



# families on faith adventures



## Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with members of the family you can't see now except via the internet.

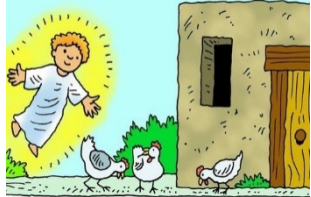

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!**

### This week's Bible story is:

## Sharing the Hope

Luke 1 verses 26-56 and Matthew 1 verses 19-24

With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.



and



Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com





## Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

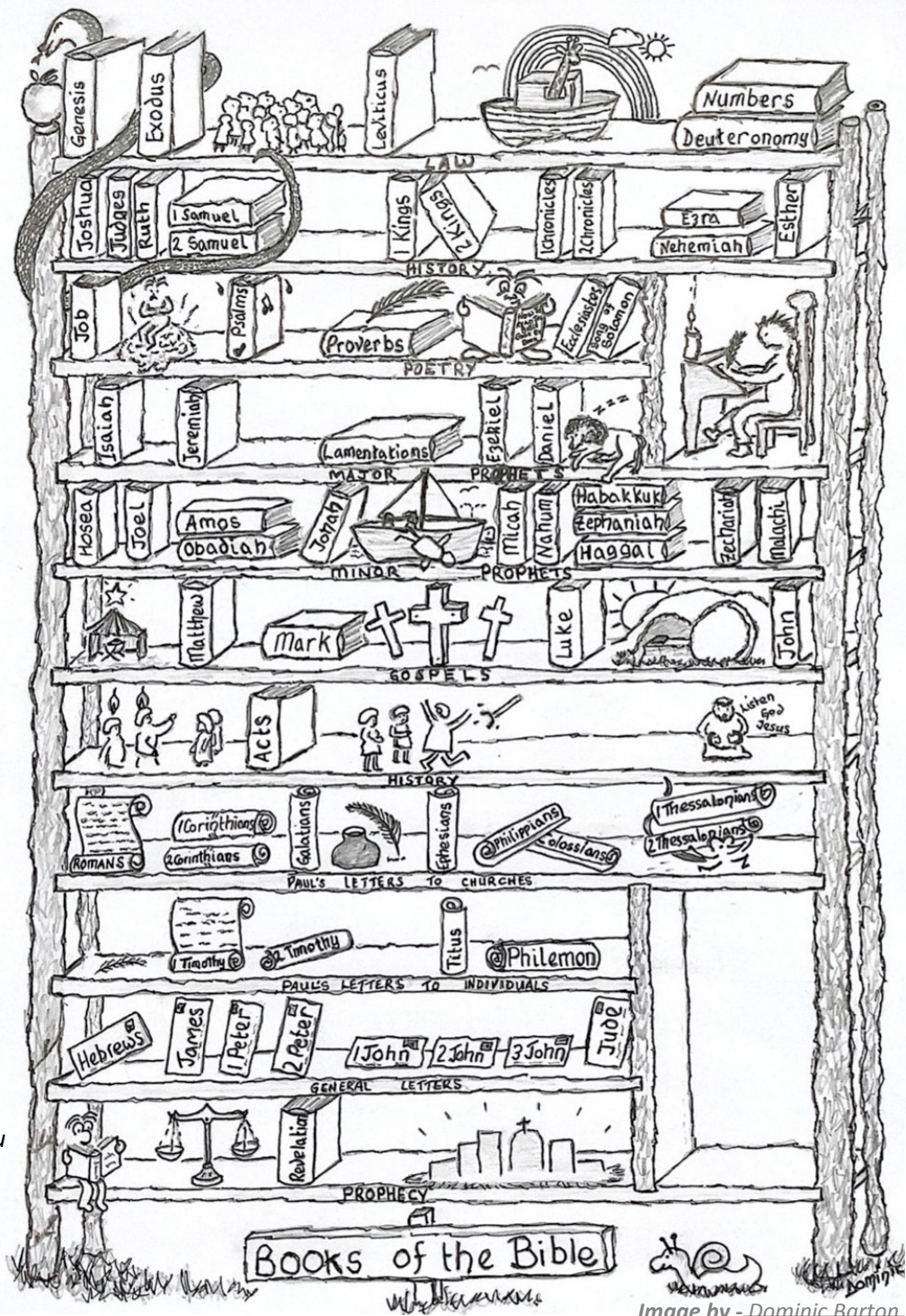
The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.

