

Gingerbread & Generosity Advent 2025



Church of Ireland 
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families



**Bishops'
Appeal**
Church of Ireland World Aid and Development



Family Pack





Welcome to Gingerbread and Generosity, a new Advent project in partnership with SAMS Ireland, the Bishops' Appeal, and the Board for Ministry with Children and Families (BCFM).

This Advent and Christmas season we invite you to include “Gingerbread and Generosity” as part of your parish and family celebrations.

During the Advent and Christmas season, we are looking forward to celebrating the birth of Christ. Each year we remember that when Jesus was born, it was in a stable because there was no room in the inn. The Son of God knew what it was like to be homeless, to be vulnerable. He came to give us hope and a future.

Our theme, “Houses of Hope”, highlights the need for everyone to have a place to call home. We will focus on two projects in South America supported by the local Anglican Church, providing care for homeless families and individuals, and providing safe places for vulnerable young girls to live.

The packs explain how, when we are generous with what we have, we can make a significant difference in the lives of those who are dealing with a lot of challenges. A small amount of money can make a big difference and bring comfort and dignity to someone in need. For example, in Chile £/€16 provides a quality blanket to keep someone warm through the cold nights. £/€10 buys a T-shirt. £/€11 gives someone a special Christmas meal with chicken, potatoes, rice, and a small gift. £/€5 provides a simple but nourishing lunch of chicken, rice, and dessert. £/€5 buys a toiletries pack. £/€5 enables a child to receive a small gift, a reminder they're not forgotten. £/€4 buys underwear.

In the Safe House Project in Brazil, £/€7 covers the cost for a girl's food for the day. £/€7 buys a basic item of clothing. £/€10 covers the fuel needed to get the girls to school for a week. £/€30 provides a session with a psychologist.

The included packs contain service outlines for church and school settings, such as assemblies, encouraging children to participate and pray for those in need. Your generosity can make a significant impact, and even a small donation can help.

You can contribute through the Bishops' Appeal Donation page or the Church of Ireland website “store” by selecting the Gingerbread and Generosity option. All funds raised will be sent via SAMS in the new year to support these projects in Chile and Brazil.

Thank you for your support.

Hilary

Hilary McClay
Bishops' Appeal Education Advisor





Gingerbread & Generosity Advent 2025



Welcome to Gingerbread and Generosity 2025: Houses of Hope!

We're so excited to share this festive pack with you! It's bursting with creative ideas and ready-to-use resources for you and the children in your household. It also raises awareness and support for two incredible projects backed by The Bishops' Appeal.

One of the main activities we'd love you to enjoy together is the decoration of a gingerbread House of Hope. We have recipe's and templates to help you do this. Once you have finished your masterpiece, and before it gets gobbled up(!) take a quick picture of it (or a selfie with it if you wish!) and enter our Houses of Hope competition, where you have a chance to win one of two €50/£50 One4All vouchers! Check out the poster in this pack for all the details.

So, what's inside this pack?

- Gingerbread house recipe/templates.
- A printable trail with questions for all ages that you can place around your house.
- Fun puzzles and colouring pages
- Games and craft activities to keep everyone engaged throughout the advent season.

However you use this pack, we hope that you have fun, learn about families in other countries and think about ways we can help each other.

Let's make this Advent season one to remember, full of creativity, connection, and compassion. 🧡



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Making your Gingerbread House



There are two different options when it comes to the gingerbread houses you wish to decorate. You can either bake it yourself (or find a lovely member of your congregation who is blessed with the gift of baking!)...or buy them!

For those of you brave or blessed enough to bake your own, you will find in this pack a recipe and template to help you along - of course, you do not have to follow either of these if you have your own secret recipe!



For those of you who - like me - are the furthest possible distance from being a Bake Off contender, there are some very good and affordable options for buying your basic gingerbread houses.

Our go to option is IKEA's Vintersaga house which costs €3.95/£3.50 each. At the time of writing none of the supermarkets have released details of their build your own gingerbread house, but usually these come in a little more expensive For example last year Aldi's came in at €6/£5.

Alternatively, if you are looking for a bulk order it is worth contacting your local bakery and asking for a price for batches of 10 gingerbread house blanks.



Decorations are altogether easier to purchase - but do please consider the choking hazards of small sweets and always check for allergies.



Make your own Gingerbread House

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Ingredients:

250g unsalted butter
200g dark muscovado sugar
7 tbsp golden syrup
600g plain flour
2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
4 tsp ground ginger
2 egg whites
500g icing sugar plus extra to dust



Step 1: Make the Dough

Heat oven to 200°C (180°C fan) / Gas 6.

In a pan, melt butter, sugar, and syrup.

In a large bowl, mix flour, bicarbonate of soda, and ginger.

Stir in the melted mixture to form a stiff dough. Add a tiny splash of water if needed.

Step 2: Roll & Cut Shapes

Roll out $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dough on baking paper to the thickness of two £1 coins.

Use a template to cut out house parts: 2 sides, front, back, and 2 roof panels.

Re-roll scraps to make more pieces or Christmas trees if you like.

Step 3: Bake the Pieces

Bake all pieces for 12 minutes until firm and slightly darker at the edges.

Cool slightly, trim using the template again, then cool completely.

Step 4: Make Icing & Build Walls

Mix egg whites and icing sugar to make thick icing.

Put icing in a piping bag.

Pipe icing along the edges and stick the walls together.

Use a bowl inside to support them while they dry (a few hours is best).

