

A Messy church outline

Theme: Jesus is Sent

What does the word Christmas mean?

The English term mass evolved from the Anglo-Saxon word maesse, which derived in turn from the Latin missa, which is a form of the verb mittere, which means "to send."

Consequently, the root meaning of Christ-mass is "to send Christ," or "Christ is sent." The apostle Paul referred to Immanuel's incarnation as the sending of Christ (Galatians 4:4). Jesus spoke often of "him who sent me." The term accurately represents what the season is all about or should be—the sending of Christ.

Activities

Activity tables should be set up with all the materials needed, a completed sample of the activity or craft, and some questions or ideas to talk about written on cards and placed on the table or pinned up nearby. Ideally each table needs a leader to show people what to do and talk to them as they are creating! It's also a great idea to take photos of crafts people are making and put together a quick selection of PowerPoint slides which can be used as people are gathering for the celebration.

1. Straw Manger ②

You will need

Sheets of paper
PVA Glue
Fun Foam
Wooden craft sticks
Straw, fine twigs
Metallic pipe cleaner

What to do

Cut out baby Jesus from Fun Foam and draw a face with marker pens.

Make a stable by gluing wooden craft sticks into a simple house shape.

Glue straw inside the stable and glue baby Jesus on top.

Add a pipe cleaner star.

Leave everything to dry well before pinning up.



Talk about:

Humble beginnings. Jesus was born in the most humble of places. His family were poor and unimportant. His bed was a feed trough and his bedding was straw. Why do you think God chose this place for his son?

2. Hanging decoration ①

You will need

Slices of white bread (stale is best)
Christmas shaped cookie cutters
Straw
Glue
Paper clips
Glitter



What to do

Use cookie cutters to cut out some Christmas shapes from the bread.

Make a hole at the top using the straw.

Once the bread is dry and hard, paint over it with PVA glue and dip in glitter.

Bend a paper clip into an s shape and attach to your decoration – hang up

NB

The bread needs to dry so it is best to have some shapes done in advance. If you are using the craft more than once, one group could make the bread shapes for the next group.

Talk about:

How the light of the star guided the Wise men to the place where Jesus was and how Jesus came to be the Light of the world. John 8 v 12

3. Edible manger

You will need

Rectangular shaped biscuits e.g. wafers, bourbon creams
Tubes of Icing to stick them together
marshmallows
Biscuit crumbs
Sweets e.g. midget gems
Writing icing gel tubes
Pretzels



What to do

This should be done as a group project with people adding their own ideas. You might want to make several depending on how many people you have. The edible nativity could be eaten after the meal with everyone choosing their favourite part to eat.

Build biscuits up to form 3 walls .

Use shop bought ready made icing to glue the biscuits together.

Make a roof using a larger biscuit and “glue” it into place with the icing.

Make figures using marshmallows and sweets.

Add facial features with writing icing gel

Talk about:

How much of this part of the nativity story do people know and can retell?

4. Cup and ball shepherd ⑥

You will need:

Polystyrene ball
Paper cup
Pink paint
Pale brown paint
Brown wool
Wiggle eyes
white and pink craft foam



Scrap of white fabric
Ribbon
Pink pen
Glue

What to do

Paint the ball pink and the cup brown and leave to dry. Glue the ball to the bottom of the cup.
Cut two arms from white foam and two hands from pink. Glue one hand to the end of each arm and the other ends of the arms to the body.
Tie a piece of ribbon around the middle of the cup as a belt.
Glue on some wool as hair.
Make a headscarf by placing a square of fabric on top of the ball and tying on a piece of ribbon

Talk about:

How the angels made sure these unimportant men knew about the birth of Jesus before anyone else did.

5. Shaking Head Sheep 7

What you need

Cotton balls or soft toy filling for Stuffing
Sheep template printed on card
Black Markers
Scissors
Staples
White Glue

What to do

Print out the sheep pattern onto card.
Cut out the pattern pieces.
Glue or staple the body pattern together to form a cone shape.
Cut large cotton balls into smaller shapes and glue them all over the cone shape.
Glue the legs and arms onto the sheep's body as shown in the picture.
Fan fold the sheep's neck and attach it to the inside of the top of the cone.
Glue the head to the other end of the neck. The neck should move up and down when you move the sheep.



Talk about:

How sheep need the shepherds to look after them and keep them safe from harm. Jesus said "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep." John 10 v 11.

6. Wise Men 8

What you need

Large wooden lollipop craft sticks
PVA glue
Sequins
Glitter
Scraps of material/ribbons
Glitter fun foam sheet
Brown fun foam sheet
Fine tip black marker

What to do

Paint the sticks in rich, royal colours but leave the top quarter unpainted.
Make beards from scraps of brown fun foam.
Cut the crown out of glitter fun foam.
Make the "turban" and scarves from scraps of fabric or ribbon.
Glue on lots of glitter and sequins to give your Wise Men a ton of bling!!



Talk about:

Why did the Wise Men make this journey? Who were they hoping to see? Why did they go to King Herod in Jerusalem first?

7. Camel biscuits

What you need

Cupcakes
Rich tea finger biscuits
Mini marshmallows
Cheerios
Icing



What to do

Spread some icing on the cupcake and stick the rich tea finger on top.
Cut the mini marshmallow in half to make 2 flatter circles and stick on as eyes
You can use icing writing gel to make the pupils of the eyes
Stick on Cheerios to make the nostrils and ears.

Talk about:

The wise men came from the east but the bible doesn't say how they travelled. We only assume that they had camels to carry them and their provisions. How else could they have travelled?