  
Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.





# families on faith adventures

at home

## **Bible context – Luke and Matthew**

Both Luke and Matthew capture this part of the Christmas story in their books, written around 60 AD. They were disciples of Jesus; one was a tax collector and the other was a doctor before they decided to follow Jesus. Each author writes from a different perspective, with different readers in mind. Matthew often writes for the Jews, showing how Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus as the promised king. Luke often writes about individuals and the good news of Jesus, showing the humanity of Jesus and exploring how he came for everyone, Jews, and Gentiles. It's a good idea to read the same story in different books to get a wider understanding.

## **The Story – Luke 1 v 26-44, Matthew 1 v 19-24 (The International Children's Bible)**

### **Luke 1 v 26-44**

God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."

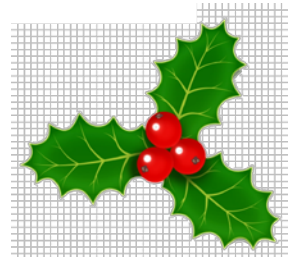
But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!"

Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.





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# families on faith adventures

at home

Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the mountains of Judea. She went to Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She cried out in a loud voice, "God has blessed you more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to. You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. You are blessed because you believed what the Lord said to you would really happen."

## **Matthew 1 v 19-24**

Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to divorce her secretly. While Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins."

All this happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son and they will name him Immanuel." This name means "God is with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do.

*Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible®, copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.*

## Online versions of the story

### **Watch and Listen**

Cartoon by Saddleback kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkEypzmHwCI>

An Angel visits Mary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alb8szs0mzA>

The Christmas story by children [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s56Xa\\_C54I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s56Xa_C54I)

Gabriel visits Mary by Superbook <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1OLLwtCqTM>

Plasticine Animation by Gospel project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcap1eWuatE>

### **Dance and Sing**

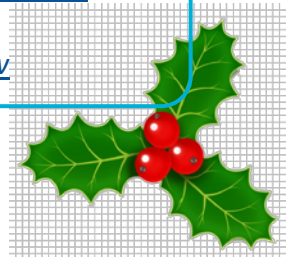
Mary did you know by Pentatonix <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE>

Angels by Hillsong worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ydf4ybPdAvC>

Light of Christmas by Owl City <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEM5zwd9Lzk>

Angels we have heard on high by Lifetree Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR0-oCsp4E>

Make Room by Casting Crowns <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUFSxt7qkNw>





# families on faith adventures

at home

## **Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story**

### **Play a game of Chinese whispers**

Think of a message and send it round the room by whispering it into each other's ears. See how the message changes as it travels.

### **Play a game of 'and so it begins.....'**

Each person has a piece of paper. You write each part of a story onto your paper before folding it over and passing it on for the next person to write the next part of the story. Decide the structure of the story first: for example, where is it set, who is it about, who comes to visit them, what message do they give them, what happens next?

It can be as silly as you like, and the fun is in the opening of the finished stories, reading out loud the crazy story creations.

### **Preparing for Christmas – Telling the story**

What messages do you bring?

As you decorate your house, garden, front door, windows etc, ask what messages are your decorations giving to people who see them? For example, do our decorations tell the story of Jesus' birth and God's love or do they only tell the stories of Santa Claus and a naughty elf? A challenge this year is to look again at our Christmas prep and explore how we can use it to tell others the Christmas story. This is our chance to share the Christmas messages.

### **A bedtime story to watch together**

God gave us angels by Lisa Tawn Bergen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlyRwdAsid8>

## **Table Top Discussions**

### **How does God speak to us?**

An angel appeared to Mary; she was awake at the time. Joseph saw an angel in his dreams. There are many stories in the Bible of people who have seen or heard angels and God in different ways.

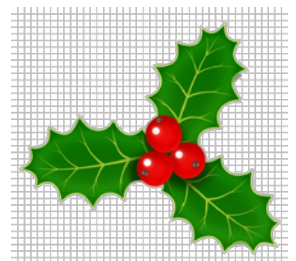
What stories come to mind? E.g. Saul seeing a bright light and hearing Jesus voice, young Samuel hearing God in the night.

