

All Things...

Advent & Christmas

ideas to use with children and young people



From The Go Team



**DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.

All Things Advent and Christmas

Introduction

This booklet provides you with a range of ideas to use during Advent and Christmas. The Go Team have collated some of their favourite ideas for exploring this central and significant season. You will find ideas for various age groups that you can adapt as necessary for your context. For many of the activities, you can make them age appropriate. Some of these ideas involve opportunities to delve into the Christmas story, while others provide opportunities for your children and young people to invite friends, while some are more about your group having fun and building relationships.

As we seek to live and tell the story of Jesus, we hope and pray that these ideas will help you and provide you with some inspiration for your toddlers, children, youth and families. Many of these ideas have been trialled and tested by ourselves and others. A number of the ideas have an online link for you to follow for further explanation.

For further help and support do contact one of the Go Team Advisers. We would love to hear your stories and experiences of using this resource. Please share them with us through sending us an email or sharing your photos with us on Twitter (@GoTeamAdvisers) and Instagram (goteamadvisers).

For more resources and to sign up to our newsletter **Inform** visit:

www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people

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Top 10 Ideas for under 5s...

1. Reverse Advent Calendar

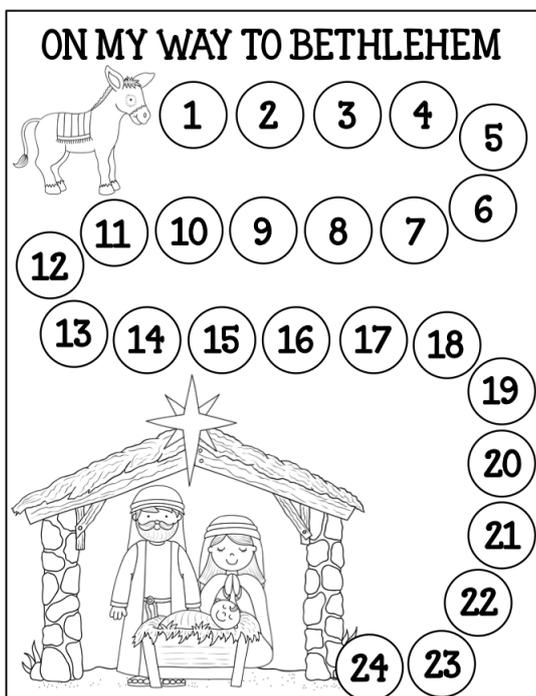
This has become a popular idea over the last few years. Grab a hamper or a large cardboard box and on each day during Advent, add something to the box. You may choose to add food items, such as baked beans, tins of soup, tinned vegetables and pasta or you may choose to add health and beauty items such as shower gel or toothpaste items of clothing, such as socks or gloves. How you fill your hamper, will depend on who you intend your gift to go to at the end of Advent. If you choose to do food items, check out what your local Foodbank is in need of, often you can find up to date lists on their website or Facebook page. Also, check out the regulations around items accepted, for example, long use-by dates are helpful, and homemade and fresh items are rarely able to be taken. You may like to finish a few days early, to give your food items an opportunity to be donated and used by those in need over the Christmas period. Alternatively, on Christmas Eve deliver the contents to a foodbank or to someone you know who is in need. What a great way to get children involved in giving at Christmas.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Each day you add an item to the box and on Christmas Eve you donate the contents to a foodbank



2. On my way to Bethlehem, Advent Calendar:



To help children think about the journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem, using an advent calendar such as the one opposite (see larger, printable version in Appendix 1), is a brilliant way to encourage children to think about the real meaning of Advent and the preparing to welcome and meet Jesus at Christmas.

Print a copy of the calendar off, if you have access to an A3 printer, a larger version would be great, but equally it will work well on A4. You may like to let children colour them in.

Using stickers, such as dot stickers, get the children to add a sticker each day throughout Advent to countdown to Christmas and represent Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

3. Shepherd on the Search

No doubt many parents will have heard of 'Elf on the Shelf', it seems to have become popular in the UK over the last few years, but have you heard of 'Shepherd on the Search'? It is an American resource, that you can do instead of Elf on Shelf, but which allows you to link to Jesus.

On that first Christmas, angels visited the shepherds and brought them good news. When the shepherds heard the good news, they set off on an incredible journey to search for the new-born baby Jesus. By engaging in something like, 'Shepherd on the Search' you can make this timeless story come alive with your own shepherd. His journey begins anew every Christmas season and ends on Christmas day as your shepherd finds his way to the manger.

Every Christmas, this Shepherd now visits houses of boys and girls to help them remember to look for Christ during the holiday season. He hides each night while they are asleep, and each morning they must find him. Then, on Christmas morning, he is right where he should be, beside the manger.

This is something that you could introduce to some of your families in your church, both with pre-school and primary aged children. They may like to try and get hold of the resource (not easy, being that it would come from America) or they may like to find their own Shepherd (one from a knitted nativity would be perfect), use the website and print off the daily ideas for inspiration on what to do with your Shepherd each day: <http://shepherdonthesearch.com/countdown/>. Also, take a look at this Pinterest board for further ideas:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/dayspring/shepherd-on-the-search/?lp=true>



4. Baby Jesus Biscuits!

Who doesn't like a food based activity?

