

COME and see

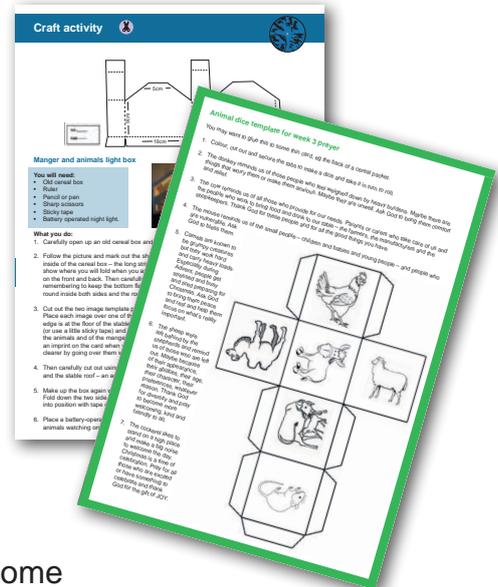


Imagine this arriving through the letter box of those connected with your church. Introducing the **2021 URC Advent resource for families**. People receiving this will know that their local church has remembered them, cares for them and wants to connect with them.

Inside is a wealth of material to enable people of all ages to respond to God's invitation to come and see the birth of Jesus. The contents are organised into four weeks so that each week we see the Christmas story through the eyes of different eye-witnesses. Each week there is an envelope to open containing a creative re-telling with ways to pray, things to do, links to explore and conversation starters to engage all ages. There is more material for each week in an A4 activity book, including the Bible text for the story, and things to do, which range from simple to more complex (and tasty!).

Each box includes:

- An advent spiral calendar decoration to make
- A 'viewer' to make
- Four colourful envelopes to open
- Four stained glass windows to decorate and display
- Four colourful slides to view the Christmas story
- Craft ideas
- Reflective activities
- Justice challenges
- Prayer practices
- Conversation starters
- Games
- Recipes
- A link to the weekly Families on Faith Adventures@Home



You can add a greeting and invitation to join the church in your celebrations this Christmas. Kits come ready for assembly in sets of 10 or 50. Individual kits can be ordered pre-assembled and sealed. There is space on the box for an address sticker and they are letter-box sized.

Please note that there is limited availability, so order early to avoid disappointment. Boxes will be despatched from early to mid November. You may wish to add some other items, such as glitter, glue, wool or string, tissue paper, pens or pencils, but the box works well without them.

Suggestions for how to use the box

The box is aimed at families and households that the church has connection with and wants to bless (rather than church families – although it would still be appropriate for them!).

The range of activities and resources are suitable for most ages and stages.



- **Making connection** – give away boxes by taking to the door (opportunity for conversation) or by post or invite people to collect them from the church.
- **Invitation** – to join with church activities over the advent and Christmas period and beyond.
- **Personalise the box** – with the name of the recipients and with details of who it is from (your church).



You could encourage people to make the recipes or crafts by creating ingredient or materials packs for particular activities, or inviting people to come and do them together as a group (this can even work over zoom with advanced notice!).

Linking your worship

The box is organised into four weeks – each week has a colour, theme and envelope of materials. The whole resource is tied together by the theme ‘Come and See’. The envelopes are opened on 1st, 6th, 13th and 20th December (the first day of Advent and then each Monday), with new resources becoming available online every Monday <https://urc.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures>

Week 1

Come and see with the angels



Luke 1:26-38 – An Angel tells Mary and Matthew. 1:18-24 – An Angel tells Joseph in a dream. The angels begin the story that has been promised over many years.

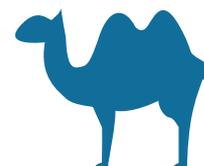
Week 2

Come and see with the wise men

Matthew 2:1-12 – Wise men visit Jesus. They begin their journey, having seen the clues.

Week 3

Come and see with the animals



Luke 2:1-7 – Jesus is born among the animals and placed in a feeding trough.

Week 4

Come and see with the shepherds

Luke 2:8-20 – Shepherds, Come and see – and go and tell others.

Before Advent begins, you might choose to use a Sunday to encourage your congregation to pray a blessing over the boxes and those who will be receiving them.

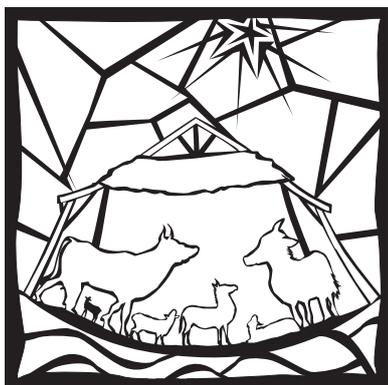
You may prefer to use the week’s theme on the Sunday before the envelope is opened, or the Sunday after to summarise the theme and maximise engagement. See suggestions below.

Online or gathered worship

Ask what people have been doing with their boxes this past week. Invite them to show what they made or share what they have learnt, perhaps inviting different households to pre-record a small item for this. This affirms their 'at home' activity as part of the life of the congregation.

Use the videos and songs from the weekly resource in your shared worship; this connects home and church. Children like seeing things they know from one context in another; it reinforces learning.

Create giant versions of the crafts as a backdrop to your worship or to display outside the church building to reinforce the connection with the life of the church.



You can download the circular logo, stained glass window designs (weeks 1-4), invitation card design and 'Come and See' bunting design from the URC website www.urchurch.org.uk/advent-come-see, where you will also find the weekly stories and activities if you wish to print more for your congregation.

Invite people to contribute decorations to a community Christmas tree, or prayers to a prayer wall.

Adapt the reflection and prayer ideas for use together in your shared worship.

Don't forget **Families on Faith Adventures @ Home** resource comes out every Monday – this will have even more material on the theme of the week and can be adapted to use in your all age worship or children's activities: www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures



-  Adapt the materials for youth groups, senior coffee mornings, all age home groups etc.
-  Use the justice challenges and 'Do' activities to engage with people during the week through social media – share what you are doing, invite others to share too.
-  Please encourage everyone to use [#URChristmas](https://twitter.com/URChristmas) [#AdventCome&See](https://twitter.com/AdventCome&See) on social media channels and try to engage with this on the local church website and social media channels too.
-  Keep an eye on the URC Children's and Youth Work Facebook page throughout Advent, and search the resources section of their web pages for even more material: www.urchurch.org.uk/our-work/children-and-youth

Environmental impact

We are delighted that the box has been designed to include recycled, re-useable and recyclable items as far as possible. We are encouraging people to use everything included in a variety of ways – even the box itself. Please consider the environment in your own use of the boxes, as far as you are able.