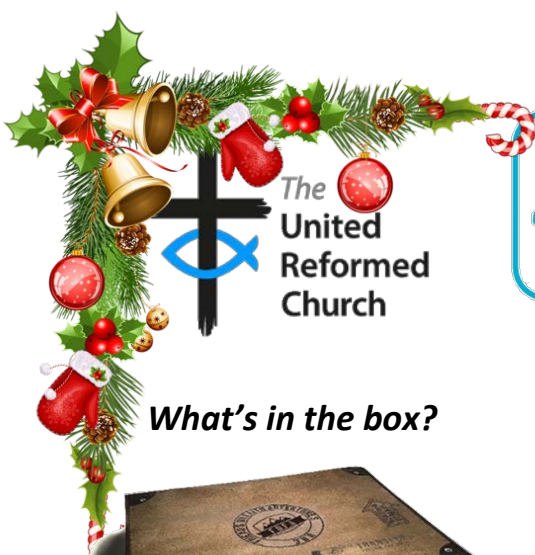
**How do you think God talks to people today?** Perhaps, when we read the Bible, through the words of a song, through something someone else says, a small voice in our heart or mind, in our dreams..... what else?

At the meal times each day this week, take some time to reflect as a family. What is God saying to you today?

How did God communicate?

Is it a message just for you or something you need to share with others?





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## What's in the box?



What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.

 Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.

## This week's Bible story is:

### Sharing the Hope

Luke 1 verses 26-56 and Matthew 1 verses 19-24



A toy telephone

Something with rainbow colours for God's promise



An angel



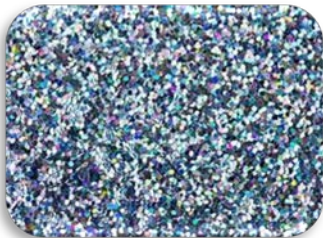
Silver Tinsel



White Feather



A trumpet



A glitter jar with silver glitter

**As with all small things, please be aware of the risk of these being put into mouths, eyes, noses and ears. Please supervise small children!**

Illustration by [lambsongs.co.nz](http://lambsongs.co.nz) via [freebibleimages.com](http://freebibleimages.com)





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## Pray Together

### Advent Wreath Prayers

Light two candles on your advent wreath.

The first candle is the light of the prophets and a light of Hope.

The second candle is a light of Peace. Enjoy the light, look at the candle, watch as it flickers and lights up the room. Sit quietly as you look at the flame. Ask God to help you have peace in your heart.



A prayer to say together

*Today we light two candles.  
We light this candle of Hope.  
We light this candle Peace.  
We look forward to Jesus coming.*

*Dear God,  
Help us to make peace.  
Peace in our hearts,  
Peace in our homes,  
Peace in our communities. Amen.*

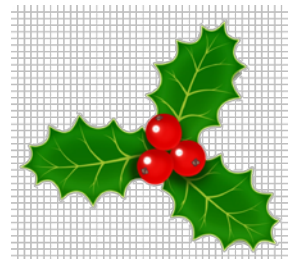


#### An Alternative Prayer Wreath

Cut out some green circles and join them together to form a wreath. Make four stars and write on the words Love, Joy, Peace and Hope.

Place a candle in the centre. Put the stars on the wreath and think about the four words.

- Talk to God about your hopes.
- Ask God to bring peace.
- Say thank you to God for the things that bring you joy.
- Talk to God about the people you love and the people who need to feel loved.





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## Pray Together

### Prayers of Hope -we carry on the wind!

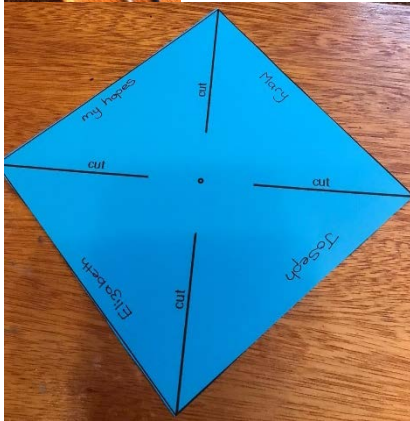
Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph had been given the promise of hope which carried on the wind.



