





## HOW TO USE THIS PACK

This is a pick and mix resource pack. Some of the activities are suitable for all ages together, some are aimed at children and some at adults. We've had a few thoughts about who the different materials might be used with, and we could imagine them being used in church services, house groups, families, neighbourhood parties, children's holiday clubs ... You know the people and the situation that you're in, so be imaginative with the ideas!

For some of the activities you have to gather together the items you'll need to run the activity, and for others there's photocopying to do beforehand.

Have you tried something we've not thought of? Then let us know!!

The following codes indicate who the activity may be suitable for:

- AA** All age
- A** Adults
- C** Children
- Ac** Adults with accompanying children
- Ca** Children with accompanying adults
- Y** Particularly suitable for 11-14s



## WHAT'S IN THE PACK

| <b>Activity</b>                          | <b>Page</b> | <b>Suitable for</b> | <b>Possible event</b>          |
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| Birth-day in Bethlehem                   | 2           | A                   | Bible reading                  |
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| Label power                              | 17          | AA, Ac, C, Y        | Home, children, youth groups   |
| Christmas crackers!                      | 18          | AA, Ac, C, Ca       | Party, home, children's groups |
| Young people and the Christmas story     | 19          | Ac, C, Ca, Y        | Children, youth groups         |
| An alternative Christmas                 | 20          | AA, A, Ac           | Church, home, family groups    |
| Talkabout giving                         | 21          | A                   | Home group                     |
| Christmas grand slam                     | 22          | AA, C, Ca           | Party, children's group        |

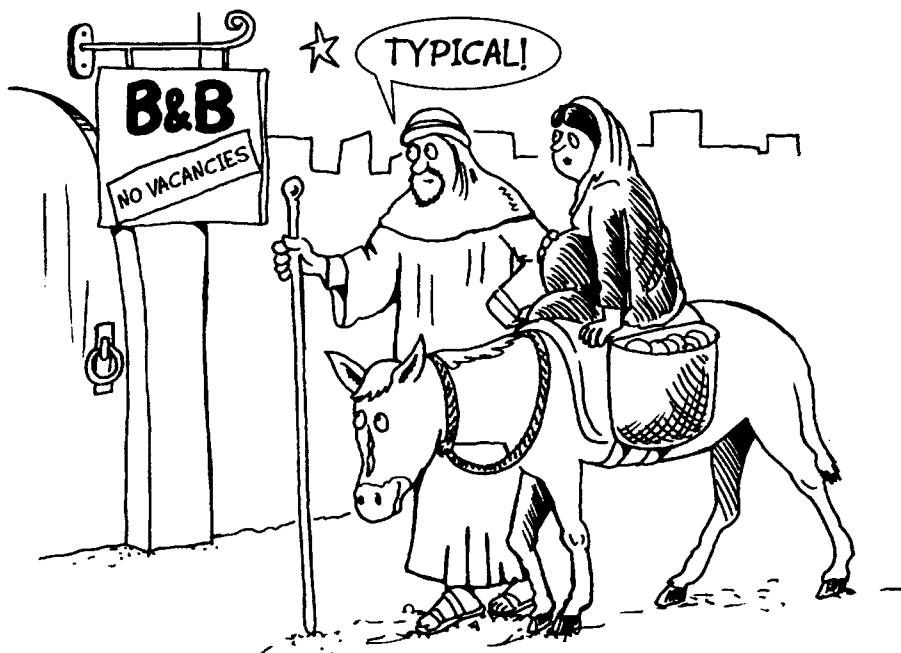
# Birth-day in Bethlehem



Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birth place of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby.

She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

Luke 2v4-7



# What would you give?



Soon afterwards some men who studied the stars came from the east to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." ...

On their way, they saw the same star they had seen in the east. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs!

It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother, they knelt down and worshipped him.

They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and presented them to him.

Matthew 2 v 1-2, 9-11

**Gold** was a universal precious metal and a sign of a king

**Frankincense** comes from the gum resin of a tree found only in southern Arabia and East Africa. It gives off a strong, sweet, heady smell when burnt. Mixed with herbs to produce incense, it is still used in worship. In ancient times it accompanied sacrifices, its strong scent helping to purify temples and remove the smell of blood.