1. Get a biscuit (digestives work well!).
2. Ice the biscuit and crumble on some shredded wheat to make the 'hay'.
3. Lay a jelly baby on the hay.
4. Cover the jelly baby with a fondant icing blanket.
5. Eat!



N.B. Taken from:

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2012/12/baby-jesus-manger-biscuits.html>

5. Send a Posada Family on a journey through Advent

Originating in Hispanic countries to celebrate the nativity story, Posada is a period of time during Advent when figures from the nativity story travel around different households in the community and stay there for one night.

Families can sign up to take part and then become hosts to the holy family for one night during Advent. During this time, families and children have an opportunity to learn more about the Christmas story, and everyone can meet others from their community as the figures are passed from one house to the next. There are many ways in which this can be done, here is a story from two parishes in Lichfield, where the church has excellent relationships with the local school:

“We launch the journey of Mary and Joseph at a family service in church where families can sign up to receive it, but children can sign up at school as well. A book comes with Mary and Joseph so that children can record photos, and there’s a selection of prayers, or they can write their own. It all ends up back in church at the schools’ carol service.”

“We use figures that older people from our two congregations have knitted, so the figures themselves aren’t breakable.”

“The figures travel around in a story bag with a copy of the Christmas story, plus a diary into which all those who host Mary and Joseph (and the donkey), can write in their experience. Also included in the bag is an Advent candle and this can be lit and burned down one section on the night which Mary and Joseph stay with the family.

“There’s also a short dialogue people can say on the doorstep when they pass the figures over to the next person. It encourages families to visit each other, and the rota is interleaved with older contacts, who have no children, so it gets them meeting a wider set of people around them. People have found this really helpful because they’ve chatted and got to know different people – it builds links between young and old.”

Last year, a parish in our Diocese was Tweeting a daily post of the journey of their Posada family as they got out and about in the community, each Tweet included a prayer. There are endless possibilities on how you could do this, but it’s a great way of enabling people to engage with the Christmas story.



6. Make an Advent Wreath

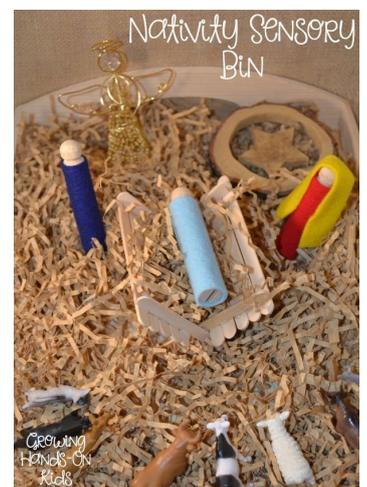
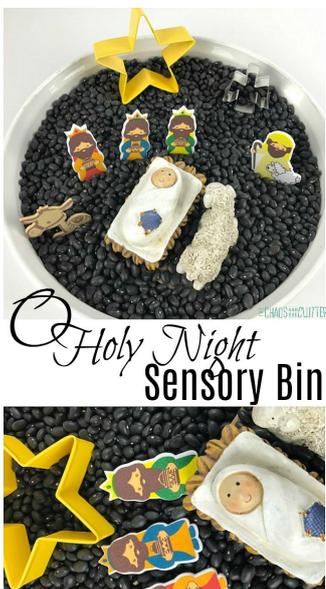
Visual aids can really help children work their way through advent, especially if they have reached the age where they have an idea of what Christmas is. Lighting candles on an Advent wreath and counting down to Christmas, can be really helpful. It can also be a really good way to help children have a few minutes of quiet and down time. There are many ways in which you could produce a craft Advent wreath, using paper plates, tissue paper, card and more (find a range of ideas on Pinterest), but I suggest you take the plunge and allow children to create an advent wreath using foliage and Christmas items that can be put into flower oasis. It's your call on whether you put real candles into the wreath or electric ones, but try to ensure you have at least four candles and if possible, a fifth candle to put in the centre to light on Christmas Day. You can opt for the traditional colours of three purple, one pink and a white candle at the centre, or go with whatever you have available.

Choose a day (often a Sunday works best), where you can light the Advent wreath, starting with lighting one candle, you may like to put a focus around each candle, asking the children to focus on an aspect of Christmas, asking them to do some 'thinking' in the quiet. As you go through Advent, add an extra candle each week, giving each a focus as you work through.

7. Nativity Sensory Bin

It is important to ignite the senses in pre-school children and sensory bins or boxes are an amazing way in which to do this. With the Christmas Story as your central theme, come up with a range of objects that children can play with, thinking carefully about which senses they will engage.

You may like to put in characters to represent the key people in the Christmas story, this is likely to include Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, a shepherd and some sheep and maybe some wise men. Including a stable or some materials that children can use to build their own stable, would also be a great addition. Straw or items to represent the kinds of things Mary and Joseph may have found in the space used for housing animals would also add to the experience. Some of the images below give ideas of how you might seek to do this.



