

## Advent and Christmas resources

Once again we find ourselves at the time of year when we are looking for new resources and approaches to a familiar theme. Hopefully this resource sheet will be of use to you in your planning and preparation.

Families and All Ages:



Follow the Star – Anglican advertising campaign for Christmas. However at the bottom of this page are some free downloadable family advent and Christmas activities. <https://www.churchofengland.org/christmas>



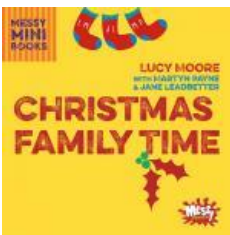
On pages 2 and 3 of <http://godventure.co.uk/category/seasonal-activities/> you will find a number of activities for Christmas and the Advent season including making a Christmas story photobook, making angel bunting, thinking about the star as a symbol, and building a Gingerbread nativity scene. These pages are updated frequently and are always worth a look

A1



Godventure also produce an advent calendar in poster size which comes with a mini book telling the Bible story and stickers for each day during Advent. It is a perfect way for families to focus on the Christmas story step by step <https://godventure.co.uk/product/godventure-sticker-advent-calendar-poster-a1-2/>

If your church is thinking of a giveaway for local schools or groups, these can be bought in bulk for £200 for 100 copies, which is an extremely cheap way of spreading the story of Christmas.



Messy Church have produced a series of mini-books and there is, of course, one for Christmas Family Time. The books are bright and cheerful and have a host of colourful images and prompts to stimulate conversation within the family as you explore the Christmas Good News together. The price makes these very affordable and, with reductions for bulk buying, they might even prove a good gift for the families your church supports.



From Barnabas and the BRF comes a whole host of suggestions and resources for Advent for all ages – well worth a browse. <https://ideas.brf.org.uk/search?keywords=christmas> It includes some creative ways of re-telling the Christmas Story

Makaton Advent Calender						
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1st Snowman	2nd Christmas Tree	3rd Sleigh	4th Family	5th Stars	6th Happy	7th Bells
8th Pudding	9th Winter	10th Jesus	11th Reindeer	12th Holiday	13th Presents	14th Church
15th Donkey	16th Stable	17th Candles	18th Angel	19th King	20th Cake	21st Robin
22nd Turkey	23rd Toys	24th Sleep	25th Christmas Day		Father Christmas	

In the days leading up to Christmas, why not seize the opportunity to learn a bit of Makaton, the signing system used to support speech for children and adults with communication difficulties. You do the sign and say the word simultaneously. How many can you learn by Christmas? How many can you fit into your everyday conversations? Can you sing any Christmas songs or carols using the correct signs in the right places? Youtube has lots of Makaton Christmas songs and carols you could sing along to.



From Godventure come several free downloadable resources, amongst which is their very popular "25 ways to be thankful" which is suitable for families, whether Christian or non-Christian. <https://godventure.co.uk/product/25-ways-to-be-thankful-free-download/>



Busted Halo <https://bustedhalo.com/video/watch-advent-two-minutes> have a video which introduces the main themes of Advent in just two minutes. The video can be downloaded for free.



As every year, the Children's Society has produced a service plan and other activities for Advent and Christingle. This year their resources include ideas for churches and schools, for Messy Church, for Diddy Disciples, for dementia friendly groups, and for families.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/fundraising-and-events/christingle-resources>



Baker Ross produce lots of resources for Advent and Christmas crafts. You can use the discount code **BRF15** to get a 15% discount. What about these Nativity star bauble kits, for example?



Make room for the manger this December with Love Life Live Advent, an all-age resource to help children and families celebrate the run-up to Christmas.

Following in the footsteps of the million-copy selling Love Life Live Lent, Love Life Live Advent provides a simple prayer activity for children and families to do together, every day of December until Christmas Day. <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715144411/love-life-live-advent-kids-single-copy>

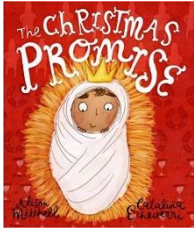


Action for Children have produced an all-age worship resource for Advent/Christmas which is worth a look. You can find it online here: <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/promotional-materials/christmas-resources/>

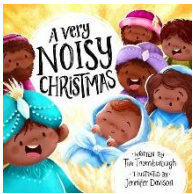


Who can resist a bit of chocolate in the run up to Christmas? The Meaningful Chocolate Company have produced an advent calendar full of fairly traded chocolate and accompanied by a book telling the REAL story of Christmas. There is also a book with 24 different activities for the Advent period. Individual and bulk packs of calendars can be purchased through <https://www.eden.co.uk/real-advent-calendar-2019/>

Young children:



Superb illustrations by Catalina Echeverri and faithful, Bible-centred story-telling by Alison Mitchell combine to make this a book that both parents and children will love



A lovely nativity story with bright cheerful pictures and a read-aloud story that just begs children to join in.