**Myrrh** is a bitter, scented oil, also made from gum resin. It was used as a cosmetic. It also came to play a part in ceremonies of anointing kings. It can function as a painkiller and is one of the aromatics used to anoint dead bodies before burial.

## Christmas shopping?

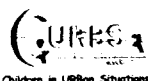
Frankincense and myrrh, like Gold, were precious commodities that were traded between southern Arabia (now the Yemen) and the Levant. If the wise men really did come from Babylonia or Persia, how did they get hold of their gifts? The only realistic possibility is that they passed a trading centre that would have had supplies of these rare commodities. The most likely stopping place is the ancient caravan city of Petra, now in the south of Jordan.



*"Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I would have thought that a nice doll or some bootees might have been more suitable than joss sticks and embalming fluid."*

[The Scroll: The Tabloid Bible page 113]

Information about the gifts from Angela Tilby; 2001; Son of God; Hodder and Stoughton with the BBC



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# Sheep with a tale



There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"

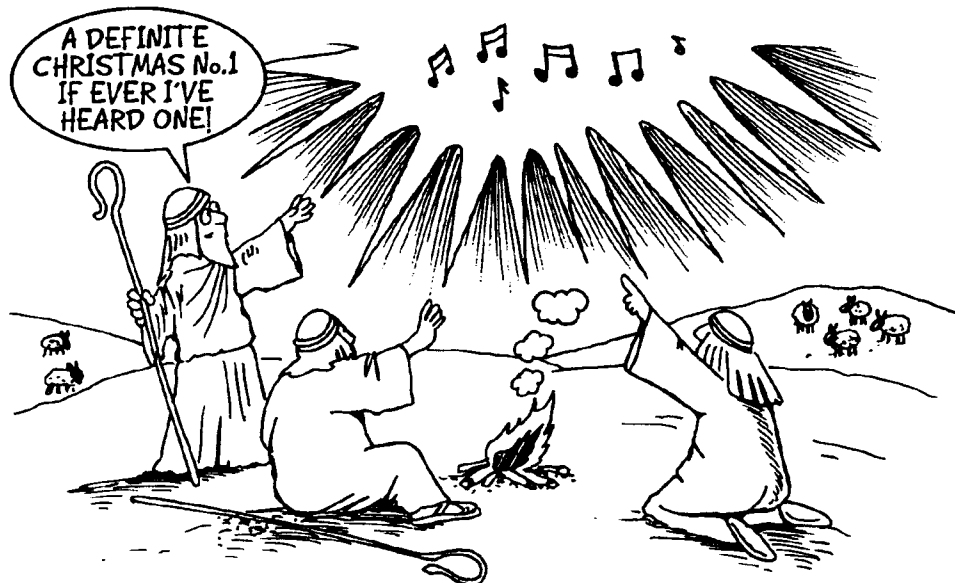
When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger.

When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said.

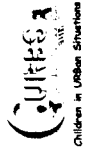
Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

Luke 2 v 8-20





John 1 v14—The Message



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# D.I.Y. Nativity: The journey to Bethlehem

by Sue Sheriff



This idea was used to involve local children in a "crib service".

You could also involve adults. It is a journey around the church starting from Nazareth and ending up in Bethlehem. The rest of the congregation can either sit and watch, or if they're active enough get up and travel with you. Most of the traveling takes place during the singing of carols - just pick your favorites to fit the theme!

## What you need

A collection of **dressing up clothes** - tea-towels, scarves, old shirts, dressing gowns, picnic rugs, some choir surplices from the back of the cupboard, sheepskin coats, loads of tinsel, flip flops, a Christmas tree star, anything that might help dress up for the nativity. Put these in a pile at the front and as each character is chosen, they can have a good rummage in the pile and come up with whatever they fancy to play their part.

And then get the church ready:

**Bethlehem:** at the front of church: a **trestle table** covered in **blankets** to form a cave, with the 'inside' lit with a **table lamp**, and a little **straw** on the floor and a **cardboard box** for a manger.