Step 5: Add Roof & Decorate

Once walls are dry, attach the roof panels. Hold them in place for a few minutes.

Let the whole house dry completely (overnight is ideal).

Decorate with icing and sweeties

Roof x2

**Template
for small
Gingerbread
triangular
house.**

Front/Back x2

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COMPETITION!

WIN A €50/£50 ONE4ALL VOUCHER!

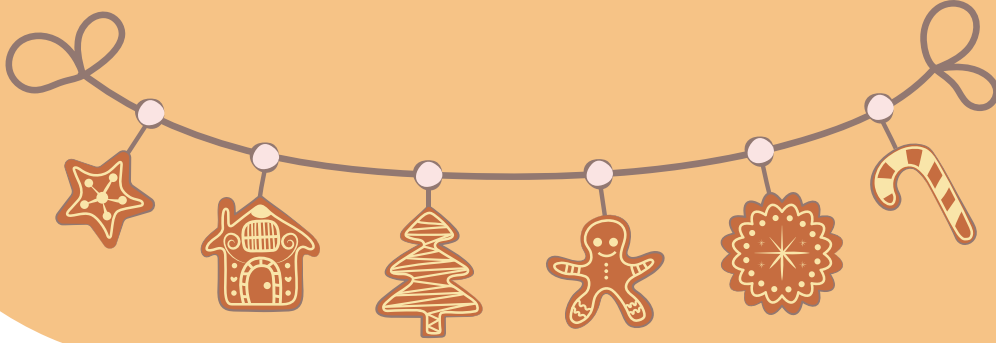
To be in with a chance to win a One4All voucher. Follow these simple steps:

- **Take a photo of your family's decorated gingerbread house along with your smiling faces if you wish 😊**
- **Scan the QR code and upload the photo with your contact details.**

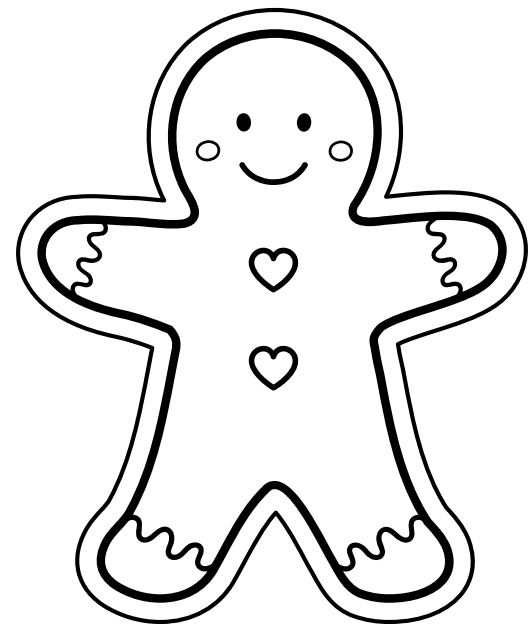
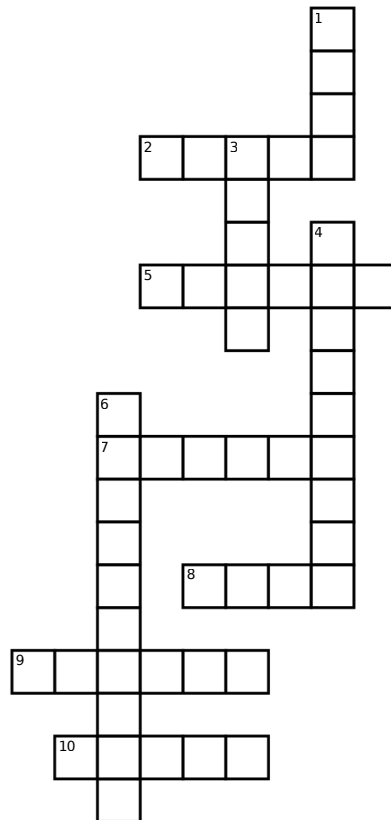
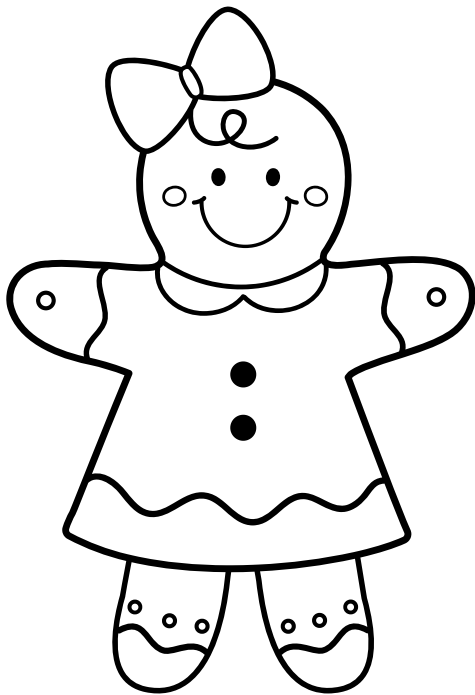
(Your details will not be used for any other purpose than this competition and by entering you give permission for us to use your image on our social media platforms and contact you should you win.)