8. Nativity Role Play

Pre-school and early years children love dressing up. Why not give children the freedom to do just that throughout December? Or have a Sunday or toddler group session, where you give the children the freedom to engage with the characters and themes of the nativity story, but not in our usual prescriptive manner. Create an area in your church or children's area that will excite and enthuse the children to engage. You may like to start by reading a children's version of the nativity story with them and then give them the freedom to play and explore it. You may end up being surprised by the things they do and come up with. Combined with a few other ideas from this booklet, you can design a hugely creative session for your children. The images below may give you some inspiration, but doing a search for 'Nativity Role Play' on the internet will also inspire you and fill you with ideas.



9. Felt Nativity

This is another activity that gives pre-school children the opportunity to explore through play. Some of you will remember the 'Fuzzy-Felt' days in children's ministry, but why not create your own, 21st Century, nativity set in vibrant colours? They don't have to be as detailed and complex as the characters below. Gingerbread men shaped characters and coloured clothing to go on the top, with some buildings, a star, and some animals should suffice. See Appendix 2 for some templates. You will also need a large piece of felt to form the background. You will then have a very simple but effective way for young children to engage with the Christmas story.





10. Story Stack Nativity

Earlier this year, we came across <https://www.storystack.co.uk/> and their amazing stacking cup characters for telling Bible stories. As it says on their website:

Storystack figures are:

- Colourful and 'dressed' for the period
- Designed with details that can be appropriate for specific stories but used for many stories
- Cone-shaped for stability in young hands
- Made from practical polypropylene which can be gently hand-washed for repeated use
- Stackable for easy storage

They are like actors on stage or television and can play the part of many different people in different stories. The cast of 24 is **sufficient for the telling of many bible stories**. A character who plays the part of one of Jacob's sons in an old testament reading will reappear as a disciple in a new testament one. The leader can use the suggested, numbered cast lists for the printable stories or ask the children to cast the characters themselves.

Visit their website to order a set and to print the pre-written stories, including scripts for the Christmas Story. Alternatively, you can create your own characters, as there is a Storystack Figure template on their website, to enable you to design your own characters.



Top 10 Ideas for children...

1. Messy Christmas / Creative Activities Sessions:



Many of you will be familiar with Messy Church and may well be involved in running one. If you have a Messy Church in your church, here are some links to hundreds of creative activities for you to incorporate into your Christmas Messy Church:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/advent-christmas-epiphany/>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/lucychappers/messy-church-advent/?lp=true>

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/tags/christmas>

If you do not have a Messy Church, your Church could host a morning or afternoon leading up to Christmas where families come for a creative and fun time together, filled with a range of Advent and/or Christmas themed activities. The session could end with a very short reflection or act of worship (10mins), to help share the Christmas story. Here are a few examples of video clips that you could use to do this:

Bohemian Rhapsody nativity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW1pbuyGIQ0>

Bible Society: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/>

Lego nativity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cij3axkCJSA>

Some of you may be conscious that some of the children and families you connect with, have additional needs, Messy Church also have a SEND Messy Church resource available. This could be helpful to anyone arranging a Christmas themed activity event, as using activities that engage a wide range of our senses, is helpful for many children:

SEND Christmas Messy Church:

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/send-messy-church-christmas-session>

Welcoming children with Additional Needs:

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/how-do-we-welcome-people-additional-needs-messy-church>

Whatever you do, make it welcoming, fun and an opportunity to share the joy of Christmas. Ensure it provides an opportunity for children and families to be creative together at Christmas and ensure it gives them an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

2. Love in a shoe box



Encourage your youth / children's group to get involved in putting together shoebox Christmas gifts. Here are a few organisations that you could connect with, to do this:

1. Operation Christmas Child: <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>
2. Link to Hope: <https://linktohope.co.uk/>
3. Blythswood Care: <https://www.blythswood.org/shoebox>
4. Rotary Shoe Box Scheme: <https://www.rotaryshoebox.org/>

All the details for the various appeals can be found on their website.

Alternatively, encourage your youth or children's group to support the 2018 Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal;

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas-present-appeal>

Often the shoeboxes have to be completed well in advance of Advent and Christmas, but they are a great way of encouraging children and young people to think of others leading up to Christmas.

3. Nativity photo booth



Create a 'pop up' stable photo booth. Provide a box of dressing up clothes for the characters in the nativity story. You may like to make this an activity at your Christmas party or children's club or you could take it into primary schools during advent to create pop up nativities. This could be done in conjunction with an Open the Book team, when they visit the school to share the Christmas story.

Someone will need a suitable camera and you will need to ensure all relevant consents are in place.

4) Advent calendar of the Christmas story

The link below offers a great way for children, young people and families to unfold the Christmas story during the 24 days of Advent. All the instructions, templates and everything else you need are included in the link:

<https://magglemaysgifts.wordpress.com/2013/11/25/advent-calendar-of-the-christmas-story>



5. Nativity Scenes



Collect lots of different materials and have a session where you challenge your children and/or young people to create their own nativity scene. Examples of materials you can use include Lego, Play-doh, Fimo, junk (boxes etc). These can be displayed in the church during the Christmas festivities, in local shop windows or in prominent windows at home. Encourage others in the community to make creative nativity scenes using different types of materials. Keep the nativity scenes small so they can be easily displayed.



