

ADVENT



*Advent
Alternatives*

Trails

*Craft
Ideas*

Welcome



It's that time of year when Children and Families workers compete with "Strictly" Celebs for the title of "Most sparkly outfit!" Albeit ours are less glamorous, and the sparkles come, not from beautiful sequined outfits but from the endless flow of glitter that starts early November and is still being found late July!

In this season's Newsletter we have some new ideas to rival Elf on the Shelf, a video trail for your churchyard and lots of helpful links to organisations with great ideas, nativities and much more.

This can be a crazy season for us all, so make sure you take time out from under the nativity costumes to reflect and rejoice yourself too.

We will continue to pray for you and would love to hear what you are up to. Feel free to contact us with any news, questions or events by emailing: cfmeireland.anglican.org

Many Blessings.

Rachael.

Christmas Bible Buddy Reading Pack



Christmas Bible Buddy Easy Reader Pack



Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children & Families

The Christmas Story. Joseph

Matthew 1 v 18 - 25



This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately.

While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins."

Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, "God is with us").

So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord told him. But he had no intimate relations with her before she gave birth to Jesus.



The Christmas Story. Mary

Luke 1 v 26 - 56



In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!" Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. For there is nothing that God cannot do."

"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judaea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "Is the child you will bear? Why should I come to visit me? For as soon as I heard your voice, the child in my womb leaped for joy."

And because of God my Saviour, for he has done great things for me, he has shown mercy to those who honour him. I have been with all their plans and lifted up the lowly, the rich away with empty hands, and I have helped the needy and sent them away with full hearts.

And now my Lord and my Saviour has come to all his descendants forever! My heart was glad, for he has done great things for me.

The Christmas Story. The Shepherds

Luke 2 v 8 - 20



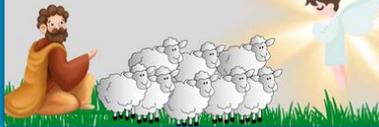
There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them.

They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people: This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.



Christmas Bible Buddies

For those of you who haven't yet held a Bible Buddy adoption event, this is the perfect opportunity. We have our updated packs now available from the website and also on our **Bible Buddy App**.

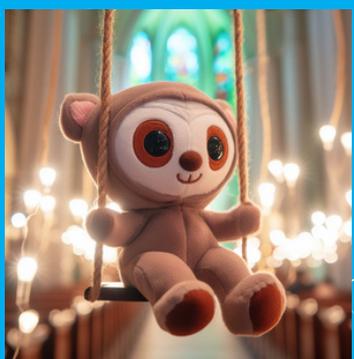
Bible Buddies encourage children and families to read the Bible to help their "buddy" grow strong and each pack has Bible passages printed and ready to read - either as the standard pack or in the Easy Reader pack.

If the children in your parish already have their buddy, why not invite them back for a Buddy party where they can get their new Christmas packs. You could even have a **buddy sleepover in the church** - Buddies only, not children!

The children can bring their buddies to church (tie a Christmas gift tag on them with their Buddy's name and their own name so you don't have tears over buddy's going back to the wrong homes!) leave them overnight and see what mischief the Buddies get up to! When the children have gone, take photo's of the Buddies preaching, cleaning, sleeping - let your imagination free! The pictures could be shared on your parish social media page in the morning so the children can see what went on, or put all the photo's into a PowerPoint/video and invite the children back for a party or Christmas service where they get to see all that their buddies have been up to.

Download the full pack by clicking [HERE](#).

Buddy Church Sleep Over!



Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children & Families



Hide & Speak!

This is a new resource you can give to your families or school, offering a fun alternative to the pesky Elf! 🧝🏻‍♂️👍

Hide and Speak is an Advent challenge that tells the whole Christmas story day by day. Every day from December 1st adults hide the relevant card along with a treat of choice – chocolate, fruit or whatever the child loves. The child seeks out the card, reads the verse and enjoys the treat. You could involve the Elf in the hiding if you wanted!