At other places round the church you'll need:-

**Nazareth:** marked only by the presence of a **donkey:** the real thing (!), a stuffed toy on wheels, a tricycle - or even a volunteer with a duffle coat?!!

**Shepherd's hills:** a **group of chairs** or a **pile of cushions**, you could even get really enthusiastic and cover them with a **green sheet**.

**The East:** a **homemade weather vane** works well for this. This should be fairly near "Bethlehem" ... the wise men's journey can then take a long route around the church.

You'll also need a **star:** a Christmas decoration, or made from card and tin foil, and **3 wrapped presents** for the kings to carry: one contains a **bottle**, one a **'gold' bar** (perhaps a chocolate one?) and one a **mirror!** Another **bottle, labelled "Myrrh"**.

You could add **sign posts pointing to Bethlehem**, perhaps showing how many miles/kilometres to go.

*Everything ready? Then let's go on **The journey to Bethlehem...***

The script (on pages 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4) gives you a framework for the nativity, but isn't meant to be stuck to exactly - relax and ad-lib to suit your own style and the people with you.

You know the story - enjoy it!

If the children taking part are confident and have loud voices, whisper to them and get them to repeat what you're saying... if they're a bit shy say the words out loud and get them to copy you - really confident children could even make up their own words - but be prepared to hear all sorts!!!

You may find it works more easily to have one person responsible for the script, while another helps the children move to the right places, and yet another helps with the dressing up?

An alternative is a **Teddy Bear's Nativity!** The idea of dressing up the toys came originally from Rev Peter Tompkins. Use the same script: The journey to Bethlehem.

Ask everyone to bring their favorite soft toy or doll (action men included) dressed up as a shepherd, an angel or a king. Certain children were asked to bring a **Mary**, a **Joseph**, and a baby **Jesus**. Just be sure your church won't be offended if Joseph turns out to be a spotty dog, Mary a Barbie doll, and Jesus a well-worn teddy bear. Also don't get too worried if you end up with two Joseph's or the like - we did and just let them take turns, no problem! It is always wise to have a few spares ready for those who forget...

At the points in the script where the characters are asked to dress up, at these points the children come forward with their toy that is taking the part.

Health and safety warning (based on real experience!!) ... watch out for flying angels!!!



## The Journey to Bethlehem

**Hello and welcome to our Christmas Story. This story takes place 2000 years ago and begins in a little place called Nazareth quite a few kilometres away from Bethlehem.**

**You may notice we don't have any characters for our nativity – that's because you're going to *do it yourself!***

**When you hear me talk about somebody in the story that you want to be, put your hand up and if I choose you, you can come and find your costume.**

**Perhaps you'd like to travel with us to Nazareth as we sing our first song.**

Sing: Opening song, just setting the scene such as O come all ye faithful, Silent Night, Come and Join the Celebration etc... \* As you sing everybody moves towards Nazareth.

**Here we are in Nazareth at a small carpenters shop – Mary and Joseph live here**

Choose, and dress up Mary & Joseph

**They are just getting ready to go on a long journey. They are going to town where Joseph's family came from... anybody know where that is? It begins with a 'B'... ... Brilliant, I was a bit worried then, I thought you might say Blackpool, but you're right it was Bethlehem!**

**They had to sign a register there but they had a problem – Mary was going to have a baby any day and she didn't fancy such a very, very, very long walk. At first Joseph wasn't very pleased Mary was going to have a baby because he knew he wasn't the dad... but Mary explained how an angel had visited her and told her she was going to have God's baby. Dress up an angel**

Angel: **I'm an angel but don't be scared Mary, God told me to tell you your going to have a baby**

Mary: **Are you sure? Joseph's going to be really angry and go ballistic. We're not even married yet.**

Angel: **Don't worry, God will sort it.**

Mary: **Joseph, an angel told me I'm going to have a baby.**

Joseph: **Oh yeah, do I look stupid? I'm not going to marry you now.**

Angel: **Joseph, I'm an angel and God says it's true and you've got to marry Mary.**

Joseph: **Okay then.**

**So here they are ready to set off for Bethlehem...**

Joseph: **Don't worry Mary, we'll go really slowly, and look I've got you a donkey.**

Sing: Little Donkey – Mary and Joseph lead the way as everybody follows the signs to Bethlehem. Stop a little way away from the stable.



