

WINTER



Church of Ireland ✝
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families

www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org

Intergenerational
Connections



Hope
Trumps



Gingerbread
Galore



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WELCOME

November is upon us and I am sure you are already seeing the first flakes of glitter drifting from your shelves and jumpers! As always in this newsletter we will cover Christmas ideas and signpost you to some amazing resources created by a multitude of organisations. Even if you are already organised for this year's Advent season there is plenty to bank for next year too.

We have also dipped into the New Year this time and thought about ways you can help all ages in your Church family work together through the long, dark and cold days of January and February. There are still great opportunities to engage with your local families and encourage them on their faith journeys together.

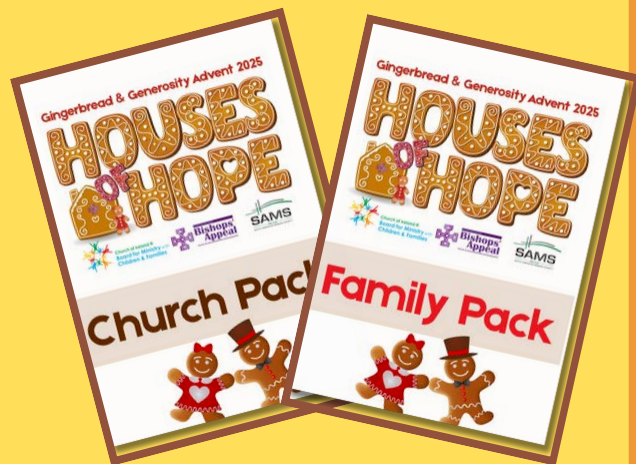
As always we would love to hear from you about all that's going on in your parish, and we will continue to pray for you in all you do.

Many blessings,

Rachael



GINGERBREAD & GENEROSITY



Hopefully by now you will have heard at least a little about our Advent Appeal this year where we have teamed up with Bishops Appeal and SAMS (South American Missions Society).

Gingerbread and Generosity, we hope, will become an annual event with a different focus each time. This year the theme is Houses of Hope because all the money raised will go towards two projects in South America who provide vital shelter and support for the most vulnerable.

ReVive run a safe house for young girls who have been exploited and provides them with security, education and a future. In Chile the local church is helping to provide food, shelter and clothing to homeless men, women and families. There is a community kitchen, a clothing bank and chance to connect with a community and feel less isolated.

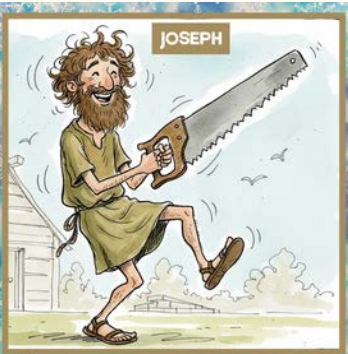


We would love your church to host a Houses of Hope Gingerbread House decorating event!

This event can take place at the end of a service as a fun time for all ages to connect, or you could organize it as a **Messy Church** event open to the wider community, with an entry fee for families to decorate pre-prepared gingerbread houses. Additionally, this can be incorporated into your **Sunday Club** or **Toddler group** Advent celebrations.

The church pack includes everything you need to host the event, including a trail and quiz that engages participants of all ages while educating them about the supported projects. We also provide two service outlines with talks that you can adapt as needed—one is tailored for the Advent period, and the other can be used after Christmas or as an alternative to Christingle. There is also a family pack that you can print and give to families, allowing them to participate at home with craft templates, puzzles, and recipes. [**DOWNLOAD PACKS HERE.**](#)

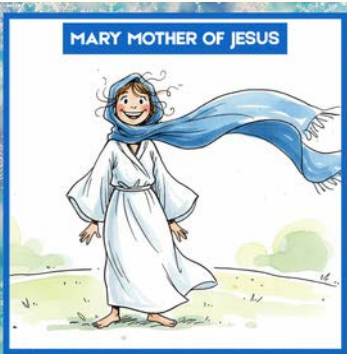
No matter which pack you choose, anyone who decorates a gingerbread house can take a photo and upload it to the competition page for a chance to **win a £50/€50 One4All voucher.**



JOSEPH

Carpenter, engaged to Mary, freaked out when he found out she was pregnant! Then had a nap, dreamt an angel told him it was ok, so did the right thing and married Mary. Taught Jesus cool carpentry skills. Key verse: "When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph married Mary."