The cards can then be stuck or hung up on a wall or the fridge so that by December 24th the whole story can be read together. **Download your copy [HERE!](#)**

Christmas Trail

This trail encourages families to hear the Christmas story from a different perspective. Each stop has a video that can be played on mobile devices. You hear from Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth and others, acted out in short monologues that help us to imagine what it was like that first Christmas.

The videos explore the emotions and questions each character may have experienced - the joys, the doubts, and the fear even. It brings the whole narrative to life and encourages families and friends to chat together.

The trail includes posters that can be printed and laminated or printed onto Corriboard and placed around the Church yard - to access the videos participants simply scan the QR code on the first poster. Each stop as practical activities too for all ages to try so it's not purely digital.

Download the trail [HERE](#)



Welcome to our Interactive Nativity Trail.

If you are following the video trail on your mobile device or tablet simply scan the QR code below & click play. Then find the posters with each character as directed by the video.

You will find you can see the video better if you turn your device to give you a landscape view.

If you don't already have a QR scanner on your device they are free to download from any App store.

Please note this trail will require good mobile data reception if you are not connected to WiFi

SCAN ME

Trace the word below with your finger

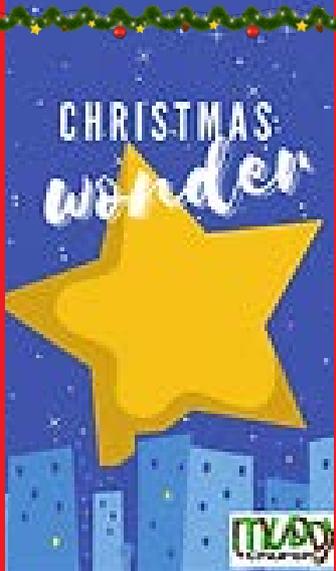
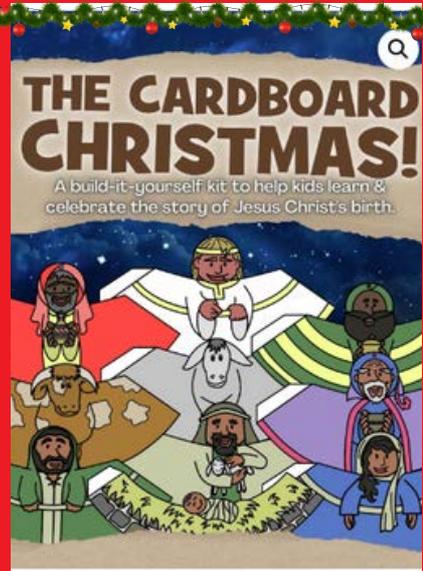
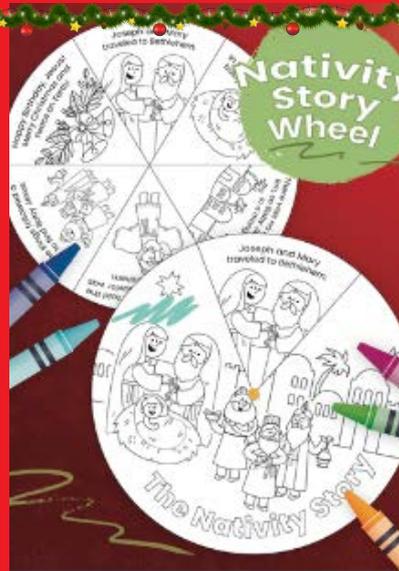
Love

Elizabeth and Zachariah had prayed and hoped for a child for many years. When they finally had a baby they were a lot older than other parents in their town.

At Christmas there are many things we hope for - toys, games, money, a happy time with family. Using the things around you (if you're outside use sticks / leaves etc) create a picture of what you are hoping for this Christmas.

Sometimes we put our hope in people and they let us down. When we put our hope in God He will never let us down, He will always give us what we need at just the right time.

"Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise." Hebrews 10 v 23.

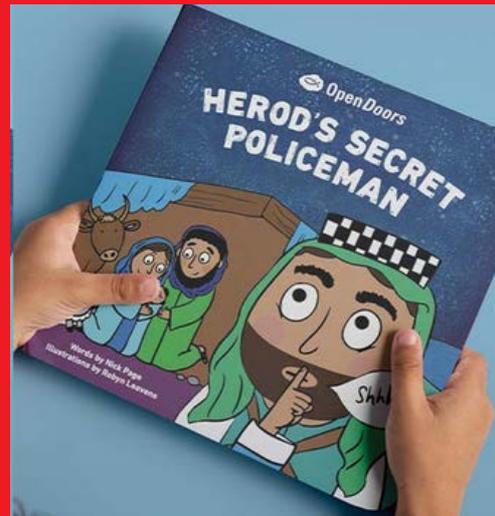


Resources Round Up!



With so many ideas and resources available it can leave your head spinning, so we've rounded up a few of our favourites to help you focus! Click the links to head to the relevant resource.

- First up is **Open Doors new resource "Herod's Secret Policeman"** this pack includes a book, video, craft and teaching session. All fantastic quality, using the nativity story to gently introduce to the pressures faced by secret believers around the world, many of whom live under surveillance, or disguise their faith. They might even have to flee for their lives, just as Mary, Joseph and Jesus did.
- Second is a lovely simple craft - **Nativity story wheel**, free to download from **Children's Ministry Deals**. If you sign up soon they've 50% off their paid resources too!
- Then we have the Bible Society who always have wonderful resources from Instant Nativities to books and more. This year they have Festive Fred - a book and accompanying video which tells the story of Fred as he wakes up in the middle of the first Christmas. If you have international families in your parish, this book also comes translated into Ukrainian, Russian, and Traditional Chinese
- Another super simple but highly effective craft also free to download is the **Cardboard Christmas from Kids Enjoying Jesus**. This comes with leaders ideas to expand the craft too.
- **Godventure** once again have some lovely Christmas resources and ideas, including their beautiful Advent Calendar with stickers available. A pack of 10 will cost £54/€60



- Finally, no newsletter would be complete without a **MuddyChurch** trail! As always there's loads of options for the festive season, Advent trails, Christingle trails, Epiphany trails and more. No excuses for boring empty Churchyards this season!

Crafters

Corner



A simple but beautiful wool wrapped nativity ornament. This can be done simply as a craft or even as a prayer activity encouraging families to wrap the wool as you pray for families around the world this Christmas. Alternatively you can use the prayer script used in our Sheep Wrap prayer activity which you can find by clicking [here](#). The image and instructions for the wool wrapped nativity are from [Big Family Blessings](#)

Use up your egg cartons by creating super cute angels with dangly legs! Using beads & feathers this is a lovely easy craft to do with your children. Image and instructions can be found on [Meaningful Mama](#) blog page

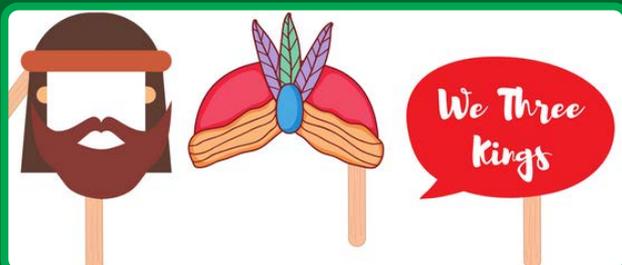


A throwback craft now from [Flame Creative Ministries](#).

The Epiphany chalk door blessing .

You can download the printable door blessing or make your own.

If you print from the website please note that the back of the blessing pack is for 2021 so you will need to create your own version for this year!