Children:



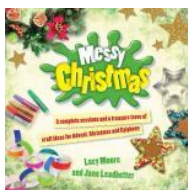
Godventure produce a downloadable colouring poster of the Nativity for £1.00

You could put on some Christmas music or a narration of the Bible story while you colour.

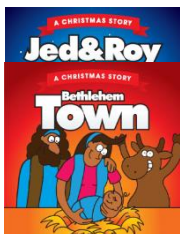
<https://godventure.co.uk/product/nativity-colouring-poster/>



<https://godventure.co.uk/product/print-your-own-godventure-advent-pocket-cards/>



Messy Church have produced this booklet by Lucy Moore and Jane Leadbetter which is packed full of good ideas and activities for an Advent Messy Church. Not that you need to be a Messy Church to take advantage of these great ideas. All of these are adaptable for other children's groups or families. <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-christmas>



Andrew McDonough's books are all written with an engaging style and amusing illustrations and he had produced five books on a Christmas theme. They are aimed at children but enjoyed by all ages. You can read the books online at

<https://www.lostsheep.com.au/stories-overview/> and can order either ordinary books or a set of slides prepared for showing on screen.



(Amazon review) Alary shows children that Advent is a time to look back, a time to look around, and a time to look ahead. Included are Bible stories, hands-on children's activities, and the encouragement of practical ways for children to reach out to those around them. This children's guide shows the beauty of the purple and the pink of the Advent Season. The muted illustrations by Ann Boyajian also add a complementary sweetness to the book.

This book presents Advent as special time for waiting and watching—paying attention—to the ways God comes to us. Told from the point of a view of a child, the story weaves together familiar Advent traditions like the Jesse tree and the Advent wreath, biblical stories and characters, and reflections on what these stories call us to do and be. This book reassures children of the presence of God in all times and places and invites them to become part of the holy work of making Christ present in the world.

Young people:



<https://tuerchen.com/en/> is a website which enables you to make your own digital advent calendar using Youtube videos, GIFs, photos etc. It can be used for free for individuals. Maybe work on it as a group and send it out to family and friends.

## Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.

Using Christmas wrapping paper, old cards, sweet wrappers and all the ‘trappings’ of our commercial Christmas, can you create you own mosaic picture of one scene from the nativity story, or a picture about what Christmas actually means to you. <http://www.cofebirmingham.com/news/2017/11/02/youthwork-ideas-christmas/>

## Instagram Nativity:

What about creating the whole of the Nativity story through Instagram? Read the Luke and or Matthew accounts (they differ slightly - you only get the kings in Matthew for example) and then see if you can re-create the time line of the story only using photos! The young people could go out on the street (don't forget safeguarding and risk assessments for this) to capture shots or could you do the whole thing using your meeting space and the young people in it. <http://www.cofebirmingham.com/news/2017/11/02/youthwork-ideas-christmas/>



### Where am "I" In the Nativity?

Advent is the time we are waiting for the coming of Jesus. Think about which character in the Christmas story you identify with most at this point in your life: the expectant mom, the worried father, the scruffy shepherds, the travelling magi, the angels coming to bring good news, the animals wondering at the spectacle happening in their stable?

Take a paper doll cutout and draw your likeness or name on one of the dolls and place it in the nativity scene as a way of symbolically entering the mystery of this story for the rest of the Advent season.

(Young) adults



<https://prayingincolor.com/adventword-and-advent-calendars>

This website provides PDF outlines of different advent calendars and a list of words taken from the lectionary readings for Advent. Each day, choose one part of the calendar to colour/decorate on the theme of the word for that date on the list. This can be a meditative practice or opportunity for prayer.



Candlepress prayer spirals – one for each week of Advent – include ways into prayer, a Bible reading, discussion starters and things to notice during the week. <https://buildfaith.org/advent-spirals-candle-press/>



12 Revelations of Christmas from Missional Generation.

<https://www.missionalgen.co.uk/product/12-revelations-of-christmas-augmented-reality-box/>

Please note that we have not been able to test a copy of this so this is not a recommendation, just raising awareness that it exists. We would love any feedback on it!

This Advent resource includes 12 Augmented Reality stories allowing you to follow Mary and Joseph's journey that comes alive in front of you through your smart phone on a table. The AR app is linked to 12 devotions is to help individuals explore different 'revelations' of Christmas. Each of the themes encourages you to think on and consider the truth and meaning of this key time in the Christian calendar.



<https://youtu.be/kWmvu3cEBmM>

'Mess' is a spoken word poem, showing us the Christmas story afresh in a lyrical and imaginative style. It's free to download and stream.