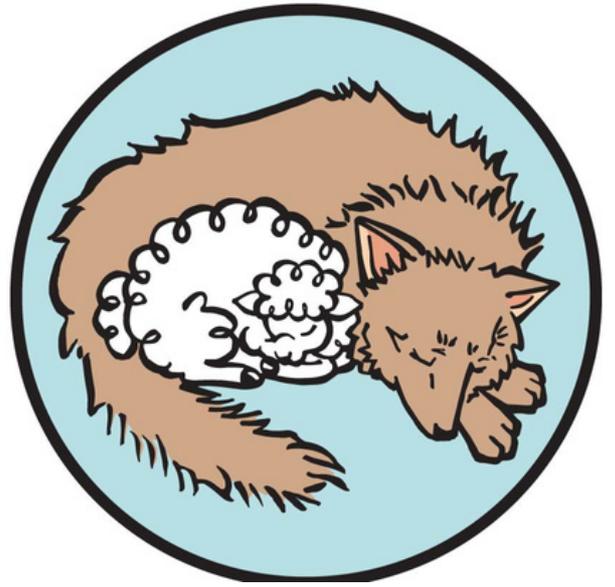
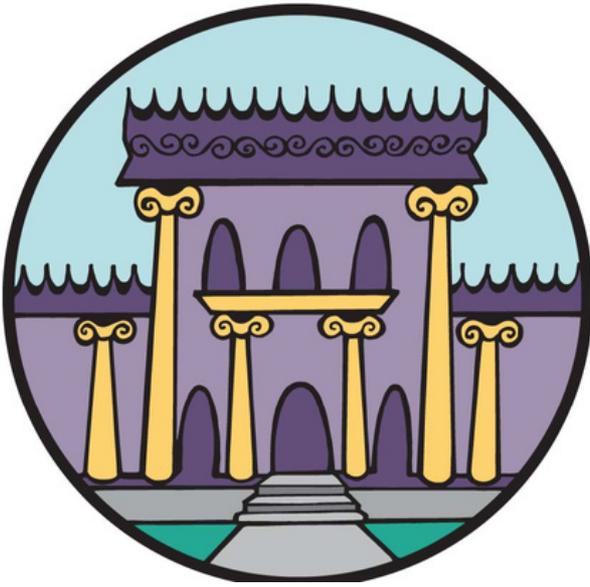


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*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Cor 9:15*

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