To make your prayer windmill you will need stiff paper or card, a pencil with a rubber in the top, a map pin, pens and scissors.

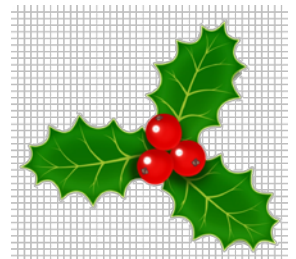
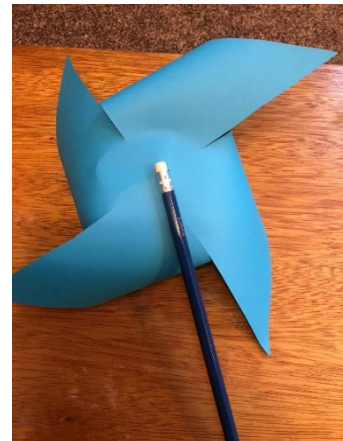
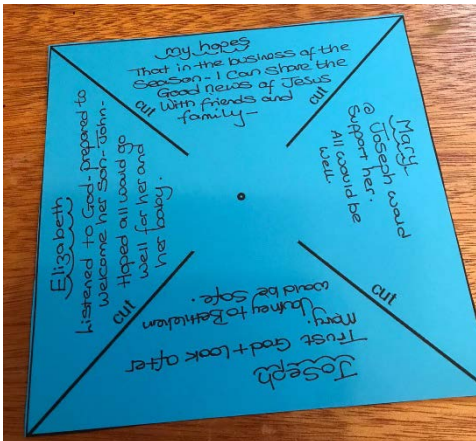
Using the template, print onto coloured paper, or copy and colour.

This week is the colour blue, the colour of sky and the colour given to Mary.



Then write the headings: Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, my hopes. Think about each one in turn and what they might prompt you to pray for. Then pray for yourself - what might your hopes be?

Make your windmill by cutting along the black lines and folding each corner into the middle loosely. Add the pin in the middle and push through into the rubber at the top of the pencil. Then blow on your windmill and, as your prayers spin around, think of all God did for Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph and thank God for all he does for us.







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## Pray Together

### Feather prayers

*The wind is whispering, the promises are about to come true,  
the waiting is over...*

*The greatest story ever told has begun.  
Like the wind it travels and will never end.*

*From: the Advent Box story book  
<https://youtu.be/cVIDocXzpog>*

*Take a feather and hold it in your hand. Feel its softness; hold it up to the light and see how the light shines through it.*

*Sit quietly and talk to God about the things that worry you, ask God to bring you peace. Hold the feather above you head, drop it gently, watch as it floats to the ground. Think about the message of hope and peace whispering in the wind and the Good News of the angels.*

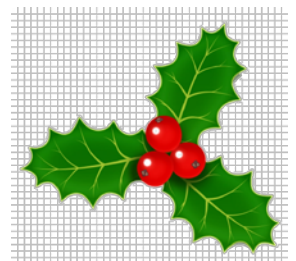
*If you don't have a feather, perhaps you could use some very tissue-like paper or fabric.*



### **A Christingle Service**

*Available on the URC Children's & Youth Work YouTube Channel.*

*In the week leading up to Christmas Eve we will be publishing a special FOFA@Home all about the Christingle and you might like to watch it together on Christmas Eve.*