If you missed it last year, this is your chance to make your very own Nativity photobooth as modelled by our front cover star! A totally free download from our website will give you all the characters - even the donkey! Print and laminate for extra durability. Pick up your download by clicking [HERE](#).

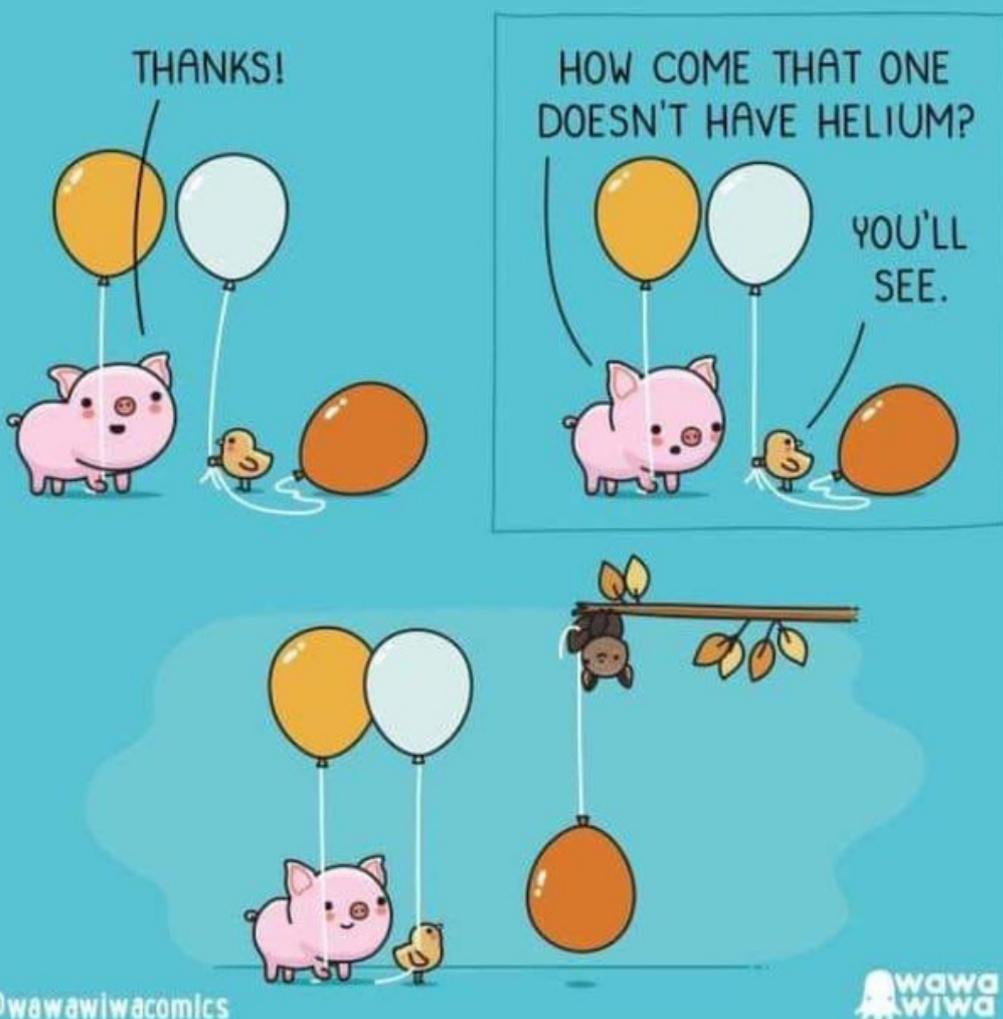
DON'T FORGET TO BOOK FOR
THE NEXT ONLINE WORKSHOP.

[CLICK HERE](#)

HOW TO BE AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Online Workshop

November 23rd 7.30 pm



How to include, support, create places of belonging for, and spiritually grow children, young people and young adults with additional needs.

With Kay Morgan-Gurr,
Co-Founder of Additional
Needs Alliance



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CONNECT WITH US

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