The winning houses will be chosen by our projects in Brazil & Chile and winners announced in the first week of January





Crossword



Down:

1. A feeling that we get when others help us
3. The wet, sweet and sticky stuff you pipe onto your gingerbread house
4. Small round sweets that make great decorations
6. Stripey, minty sweets that often hang on a Christmas tree

Across:

2. Sounds like you are not warm - the country of Hope for the Homeless project
5. The main ingredient of the edible men
7. The time of year leading up to Christmas
8. The charity who supports the projects in Brazil and Chile
9. What country is the ReVive safe house in?
10. Whose birth do we remember at this time of year?





Gingerbread Wordsearch

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c y p w g t j j s m n v k l c
s b j c u e q m e a u c c j a
g y g b h k n c t b f e x e n
i c i i j i g e h x i e i q d
c h k x n w l w r h p o t z y
i i b z q g b e i o o i n y c
n m a u g l e t u n s u j a a
g n k t j o y r b t t i s h n
s e e m k v r q b r s e t e e
d y w i r e s y y r a r r y l
d s h u z r f u h g e z o k b
v d q o q z r h g o l a i f z
p h u z p a p x a a r c d l y
c z s i d e r a d p r r o o f
j e l l y t o t s s q n h t b



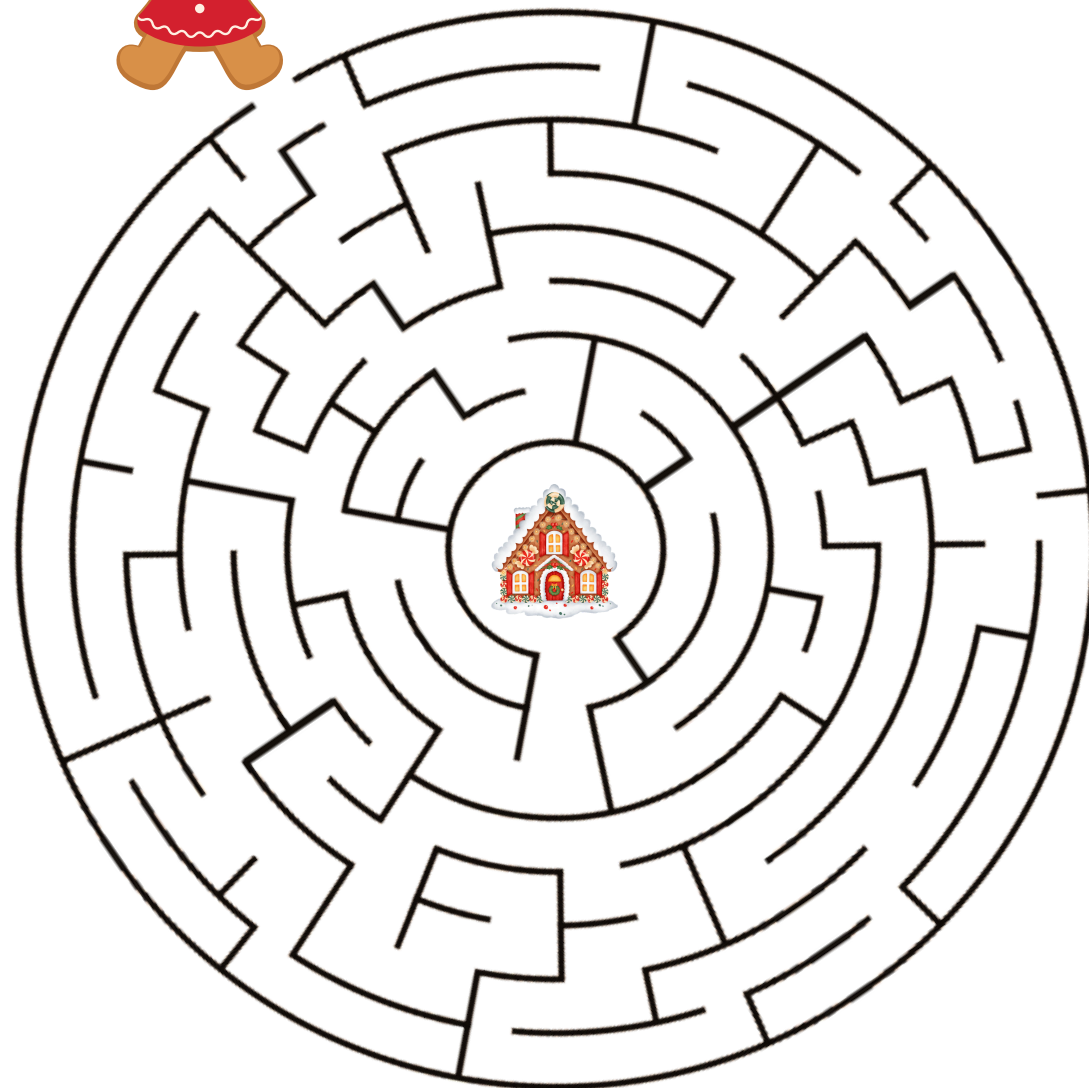
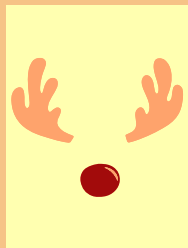
Gingerbread
Winter
Brazil
Candycane
Sugar
Roof