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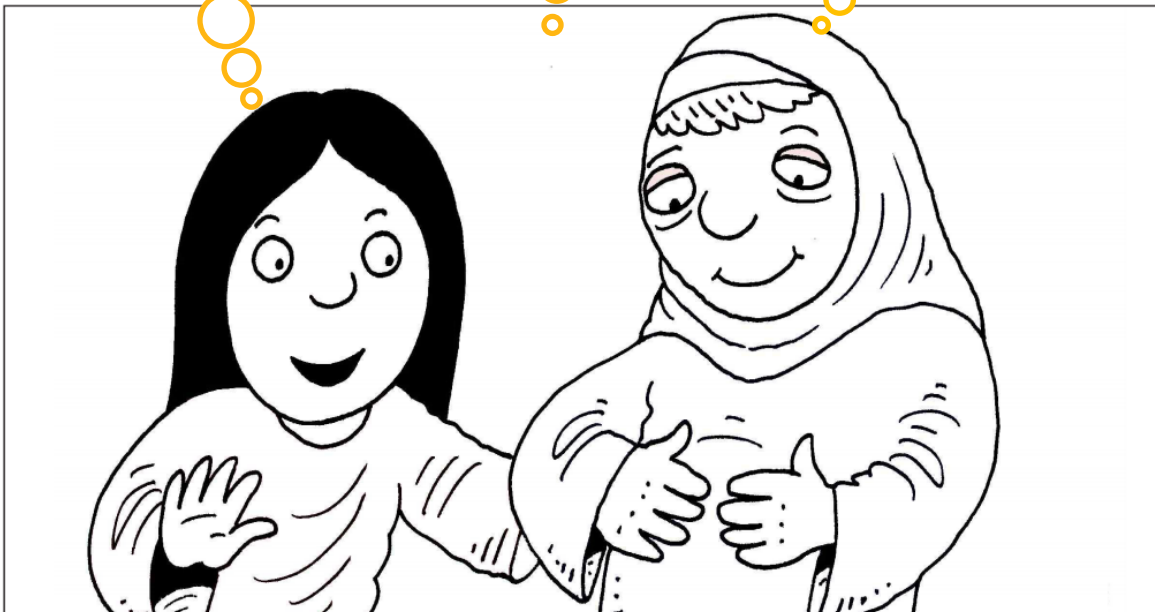
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*I wonder who you  
would share special  
news with first?*

*I wonder who you  
identify with most  
in this part of the  
story?*

*I wonder how Joseph  
took the news of the  
baby?*



*I wonder what  
advice Elizabeth  
might give to  
Mary?*

*I wonder what the reactions  
might have been from  
friends and neighbours and  
other local people to Mary  
and Joseph's news?*

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## TO DO TOGETHER...

*During Advent and Christmas we accumulate lots of paper and cardboard bits and pieces. Instead of putting them straight in the bin, we are going to reuse some of them in our creative times. Remember to save the insides from your wrapping paper tubes, cracker jokes and toys, all your gift tags and Christmas cards, boxes and any spare wrapping paper. You may find they come in VERY HANDY!*

### Newspaper Coasters

**You will need:** Newspaper  
Coloured paper  
(yellow, blue, red, green, purple)  
Card from a cardboard box  
Star cut from gold paper  
or coloured with gold marker pen  
Self adhesive clear plastic

#### What you do:

Cut six circles of card and newspaper and one circle of each of the five colours of coloured paper.

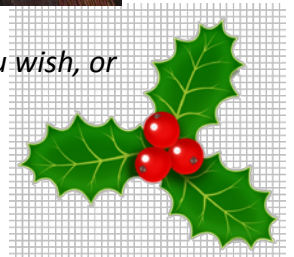
On five of the circles of card, glue a circle of newspaper onto one side and a circle of coloured paper to the other side.

On the remaining circle of card, only glue newspaper to one side and stick or draw a gold star onto the other side.

Each colour coaster will represent a different week in our Christmas story. Last week was yellow to remind us of the prophets' promise of hope, this week is blue to remind us of the sharing of the good news to Mary, Joseph and Elizabeth.

Once the glue is dry, write "Good News" onto the coaster on the side where the newspaper is. You could try to use a matching felt tip colour to the colour on the base of the coaster.

Cover the coasters with clear self-adhesive plastic to make them waterproof if you wish, or you could 'varnish' them with PVA glue.





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## TO DO TOGETHER...

### Snow Globes

- You will need:** Jar  
 A peg or Lego person  
 Baby oil  
 Glitter  
 Plumbers' tape, superglue/ hot glue

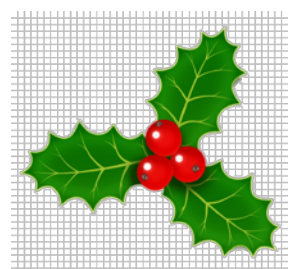
**What you do:**  
 Use the template and cut out the angel. Cover it with glue and some glitter.  
 Glue the glitter side into position on the outside of the glass jar, with the jar upside down.  
 If using a peg person, paint or use permanent pen to create an image of Mary. Alternatively, you can use a Lego or make a play figure.