Here are some useful links:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/549579960751949205/>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/mamasmiles/diy-nativity/>

6. Jesus Rocks

This is a perfect activity to use with all of the age groups included in this resource. You can create Jesus Rocks in a number of ways. You can use black Sharpie pens on a white stone and glue it into an upside down shell. Alternatively, paint stones white, then add a beige circle face at one end. Use Sharpies to draw eyes, nose and mouth on the face and lines to make the face look 'wrapped' in white cloth. Alternatively, you may like to use paint on the pebbles. You may like to write the hashtag #JesusRocks on the back then hide the pebbles for someone to find. You could add a little note suggesting people either re-hide it for someone else to find or take it home and look after it. You may like to make these for your pre-school children and then hide them together.

Here are two examples of how Jesus pebbles have been used in two different communities:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/3701909/Mystery-artist-scatters-Jesus-pebbles-in-town-ahead-of-Christmas.html>

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/news/baby-jesus-rocks.php>



7. Christmas Tree team challenge



Why not take on the Christmas Tree Team Challenge? This is where you use your group to make the shape of a Christmas tree by (safely) stacking people to make the tree shape. You can decorate the shape to add colour and you can invite other youth groups or groups in the community to do the same thing. This can also be done in schools with different classes joining the challenge. Always remember to take a photo of your challenge to keep a record of your children's/young peoples attempts. You may like to choose an appropriate hashtag for sharing on social media (ensure you have obtained consent of all involved).

If you don't feel that the stacking of children/young people will work with your group, instead, you may like to decorate one child/young person as a Christmas Tree or you could have a Christmas Tree decorating competition, using artificial trees.

8. Advent Candles and prayers

This is a really simple activity, that has proven to be unexpectedly popular with children.

You will need:

Candles—the white dinner table candles you can buy in high-street shops are sufficient.

Pens— that will write on wax. Sharpies do the trick!

You may like to provide a guide on a sheet of paper, numbered 1-25, so that children can evenly spread the numbers when they write them onto the candles (see Appendix 3).

Ask children/young people to write 1-25 on the candle (remember 1, needs to be at the top). They may also like to decorate it.

Encourage them to take the candle home and light it each day through advent. You may like to encourage children and young people to pray each day as they light the candle, an example of 25 prayers for advent are included in appendix 4.



9. Community singing



Teach the children/young people in your group some Christmas carols and then visit a few local elderly peoples homes, or sheltered elderly day care centres to sing the carols with the old people.

Christmas can be a lonely time for some of the elderly and this is a great way to bridge generations. You will need to seek permission and explain to the children that not everyone will join in the singing.

Take some song sheets with you with large font. You could also take some Christmas themed refreshments like mulled wine and mince pies.

10. Live Outdoor Nativity!

This one may involve quite a lot of effort, but are you able to let your nativity service happen outside? Could you recreate different scenes around your village or could the service be hosted on a local farm? Are you able to involve local farmers in including some animals, such as sheep and a donkey (and anything else that you think maybe applicable!!)? You could invite children to take part or use it as an amazing way to bring the nativity story to life, allowing children and families to engage with it—local communities love these kinds of things!



Top 10 ideas for 11-16s...

1. Joint youth group Christmas gathering



Invite all the local youth groups from local churches together for a Christmas celebration. Take over a suitable church hall and decorate it to look welcoming and suitably Christmassy for your young people.

Start with some Christmas themed games such as:

- Wrap up a person in your group with Christmas wrapping paper and Sellotape
- Decorate gingerbread houses
- Name that Christmas carol
- One group plays a Christmas carol or song on a Kazoo for the other group to guess

Invite each youth group to decorate a Christmas tree that represents their group. Prior to the event, you will need to instruct each group to bring their own free standing artificial Christmas tree and some suitable decorations. If they would like to include Christmas tree lights, you might like to ask that they also bring an extension lead.

As part of your evening, have a moment to reflect on the Christmas story using a few readings and maybe sing a Christmas carol together.

End the evening with a Christmas themed bring and share buffet, non-alcoholic mulled punch and spiced hot chocolate.

2. Advent Sleepout Challenge

Have an Advent sleep out/in, in the church. You could use this as an opportunity to raise money for local homeless projects.

This could be linked with The Advent Sleep Challenge:

<https://centrepoint.org.uk/sleepout>

On the above website, you will also find a useful pack, to ensure you run this event safely and appropriately for your young people.

Encourage the young people to bring recyclable materials to create shelters to sleep in, but also to bring small trees, decorations and lights to decorate their shelters.

In the morning have breakfast together and reflect on the experience, considering how Christmas may look for those who are homeless.



3. Christmas film night

You may like to do this with your individual youth group or you may like to invite youth groups from local churches to meet together in a church with suitable facilities for screening a movie:

You could start with some Christmas themed games or activities, such as:

- Decorating Christmas biscuits
- A Christmas Quiz
- Guess the Christmas Carol/Song—each group has to play a Christmas carol or song on a Kazoo whilst the other team guess the tune

Watch a classic (age appropriate) Christmas film together with Christmas themed refreshments and popcorn in paper bags made from Christmas wrapping paper.