Chile
Hope
House
Bake
Safety
Love

Icing
Chimney
Jellytots
Generosity

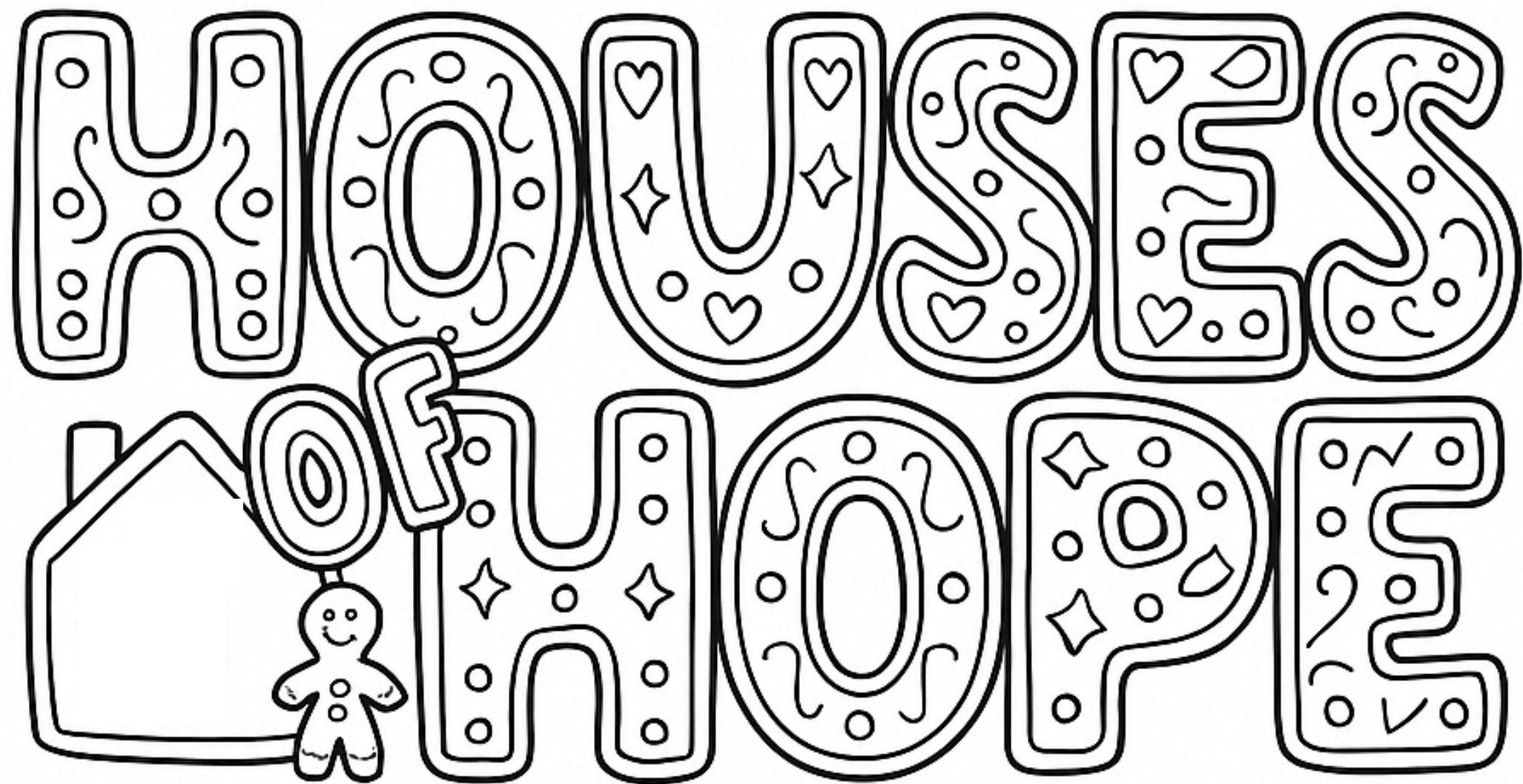


Can you match our festive friends with their missing parts?