FAITH.....60
KINDNESS.....90
LOVE.....90
HUMILITY.....80
MEANESS.....70
SPARKLE.....70



MARY MOTHER OF JESUS

Young woman who loved God. Engaged to Joseph, visited by an angel, gets told she will be the mother of Jesus, the son of God. Sings a song of praise! Key verse: "My soul praises the Lord; my heart is happy because God is my Saviour."

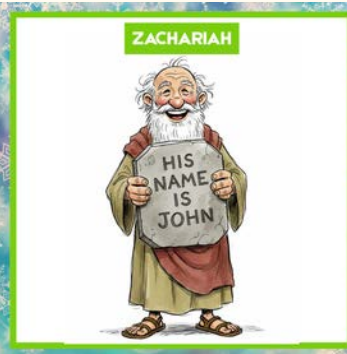
FAITH.....100
KINDNESS.....90
LOVE.....90
HUMILITY.....90
MEANESS.....0
SPARKLE.....50



DONKEY

Chosen transportation of the Messiah on two key occasions. Slightly embarrassed by his fame but loves to tell his friends the story anyway! Bares the mark of a cross on his back to make sure everyone remembers who he carried. Key verse: Behold, your king is coming to you...humble and mounted on a donkey

FAITH.....80
KINDNESS.....70
LOVE.....50
HUMILITY.....80
MEANESS.....10
SPARKLE.....5



ZACHARIAH

Jewish Priest - very old, father of John the Baptist. Didn't believe Angel Gabriel when told he and his wife would have a baby, so lost his voice until John was born. Key Verse: He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, 'His name is John.' Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God."

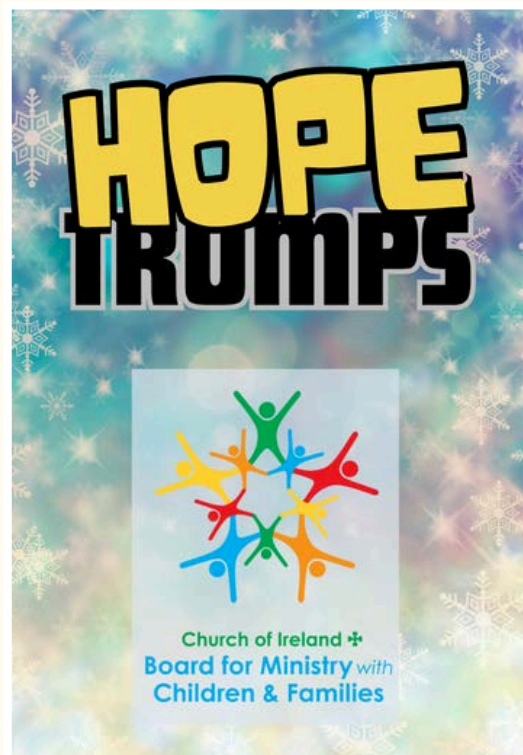
FAITH.....40
KINDNESS.....60
LOVE.....60
HUMILITY.....30
MEANESS.....20
SPARKLE.....2

Play Away Nativity

This Advent we are taking you back to your youthful days with our own version of the retro game of Top Trumps - Hope Trumps! 😊

Featuring all the characters from the story of the first Christmas - including some you might not expect! You can download our game FREE and print it onto card (back to back printing will ensure they look best), cutting each card out to form a pack. Then give the packs away to your families to play at home over Christmas...or take them into your office to play with your colleagues during the dull office party! 😊

[Download your packs HERE](#)



This game is a great age leveller and so a wonderful way to encourage intergenerational connections in your church over advent. You could give out packs to your congregation and have a "Trump-Off" competition at the end of a service. ..be careful how you explain that phrase though, you could end up with a very different take on how to win! 😈

JOINING TOGETHER THE GENERATIONS

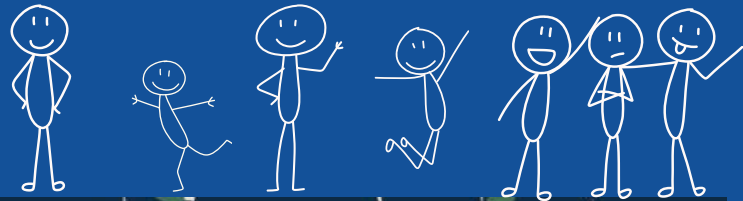
EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITIES

All too often Christmas events in our churches can be segregated affairs – the Nativity service for the Children and their doting parents, followed by mince pies and chocolates. The choral carol concerts for the more mature followed by mulled wine and cheese!