There are some brilliant Christmas themed movie discussion resources available, to encourage your young people to talk about some of the Christmas themes that have emerged from the film. See some of the links below for helpful resources:

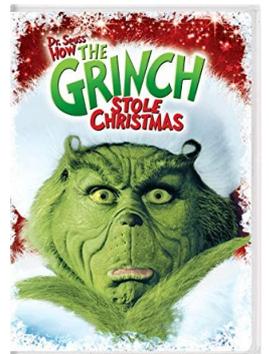
Nativity—<https://www.urch.org.uk/images/Ministries/Children%20and%20Young%20People/resources/Nativity.pdf>

How The Grinch Stole Christmas—<https://thesource4ym.com/how-the-grinch-stole-christmas-going-good/>

Elf— <https://thesource4ym.com/elf-saaanntaaas-coming/>



"A fabulous five star festive family treat!"



4. Christmas youth group meal

Have a traditional Christmas sit down meal together as a youth group. Invite the young people to dress up in Christmas clothes and consider having a £1.00 secret Santa. You can either use a hall with good kitchen facilities or a home depending on the size of the group. Alternatively, a few people in the church can cook at home and bring the food in. This is always a great event to encourage your young people to invite friends to. After the meal invite someone to share a bit about the Christmas story with some personal testimony. End the evening with a few Christmas party games. Use the opportunity to invite any guests to a Christmas Crib Service, Christingle or Carol Service.

5. Christmas quiz evening

Have a pub quiz type evening but with all Christmas themed quiz rounds. You can either do this with your own youth group or invite other local youth groups to enter teams.

You could also run this as an all age event with family teams or teams made up of intergenerational groups. Provide Christmas themed refreshments and you may like to encourage teams to dress up in Christmas themed clothes or have bonus points for the best Christmas Jumper, homemade being the preferable option! There are a number of online Christmas quizzes you can use or you can devise your own.



6. Tacky light spotting

It has become very popular and competitive to decorate houses with Christmas lights over the festive period. Some roads decorate all of the houses in the street and raise money for charity. Why not take your youth group to visit the lights?

It works best if you have access to a mini bus so that you can drive around and spot the best lights. When you find the best lights on a house, why not knock on the door, sing them a Christmas carol and present them with a certificate saying they have the best Christmas lights.



7. Advent and Christmas prayer stations



Set up some Advent or Christmas themed prayer stations in your church or school during Advent so people can have some space and time to reflect on the meaning of Christmas guided by the prayer stations.

Here are a few links to help with ideas:

<https://www.reformedworship.org/article/september-2013/advent-prayer-stations>

<https://24-7prayer.com/downloads/24-7%20Advent%20Prayer%20Station%20resource%202018%20pdf.pdf>

8. Nativity photos around your community

Dress up your youth group as characters from the nativity scene, complete with a crib and a star. Then challenge your youth to find as many places to recreate the nativity scene around your community and in your church. Get them to take photos as they journey around the community (ensure you have the consent of all involved).

Ideas for photos might be; the church porch, the lady chapel in the church, a school, a bus shelter, a pub garden, a local café, outside a local shop, in a shed, in a stable, on the back of an open back lorry, under a tree. Encourage your young people to come up with the most creative (but safe) places.

The photos can be made into a collage online or printed out to make up an alter frontal for the festive period or even for a Christmas Card.

Remember you may need to get permission from those who own the location site where you are taking the picture.



9. Christmas discussion for a youth group



Write each of the following starter sentences on separate, small pieces of paper. Fold each piece in half and put them in a Christmas decorated box or basket. Then invite someone to choose a piece of paper from the box, so the group can discuss each starter sentence. Try to encourage all of the young people to share something for each sentence. You could set a 3 minute timer (on a phone) to indicate the end of each discussion, but try not to stop them if they are in full flow and on topic. Repeat until most or all of the pieces of paper are used up.

Here are some example sentence starters:

- The most exciting thing about Christmas is...
- If I was going to explain the real meaning of Christmas to friends, I would say...
- The happiest Christmas I ever had was...
- My favourite food at Christmas is...
- The best Christmas party I have ever been to was...
- The worst thing about Christmas is...
- The best present I ever had was...
- I think angels appeared to people in the Christmas story because...
- I like Christmas because...
- I think Christmas is important because...
- The present I most want for Christmas is...
- My most embarrassing moment at Christmas was...
- My favourite Christmas carol is...
- The most confusing thing about the Christmas story is....
- My favourite Christmas film is...

If you want to run some sessions during Advent that help your youth group to rethink Christmas here are two useful links with bible studies, resources and ideas:

http://insight.typepad.co.uk/insight/christmas_ideas_and_talks/

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/christmas-ideas-for-your-small-group.html>

10. So what do you think of Christmas?



Challenge your youth group to go out on the streets during Advent to ask what people think of Christmas. This could also be done within a school or college. Where possible, capture these conversations on video or as sound clips using a phone (with permission).

Edit the videos into a montage or short film that can be shown during a Christmas service or assembly to show what people's views of Christmas are.