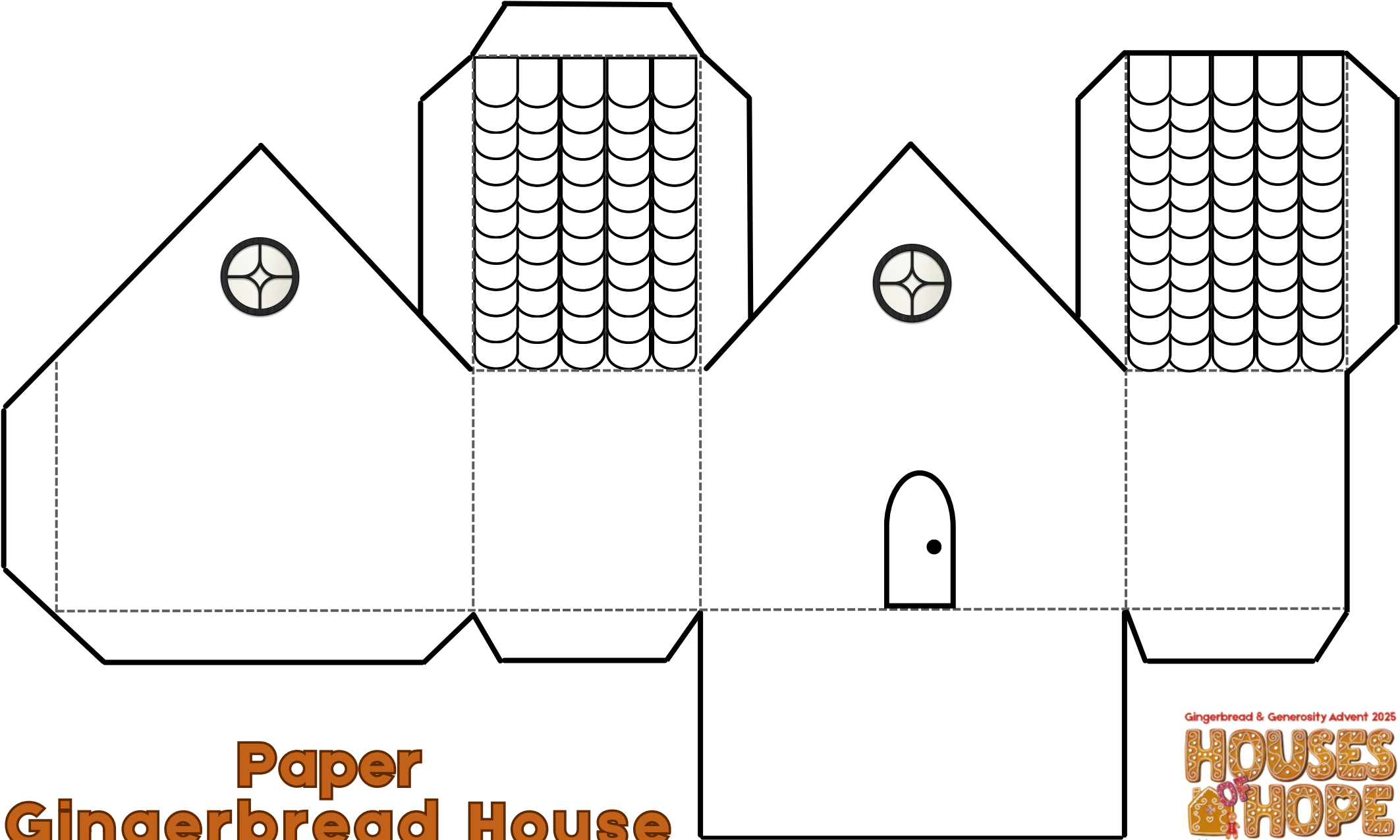
Can you help Gráinne find the way to her house?

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Decorate your house by drawing sweets and candy canes or anything you wish!
Cut along the solid lines, fold along the dotted lines and stick your house together!



Paper Gingerbread House

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Gingerbread Scented No Bake Play-dough

The smell of gingerbread is so warming and comforting and it makes for the perfect sensory scented play-dough.

Below is a simple no bake recipe that you can use - this will make a ball of dough big enough for 2 children to play with...or three if they have very small hands!

As always with any messy play, make sure that children are supervised at all times - especially as this smells quite edible!

150g plain flour

100g salt

2 tsp. cream of tartar

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

200ml water

1 Teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 Teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 Tablespoon ground ginger

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

Add in the oil.

Then gradually mix in the warm water and knead until the dough comes together to form a lovely ball of sensory squishyness! (I have to admit I may take a little longer than necessary kneading the play-dough before I hand it over to my kids! - there has to be some perks to this job right?!)

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Gingerbread Scented Cloud Dough

Cloud Dough is simple to make and fun to play with - it holds together in a similar way to Kinetic Sand and using this recipe you can fill the air with the smell of gingerbread and joy!

- 2 Kg bag of plain flour
- 240g ground cinnamon
- 4 Tablespoons ground ginger
- 2 Tablespoon ground nutmeg (optional)
- 2 Tablespoon allspice (optional)
- 480 ml vegetable oil

How to Make Taste-Safe Cloud Dough

1. Heat-Treat the Flour (for safety):

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
- Spread the flour evenly on a baking sheet.
- Bake for 5 minutes.
- Let the flour cool completely before using it.

2. Mix the Dough:

- Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl or a plastic box if you are using this as your sensory box. If you don't have a range of spices available focus on using
- lots of Cinnamon or Allspice as they bring the strongest aroma 😊.
- Add vegetable oil to the cooled flour.
- Mix thoroughly until the dough is dry but moldable.
- The ideal texture is one that clumps together when pressed, without being sticky or wet.
- Make sure there are no dry patches of flour remaining.

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Gingerbread Bowling

To make your homemade gingerbread bowling alley you will need:

- 6 paper cups
- A ball made from scrunched up foil large enough to knock the paper cups down - or if you have a light tennis ball you can use this too.
- Cut out the gingerbread houses on the next page and stick them onto the paper cups.



To play, simply stack the cups in a triangle formation as shown in the image.

Take it in turns to throw the ball at the cups, you get a point for each cup that falls down.

Winner is the person with the most points after 10 throws each.





Candy Cane Hunt

A super simple way to keep children active and entertained. You can either use real candy canes and hide them around your house/church hall, or print and cut out the candy canes on the next page. Print multiple pages if you have lots of children and a large hall!

If using the printed versions you could have an edible prize for the person who find the most paper canes.