8. Gift Box ②

You will need

4 card circles
Glue
Christmas stickers /glitter/ribbons to decorate

What to do



Cut out 4 circles of equal size and fold each one in half.



Position them so that they overlap and the base forms a square. Glue together.



Fold up each of the sides. Place a small treat in the centre of the box.



Tie with string or ribbon and give to someone you love!

Talk about

The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. What gifts did they bring? What did the gifts mean? Myrrh was commonly used as an anointing oil, frankincense as a perfume, and gold as a valuable. The three **gifts** had a spiritual meaning: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death.

9. The true meaning of Christmas ①

What you need

A variety of Christmas cards with non-religious pictures on them
1 small Christmas card with Jesus on it

What to do:

Hide the cards around the room (stick them down if you want people to see them but not lift them)
Ask people to find a card which shows the true meaning of Christmas and come back and tell you about it. Make it hard to find so that people have to really search to find it.
When they do find it point out that the card with Jesus is smaller than the rest, and was harder to find. It may be hard to find the true meaning of Christmas amidst the presents, tinsel and lights.

Talk about:

The word Christmas means "Christ is sent". Christmas is about celebration Christ being sent to us. How easy is it to remember Jesus coming as a baby at Christmas? Why is it good news?

10. Star prayers 9

What you need

Large card stars

Curling ribbon

Post-It stick notes in star shapes

What to do

Hang up a large cardboard star with curling ribbon hanging down.

The large card star could have a prayer idea on it

Children and parents are invited to write their prayer on a sticky star notelet and stick it to the ribbon.

Stick another star on the back to secure it.

The prayer stars can be taken in to the celebration service and children can be invited to read out their prayers if they wish, or the leader could read a few out.

Talk about

Ideas for prayers e.g. thanks, the true meaning of Christmas, peace



Celebration

Talk outline ①

You will need

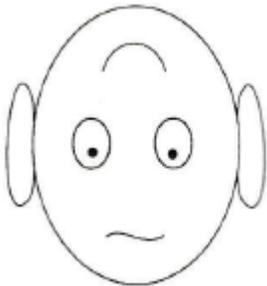
A flipchart and markers

This talk works best if you draw the pictures as you go along (which is easier if you draw faint pencil lines in advance). Each picture is turned upside down to become a different image for the next part of the talk.

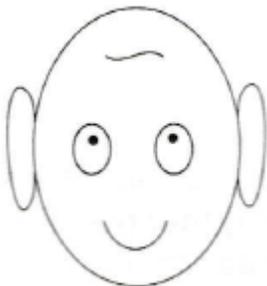
Introduce the talk by saying that the Christmas story is full of people who were surprised.

1. Joseph was surprised

Mary, Joseph's true love had promised to marry him, but he was worried and sad.
(draw his head the sad way up)



Mary was pregnant. Then Joseph had a dream. It was a surprising dream because God spoke to him. But it was also a fantastic dream because now he understood what was happening! God Turned Joseph's thinking upside down. (Turn the head upside down to show Joseph is happy.)



2. The shepherds were surprised

It was a quiet night. The sheep and shepherds on the hillside above Bethlehem. The shepherds were used to being out all night with their sheep. (Draw some sheep: clouds with triangle faces and stick legs.)



Suddenly their world was turned upside down and they were very surprised and terribly afraid (Turn upside down and make triangles into angels – add heads and halos).



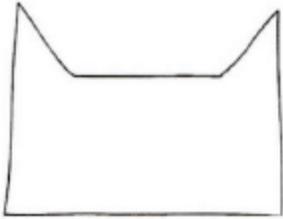
An angel appeared telling them not to be afraid. "I've got good news," he said. "It will bring great joy to everyone."

Joy- that would be a surprise for people! A chance to be really happy! Lots of people would like true happiness.

3. The Wise Men were surprised

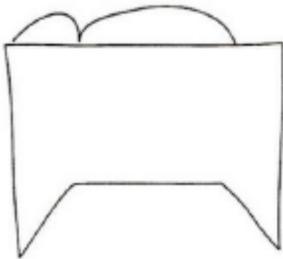
The Wise Men came looking for a baby, born King of the Jews. (Draw a crown).

They went to King Herod's palace first. He was very surprised and upset at the news. "I'm the King of the Jews" he said. There was no baby there.



So they followed the star that they had seen at the start. It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went inand had a surprise (Turn the crown upside down and draw in the baby.)

No crown, no palace, no riches or wealth, but a baby in a stable with his mother and father, just an ordinary not very well off Jewish couple.



Perhaps the biggest surprise of all is that God chose to come to earth as a vulnerable baby because of His great love for us. The angel said "Your Saviour is born." Here is someone who will turn your life upside down. He can completely change you and give you real happiness.... If you will let him.

Will you tell him you love him? Will you ask Him into your life to change you? You may be in for a big surprise!

Response ①

Display the words of Isaiah 9 v6

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Ask everyone to think about the difference it could make to them in the coming week if they were to remember that the person whom Isaiah describes in all these ways is with them.

Ask everyone to think quietly about what it means to have Jesus with us for example:

Think about when you might need wise advice during the coming week. If you have difficult problems to solve at work, school or at home, remember that the Wonderful Counsellor is here!

If you are facing something that is very hard to do this week, remember that the Mighty God is here!

If you feel frightened or lonely, remember that the Eternal Father who never stops caring for you is here!

If you are in the middle of an argument or fight this week remember that the Prince of Peace is here!

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank you that you are the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Help us to turn to you and know you are with us. Amen