Bonus Activity!

The Advent / Christmas IKEA challenge



Why not take a trip to your closest IKEA store to do the IKEA Christmas challenge? You may need to ask permission from the store manager first or at least let them know what you are planning to do. If you don't have an IKEA close by, the challenge could also be done in a DIY store, a high street shopping area or in large department store. The idea is to dress the youth group and leaders in their Christmas jumpers and Santa hats. Then split them into groups of 3 or 4 and get them to take selfies in different places in the store to spell the word CHRISTMAS:

Here are some suggestions:

Children's area / curtains / clock

Hooks / hangers / highchair

Racking / rug / recycling bin

Ironing board / Ikea sign / integrated kitchen appliance

Shower cubicle / spoons / storage box

Table / towels / trolley

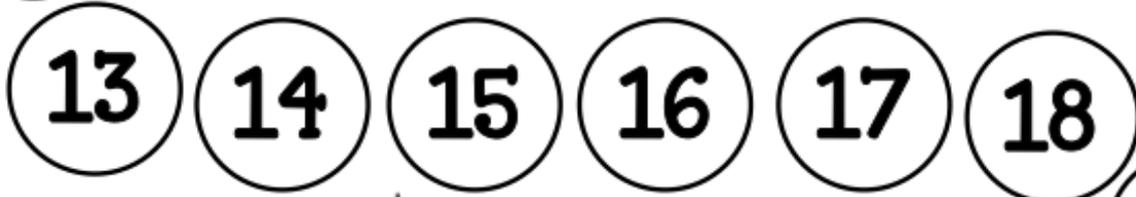
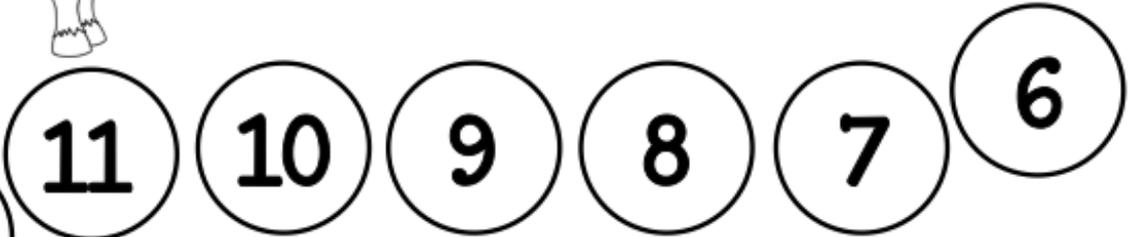
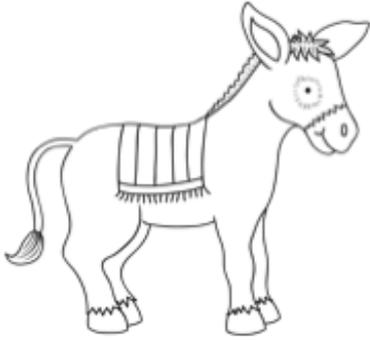
Mock up room / member of staff / mattress