Roll a Gingerbread House

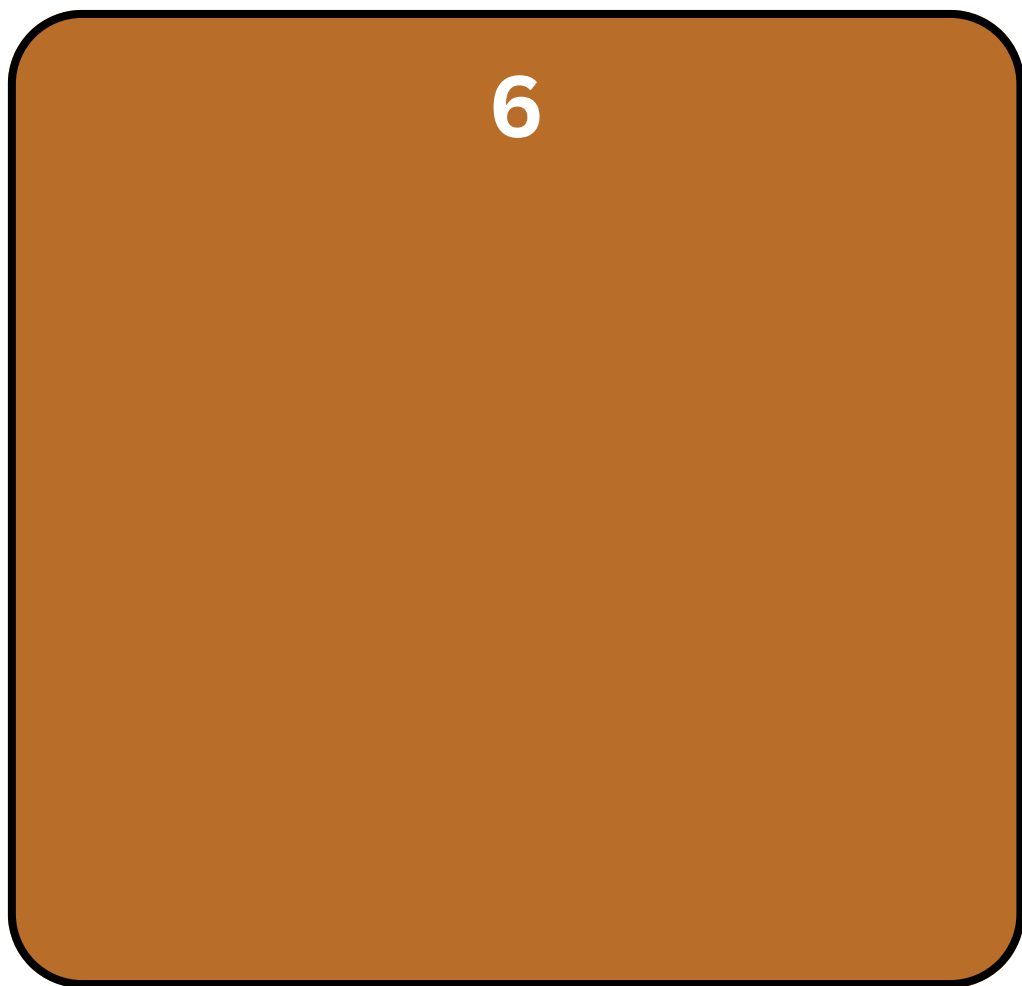
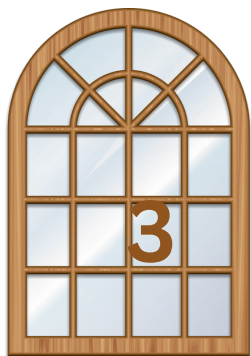
YOU WILL NEED A DICE TO PLAY THIS GAME.

Print the house pieces on the next page onto card. Cut out the parts of your House (one house per player). If you are able to laminate the pieces they will last longer.

Each part of the gingerbread house has a number that links to a number on the dice.

Take turns to throw the dice - you must throw a number 6 first to get started with your main house base (if you are short on time you can skip this rule).

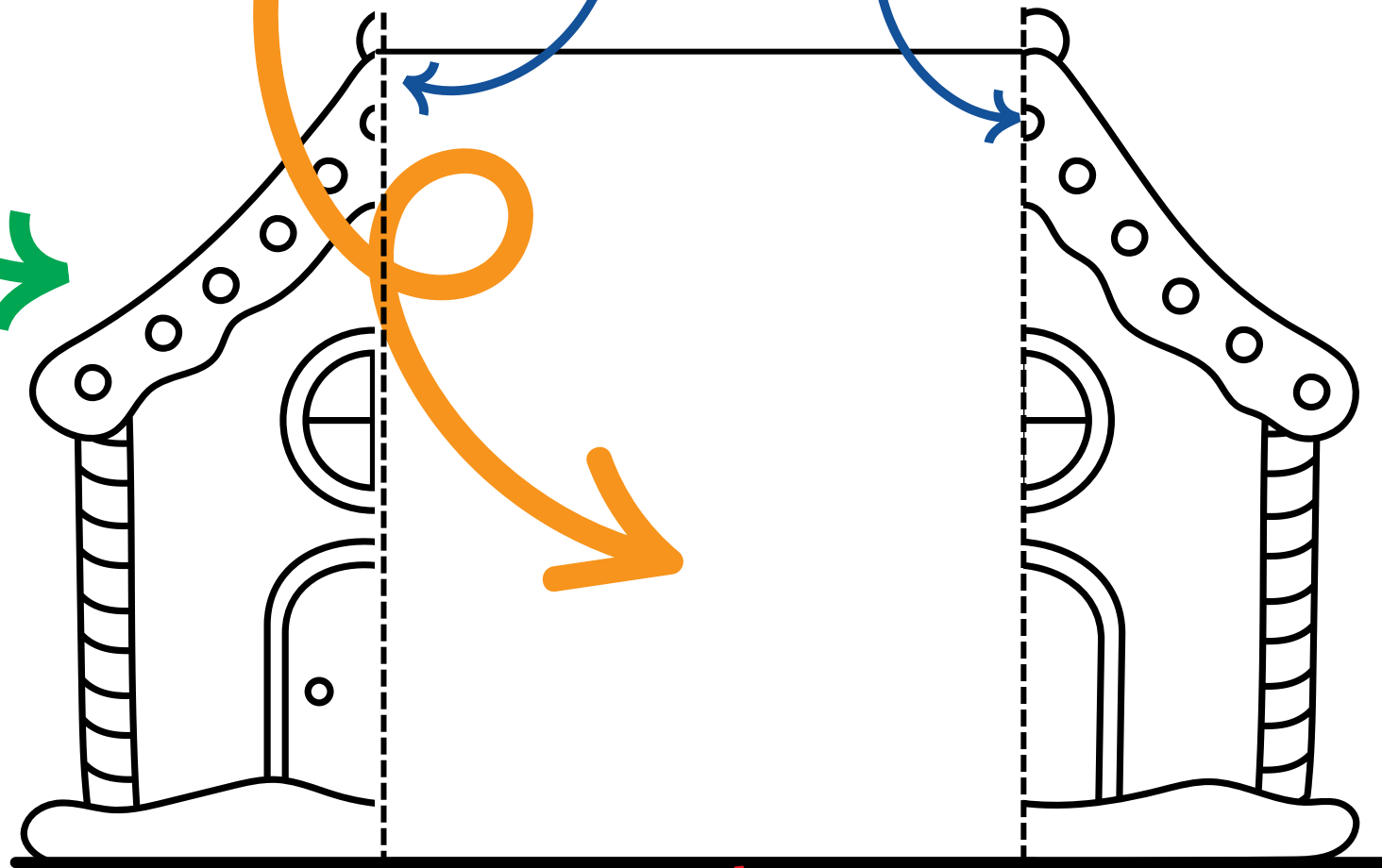
Then see who can roll the numbers they need to build their house first!