Like any family it is nice to have time spent with your own age group, to either talk about the state of local politics or run around like a maniac high on sugar (and that's just the choral group!). But if we only ever stayed in our peer groups, how dull life would be!

This year, why not try to find new ways to get young, old and all the in-betweens, chatting, sharing, laughing and building a true faith family.

To help you get started, why not take a look at the Scottish Bible Society's website where there's a load of ideas and resources, many of them free, to download and use. Click [HERE](#) to see their range.



Ideas for an Intergenerational Christmas



FLIPPING THE PERFORMANCE

Particularly at this time of year the children get put on stage to "perform." Relatives and friends sigh and laugh as the baby Jesus is dropped into the manger, the angels halo slips slowly down over their eyes, the donkey's back legs trip over the front legs and they crash head first into the Christmas tree!

As cute as it is, many children get pulled into so many performances – school, church, visiting the retirement homes – and the message can often get lost in the midst of learning lines and fighting over who gets to be Mary. So why not flip the performance and have the adults in your church up on stage in dodgy costumes for a change? Invite the children to watch and laugh and learn alongside the adults. Alternatively have the whole congregation come dressed as characters from the Nativity and lead an Instant performance where people stand up when their character is mentioned.

It doesn't need to be a West End production, and to make it even easier for you, on the next page we've gathered 4 free Instant Nativity scripts for you to choose from.



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INSTANT NATIVITY SCRIPTS

Engage Worship's Scratch Nativity: *This nativity needs no rehearsal, and only a small amount of preparation. This can be advertised for everyone to come along dressed as any character from the story, and it doesn't matter how many of each character you have (although at least one of each is helpful!): Angel, Mary, Joseph, Star, Shepherd, Wise man, Donkey, other animals (optional) ...and a King Herod . The majority of words are delivered by a narrator (in amusing, rhyming form). Download [HERE](#)*



Shelley Spires "Hope for Everyone": We've featured Shelley's work in previous years and this year she has yet another wonderful rhyming nativity for you to use. A positive message of Hope for the whole community. Easy to run and beautiful to narrate – and it's always lovely to promote talent from our very own island! You can email Shelley for a copy shelleyspiersauthor@gmail.com and she will get back to you 😊

The Reflectionary "Not a very silent night": This is an instant Nativity play suitable for schools, all-age worship, crib services or Messy Church. It has a few, very simple props and uses the tune of 'The 12 Days of Christmas' to tell the story of God with us. And No Rehearsal Needed! (Yay!) Download [HERE](#)



Bible Society England: "The Amazing Advent-ure" As always the Bible Society pull it out of the bag with their Instant Nativity and accompanying resources. This year Join Rose and Sam on their hunt to find the true meaning of Christmas in their super special, surprising Advent calendar! Click [HERE](#) to sign up and download the free script. There are books you can purchase to give away to families but sadly only if you have an address in Northern Ireland.



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Click [HERE](#) to sign up for the online PACE course with
Lisa Campbell, founder of Wonderful Me.

(Please note this course will NOT be recorded for our website)



January 21st
@7.30 pm

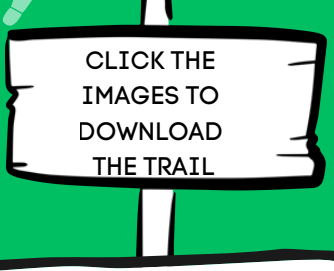
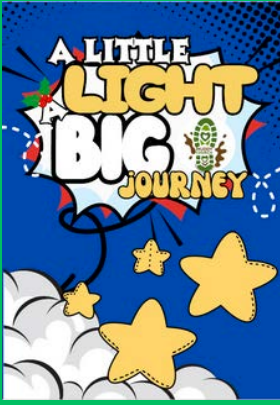


Bringing a welcoming, relational approach to children's ministry. Whenever I am asked what the most useful starting point to building a children's or youth ministry where every child thrives, I always answer - PACE! Discover the power of a PACE approach, focusing on Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy, to create a nurturing, engaging environment for every child. This engaging and interactive session is designed to equip you with practical tools and strategies to enhance your children and families ministry - with plenty of opportunity to connect and learn from others as you reflect on your own experience and setting



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● **MUDDY CHURCH: A Little Light, A Big Journey** Once again Lucy brings you a beautiful bumper pack inviting all ages to explore the Christmas story outdoors. This resource features a five-part nature trail that includes interactive games, crafts, and reflective questions. It also includes a specially written, ready-to-use interactive nativity story, along with over 20 crafts, games, and activity sheets, all available for easy download..