Arm chair / appliance / anti-slip underlay

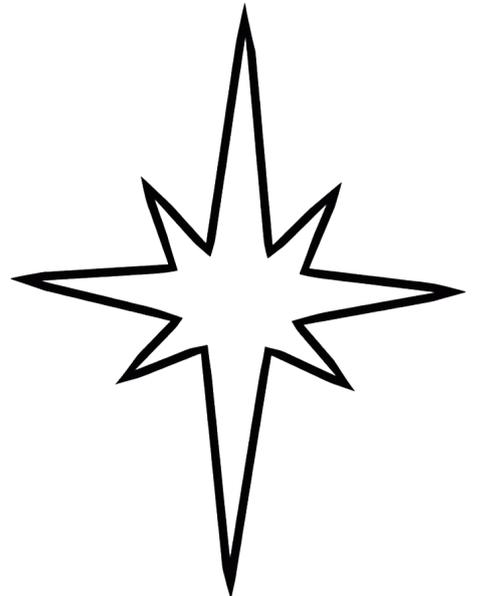
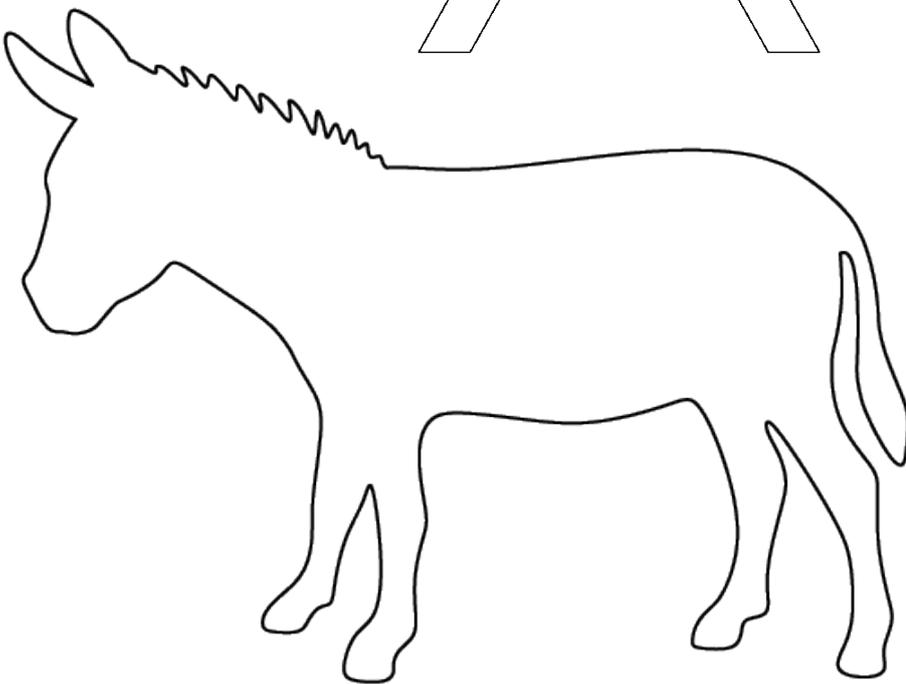
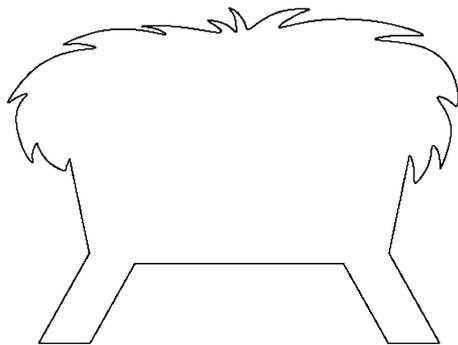
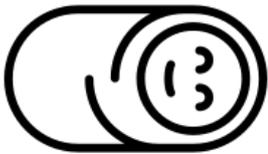
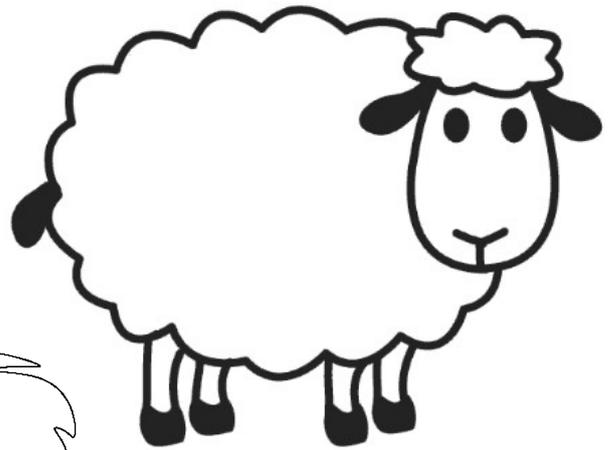
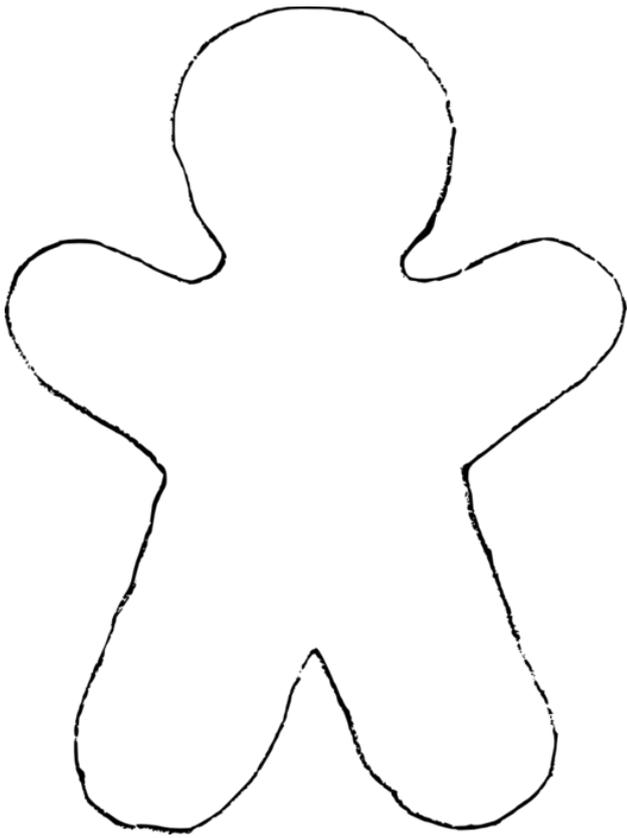
Sofa / sideboard / sink

Appendix 1

ON MY WAY TO BETHLEHEM



Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Advent candle grid.