1. Colour your Gingerbread house any colours you want 😊

2. Inside you can draw yourself, your friends and family and any pets!

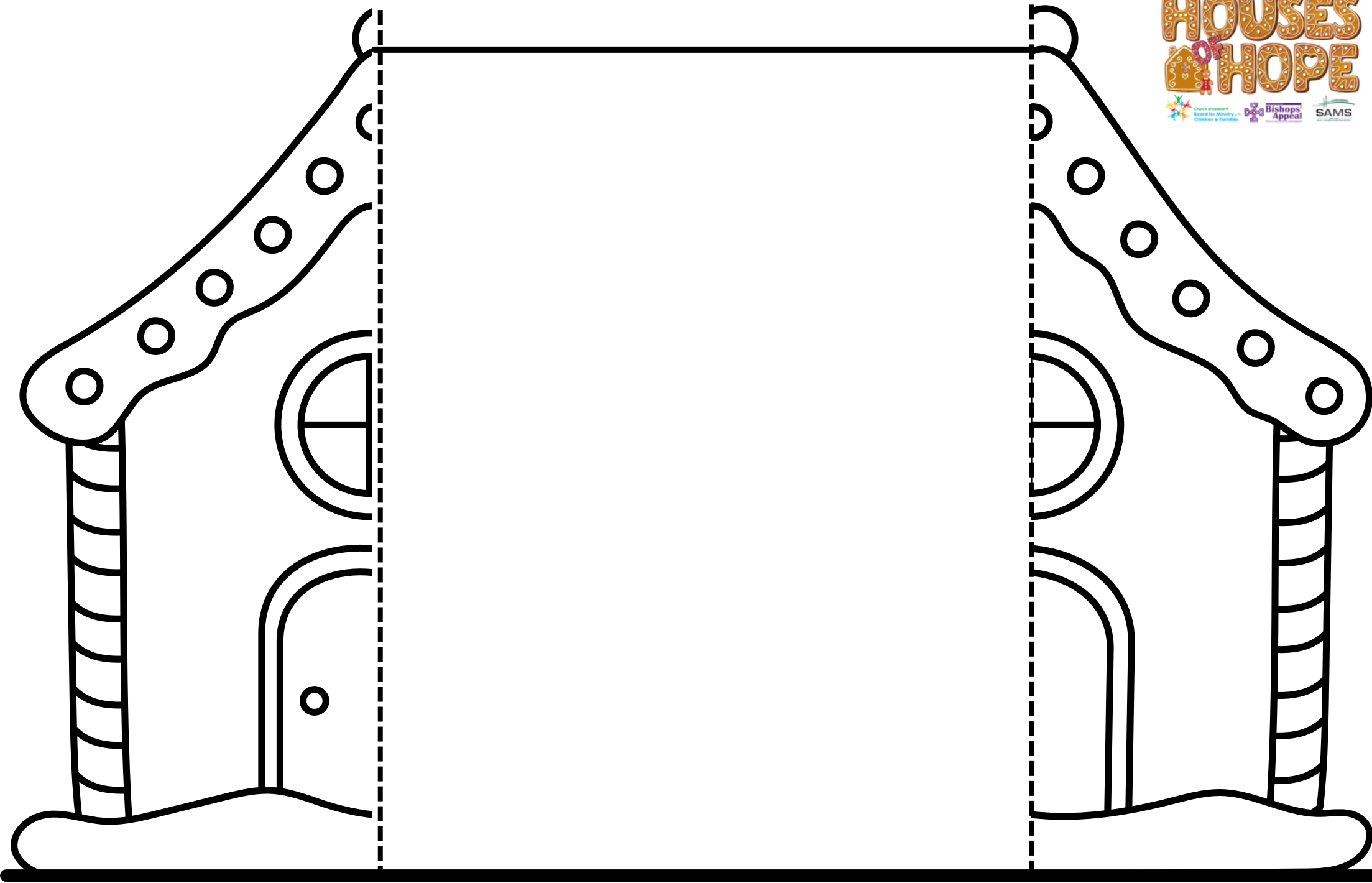
3. Fold the paper back along the dotted line



4. Bend the folded sections into the middle to bring the house together

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Tricky Trail Challenge

1. What does the name “Olinda” mean?

.....