(This next step is for grown-ups to do) Using super glue or hot glue, attach the play figure or peg person onto the jar lid.

Put about a half a teaspoon of glitter, and a few heart shaped sequins if you have them, into the jar and fill it with baby oil.

Use some super glue on the rim and screw the lid on tightly. If you feel the jar is not shut tightly enough to prevent leaks, you could put some tape around the lid to give it some extra security.

Turn upside down and watch as the beautiful story unfolds, when Mary is told she is to have a baby called Jesus.





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## TO DO TOGETHER...

### Angel Message Decorations

**You will need:** A strip of card  
String  
Two pipe cleaners

**What you do:**

Take one of the pipe cleaners, bend it into a circle shape and twist to join the ends.



Pull the pipe cleaner around one of your fingers and twist, then do this for a second time, this makes the halo and the head.



Shape the body into a triangular shape and bend the halo over to 90° angle.



Take the other pipe cleaner and form a circle, squash this circle and slip it over the angels' body to just below the head. Twist the pipe cleaners on either side of the neck, and then form the wings into shape.



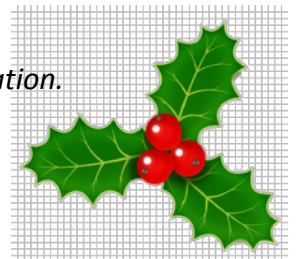
Take a length of thread and tie this onto where the halo joins the head, then tie a second knot in the thread about 3 mm above that first knot. This will enable the angel to hang in the middle of the circle.

On the card strip, write a phrase like "Good News! God is sending someone special."

Join the card ends together to form a circle with the writing on the inside, and secure with tape. Then make a small hole in the middle at the top of the circle, thread the thread through and tie a knot to secure it and stop the angel dropping down.



Finally, join the thread ends with another knot to enable you to hang your decoration.





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## Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way  
Challenge this time is...**

**At Home:**

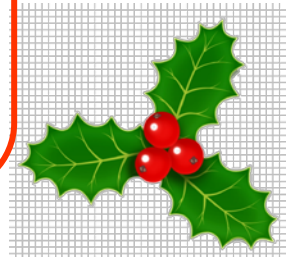
*Talk to members of your family and find out what their hopes and dreams are this Christmas and for next year – try to listen really carefully rather than just planning what you are going to say next.*

**Outside:**

*Can you make some angel shapes and tie them to a bare tree in your local area? You could write a message of hope on them, or decorate them so that they are bright and shiny against the bare wood, or even stick some seeds on them for the birds to eat.*

**For Others:**

*This is a time for sharing hope. If you are sending Christmas cards and have not posted them yet, write a little message of hope inside each one and say a prayer for the person you're sending it to as you post it. If you've already sent cards or don't usually send them, do the same with a text message or email. Maybe you could mention something that you hope to do together once restrictions are lifted or via the internet.*





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## Adventurers Go!

*You've shared together, now share with us!*

*Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.*

Email your photos to: [lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk)  
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.

Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Remember you can find more resources on our website:  
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

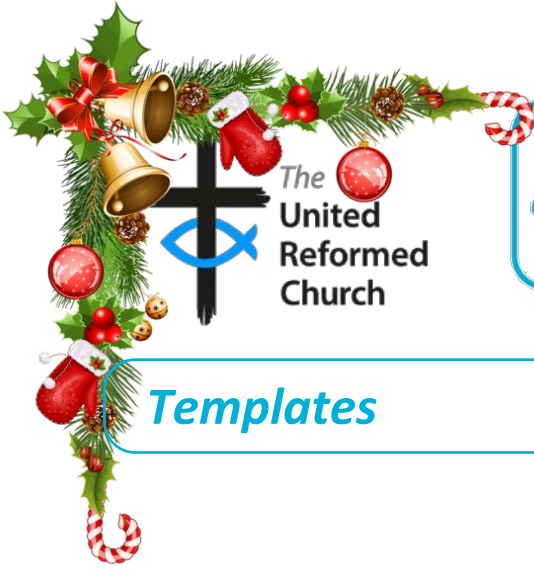
*And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.*

*Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.*



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## Templates