● **CofI CFM: Interactive Family Trail.**

We've updated our interactive trail with QR codes at each station, allowing trail walkers to scan and hear characters from the Christmas story share their experiences, from Mary breaking the news to Joseph, to Elizabeth's surprise, and the shepherds recounting their amazing night. For those who prefer not to use QR codes, each station also features actions and prompts for reflection..




Jesus: At this time of year we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We focus on the stable and on the baby.

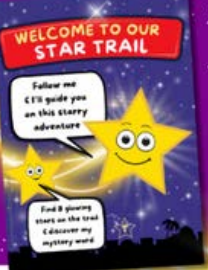
But Jesus didn't stay a baby. He grew up in a world that was full of chaos and pain, war and hurt. He was teased, treated badly by those around him and even killed by those who hated him. And yet through it all, He showed love. He forgave those who hurt him. He cared for those who the world ignored. He listened to Children, the sick and the elderly, gave time to people who others saw as nobodies. He loved with a perfect love, a love that still reaches out to us all today - a love that never ends, never runs out on us, never lets us down.

Quietly where you are, draw a cross on the palm of your hand and thank God for His love - for sending Jesus,



"I have loved you with an everlasting love" Jeremiah 31:3.

Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God...This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him. True love is God's love for us, not our love for God. He sent his Son as the way to take away our sins. That is how much God loved us, dear friends! So we also must love each other." 1 John 4: 7-11



Christmas Star Trail

Ideal for Schools or Churches
Can be used Indoors/Outside

sunhatsandwellieboots.com

Explore the Nativity Story as you follow the Trail

● **SUNHATS & WELLIE BOOTS: Star Trail**

Another beautiful, simple trail from Sunhats and Wellie Boots, perfect for younger travellers. It features engaging text, bright illustrations, and fun activities. With nine trail signs, it's suitable for all ages and can be used indoors or outdoors. There's also a downloadable colour-your-way Nativity worksheet for families, making it ideal for toddler groups.

● **ROOTS: Community Nativity Trail**

Invite your community to a festive Nativity trail around your town, church, or school. Participants can explore at their own pace using QR code posters displayed in shop windows, completing activity sheets for prizes. Alternatively, host the event in one afternoon/evening with volunteers dressed as nativity characters. It's free for Roots subscribers, or you can buy a downloadable PDF for £12.



Nativity trail



Invite your community to join in a festive and symbolic journey around your local area or church grounds

rootsforchurches.com/nativity



Whole Church Winter Wonders

What happens in your church after the Christmas rush is over? I know it might seem a strange thing to ask when we haven't even started December yet!

The winter months can provide an opportunity to encourage your whole church family to gather together. When the weather is cold and the days short, it can be a lonely and hard time for many ages.

So why not use this time to provide opportunities for connection, warmth, laughter and sharing life together?

So what could you do, where do you start?

First thing to think about are the skills and talents in your congregation, not the obvious ones but the ones that people develop in their spare time. Hobbies can be some of the greatest intergenerational connector and the more traditional the better.

You only have to switch on your tv to realise that there's a genuine hunger for embracing traditional skills. The Sewing Bee celebrating all thing stitching, Tom Daly's Game of Wool making knitting uber cool again, The Great Pottery Throw Down and of course the ever enduring Bake Off to name just a few. So why not use these programmes as inspiration and discover who does what in their spare time to see what you could run.



SOME ALL AGE GROUP IDEAS:

Sew Blessed - a sewing group for beginners who follow a simple pattern to make heart bookmarks for Valentines day; **Paint and praise** - simple painting challenges for all abilities with worship music in the background; **Music mash up** - a chance to learn the basics of a specific instrument, you never know, you could discover a new worship team!; **Bake through the Bible** - there's already a great series of books for this - click the underlined text open the links.

There really are so many ideas and we are blessed with some amazingly talented people, encourage them by helping them to encourage others.

Make it clear that these are opportunities for ALL ages to spend time together. Think about the time of day you run it (not during school time, nor too late for those who don't like driving in the dark). Be clear also that children must be accompanied by their parents, this increases the whole family connection and cuts down on the volunteer/child ratios challenge and Access NI/Garda checks.



Festive Families

WAYS TO ENGAGE ALL THE GENERATIONS AT CHRISTMAS

NOVEMBER 12TH @ 7.30PM

Sign Up Now for the Zoom link



Guest Speaker:
Julie Currie



If you missed our Online Workshop with Julie Currie looking at ways to involve all generations this Christmas you can now watch it on our website by clicking [HERE](#). *There's more ideas than you can shake a glitery stick at!*



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