2. How many young people can live in the Safe House at one time?

.....

3. What colour are the beans that go into a Feijoada?

.....

4. How many young girls have been helped since the Safe House opened 11 years ago?

.....

5. How many people in Brazil struggle to find enough food for their family?

.....

6. What year did the Community Kitchen in Chile start?

.....

7. What is the capital city of Chile?

.....

8. What ingredients would you find in a bowl of Cazuela?

.....

9. What helps to make the Community Kitchen a warm and welcoming place?

.....

10. Name two of the things the Community Kitchen give away in the winter?

.....



Gingerbread Trail Challenge

1 What does Gary the gingerbread man have on his jumper?

.....

2. What is Gráinne wearing on her head?

.....

3. How many wheels are on the train?

.....

4. How many hearts are on the gingerbread house?

.....

5. What is Gemma holding in her hand?

.....

6. How many gingerbread heart cookies can you find?

.....

7. What is Gordon doing?

.....

8.What is Ger dressed up as?

.....

9. How many gingerbread men are holding hands?

.....

10. What game is Garret playing?

.....



Trail Answers:

Tricky trail:

1. "Oh Beautiful"
2. Up to 24
3. Black Beans
4. 60
5. About 61 million
6. 2019
7. Santiago
8. Beef or Chicken, potatoes, sweet corn on the cob, rice, and green peppers.
9. Teamwork
10. 2 of any of the following: Blankets, warm clothing, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and soap,

Gingerbread person trail:

1. Snowflake
2. A bow
3. Six
4. Three
5. Candy Cane
6. Six
7. DAB or dancing
8. Cowboy
9. Five
10. Soccer/Football



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Did you know?

The Safe House in Brazil is not far from the city of Olinda, a name that means “Oh, beautiful.”

Something beautiful is happening as the local community and the church are working together like one big family.

They share food, help, and support families who do not have enough. It's a story of beauty in Olinda.





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Did you know?

Up to 24 young people are homed in the ReVive safe house in Brazil at any one time.

The house provides a safe place for the young girls to live and a chance for them to get back into education, receive the necessary help they need, learn new things and begin to restore their life, renew their hope for the future.



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Did you know?

In Brazil, the most famous black bean dish is feijoada, a rich, tasty stew made with black beans and different kinds of meat served with rice.

Feijoada is so special that it's known as Brazil's national dish!

This is one of the favourite dishes in the ReVive Safe House.





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Did you know?

The ReVive Safe house in Brazil opened 11 years ago and was the first and only home in the city for girls.

Since then more than 60 girls have found safety, hope and a future living in the house.



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HOUSES OF HOPE

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Did you know?

The Revive Project also runs a Community Food Market to help families who don't have enough food.

Some families in Brazil don't have enough to eat every day — this is called food insecurity.

Right now, about 61 million people in Brazil struggle to find food.

To help, the market uses extra food that would otherwise be thrown away. This means they are helping people and the planet at the same time.

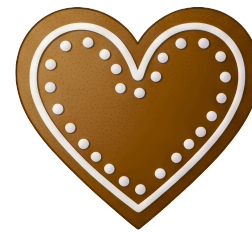


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Did you know?

The Comedor Solidario, which means The Community Kitchen started in 2019 in Santiago, Chile, to help people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though the pandemic is over, the local church still keeps its doors open welcoming around 120 homeless people and families, sharing warm meals, kindness, and a safe place to rest.





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Did you know?

The Community Kitchen project is in a big city called Santiago, which is the capital of Chile. That means it's the most important city in the country, and about seven million people live there!

The name Santiago means Saint James. Lots of places in South America are named after him because he stands for things like faith, and protection. That's just like what the Community Kitchen does—it helps people who are going through tough times by giving them food, care, and hope, and walking beside them like a good friend.



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Did you know?

In Chile, there's a dish called 'cazuela', a comforting stew made with either beef or chicken.

Other ingredients are potatoes, sweet corn on the cob, rice, and green peppers. As it cooks on the stove a yummy smell fills the air, making it taste like warmth and care.

At the homeless project, cazuela is a favourite dish during the cold winter months.





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Did you know?

The Community Kitchen in Chile is a team effort supported by around 20 volunteers. Each volunteer has an important role to play.

Some volunteers help prepare the food, while others serve meals and make sure everyone feels welcome. Many take time to chat, offering friendly conversation and a listening ear. After the meal, the volunteers work together to tidy up. Teamwork helps make The Community Kitchen a warm and welcoming place for everyone who comes through its doors.





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Did you know?

The Community Kitchen does more than provide meals, it offers support to people experiencing homelessness.

The volunteers give toiletries like toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and soap, these help people feel clean and cared for.

In the colder months, they also offer warm clothing and blankets. By helping with these simple things, the kitchen becomes a happy place full of hope, warmth, and friendship for people who really need it.