Lay your candle on the grid, to evenly space the numbers on the candle.

| | |
|----|-------|
| 1 | _____ |
| 2 | _____ |
| 3 | _____ |
| 4 | _____ |
| 5 | _____ |
| 6 | _____ |
| 7 | _____ |
| 8 | _____ |
| 9 | _____ |
| 10 | _____ |
| 11 | _____ |
| 12 | _____ |
| 13 | _____ |
| 14 | _____ |
| 15 | _____ |
| 16 | _____ |
| 17 | _____ |
| 18 | _____ |
| 19 | _____ |
| 20 | _____ |
| 21 | _____ |
| 22 | _____ |
| 23 | _____ |
| 24 | _____ |

Appendix 4

ADVENT PRAYERS

| | |
|------|---|
| 1st | Pray for your family |
| 2nd | Pray for someone who you don't like |
| 3rd | Pray for children in need - especially any you know |
| 4th | Pray for missionaries over seas |
| 5th | Pray for your church, its vicars, leaders and members |
| 6th | Pray for local (your) schools, teachers, staff, helpers, pupils & governors |
| 7th | Pray for your neighbours |
| 8th | Pray for your friends |
| 9th | Pray for those who are ill - especially those you know |
| 10th | Pray for homes where there is trouble or disagreement |
| 11th | Pray for the lonely |
| 12th | Pray for those who are being persecuted for their beliefs |
| 13th | Pray for those who work for peace and those away from home |
| 14th | Pray for hospitals - especially your local hospital |
| 15th | Pray for people in your class at school/college or work colleagues or those you will see this day |
| 16th | Pray for our government, MPs, County and Local Councillors |
| 17th | Pray for Churches and Charities working with the homeless |
| 18th | Pray for those who are bereaved or a family known to you where this will be their first Christmas without a loved one |
| 19th | Pray for doctors and nurses and those who care for the sick |
| 20th | Pray for shop workers |
| 21st | Pray for farmers and those who provide our food |
| 22nd | Pray for Kings, Queens and rulers of nations |
| 23rd | Pray for those in poverty stricken countries and those where wars are taking place |
| 24th | Pray for those who have to work over Christmas, especially the emergency services |
| 25th | Thank God that Jesus came to us "HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS" |

THE MOST IMPORTANT GUEST

When a guest is coming to stay, it can be exciting, but there are all kinds of things to do first, in order to get ready for your visitor.

The Christian Church calls the four weeks before Christmas "ADVENT" and that word means "coming" or "arriving". It is the time of year when we get ready for the coming of the most important guest of all time -- JESUS CHRIST.

Advent reminds us of three different comings of Jesus. The first is the past. It happened a long time ago at the first Christmas. Jesus, God's Son, who made our world, came to live in it as a baby, then as a boy, and a man who gave his life to bring us close to God. The second "coming" belongs in the present because Jesus is waiting to come now to every person who invites Him into his/her heart and life. The third "coming" of Jesus is still in the future. One day Jesus will come back to our world, not as a little helpless baby, but as King and Judge of all.

ADVENT is the season for getting ready -- ready to understand the true meaning of Christmas, ready to ask Jesus into our lives, and ready for the day when He will come again.

Why not use your advent candle and these prayers each day during advent? Allow yourself to pause and reflect on the coming of Jesus during this busy time of year.



Ethical and Sustainable Arts and Crafts Suppliers



Arts and crafts activities offer endless opportunities for learning about faith and creation and as a way to express thoughts, feelings and experiences throughout our Christian journeys. As good stewards of creation and the resources God has given us, we can commit to giving due consideration to the materials we use and where possible, choose ethical, sustainable and recycled or upcycled products that produce minimal waste and environmental harm.

Below is a brief guide to sourcing ethical and sustainable materials for Sunday school meetings, Messy Church, Youth Groups and craft groups. Realistically, some products do cost more but many are very reasonably priced and planning ahead can help keep costs low (e.g. accessing sales and end of season items or bulk-buying if possible).

Upcycle and Recycle First:

The most sustainable materials are those that are being reused or repurposed. We are blessed in the diocese to have multiple scrap-stores which for a small fee offer a wide range of materials and craft essentials.

Yeovil: <https://www.thehubyeovil.co.uk>

Weston Super Mare: <http://communityscrapstore.org.uk>

Glastonbury: <http://yeastscrapstore.co.uk>

Ethical Kidz:

Ethical Kidz has a clear and easy to use website that provides ethical and sustainable craft products and gifts including Fairtrade and charity-supporting purchases. They also have an excellent overview of their business considerations including how they reduce their own energy use and waste.

See <https://www.ethicalkidz.co.uk/shop/fairtrade/>

Yarn Yarn:

Specialising in yarns and fabrics from India that support women's co-operatives, Yarn Yarn provides some beautiful, handmade supplies that also reduce waste and encourage a circular economy. See

<https://www.yarnyarn.co.uk/pages/our-yarn-journey-1>



Conscious Craft:

Conscious Craft offer a wide range of plastic and waste free craft materials, toys and educational materials with the aim of providing items that will last. See <https://consciouscraft.uk>

Myriad:

Myriad has an expansive range of sustainable products, mostly produced in Europe and they do not use air freight. They source their products solely from manufacturers who pay fair wages.

See <https://www.myriadonline.co.uk>

Baker Ross:

A well-known craft supplier with a good ethical policy. Whilst they still have some way to go to be sustainable, there are sustainable and low waste options including a natural materials section.

See <https://www.bakerross.co.uk>

And finally, please share your stories, questions and sustainable craft ideas with us.

For more info about our Diocesan Environment policy visit: www.bathandwells.org.uk/faith/environment



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