**It took a long time but eventually Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. The only problem was everybody else had got there early and taken all the rooms. Joseph knocked at the door of a bed and breakfast, and the owner opened the door.**



Dress up 1st 'innkeeper'

Joseph: **Have you got any rooms, my wife's going to have a baby and she's very tired.**

1st Innkeeper: **No way, we were full hours ago, somebody's even sleeping on the kitchen table, we can't get anybody else in...'**

Move a little bit closer to the stable, and dress up 2nd innkeeper

**So Joseph went on to the next bed and breakfast...and knocked at the door...**

2nd innkeeper: **Don't even bother asking mate... we've got no room left!**

**By now Joseph was getting desperate and Mary thought the baby was going to be born any minute.**

Mary: **Joseph, I think the baby's going to be born any minute.**

Joseph: **Don't worry Mary, we'll find somewhere.**

Move a little bit closer to the stable, and dress up 3rd innkeeper

**So he knocked at the door of a little pub...**

Move up to just in front of the stable.

3rd innkeeper: **Whasssup...**

Joseph: **Have you got any rooms, my wife's going to have a baby and she's very tired.**

3rd innkeeper: **You've got to be joking mate, we've got no beer, no burgers and definitely no beds, you should have got here hours ago. The whole of Bethlehem's full of people coming to sign the register.**

Joseph: **But my wife's going to have a baby... NOW!'**

3rd innkeeper: **Well she can't have it in here, there's no room – look why don't you try the stable next door, it's a bit smelly but at least its dry and you won't have all these people watching!!!**

**So Mary and Joseph went into the stable and sure enough the baby was Jesus was born**  
A doll is probably best.

Sing: Calypso Carol or another carol... Towards the end of the song leave Mary and Joseph in the stable and head for the hills.

**That same night shepherds were out in the field looking after their sheep.**

Get nearly half of the rest to go and get dressed as shepherds.

If you've got a lot of children you might also want to get some angels dressed up now. Use tinsel as halo's.

Don't forget to save a few children to be kings.

(Sue explains: "We set-up one of our funnier children to be the comic shepherd... we did check he didn't mind looking a bit daft first... we gave some of the children toy sheep to put under their arms... but when it came to him we gave him a stuffed toy chicken... and told him out loud, so everyone could hear, that we had run out of sheep so to pretend it was a sheep.")

**Now shepherds weren't the cleverest of people...I'll show you what I mean... oi what have you got under your arm?**

Ask the comic shepherd – he should answer 'sheep' even though it's obviously a chicken or the like

**Really, it looks like a chicken to me – see I told you shepherds weren't the cleverest of people!** [Only do this if you have the right rapport with your 'audience' and you're sure the shepherd can take the joke!]



**But you can't blame the shepherds – all they had to do all day was count sheep.**

Get the children to start counting each other.

**Suddenly a whole load of angels appeared.**

Angels, all together: **Oi, you lot!**

Shepherds, all together: **aaagh!**

Angels, all together: **Stop fussing... go to Bethlehem... God's baby, Jesus has just been born... you'll find him in a stable.**

The comic shepherd can have his revenge now: **And you thought I was stupid!**

**But the shepherds got themselves ready and set off to Bethlehem to find this very special baby ... God's very own child.**

Sing: While Shepherds watched . Start moving towards the stable. When you get there arrange the shepherds and the angels in their places. Towards the end of the carol take anyone left to the East—the weather vane.

**Now a little while after this there were some very clever people from the East – so rich they may even have been kings. They had been following a star looking for a special baby who was to be born.**

Dress up Kings and somebody to carry a star.

Choose three of the kings to carry the presents.

**Considering they were supposed to be wise they were nearly as daft as the shepherds... they kept getting lost.**

King: **I told you to turn left at the last camel station**

Another king: **No you didn't**

Get all the kings to start arguing over which way to go.

**Luckily just then the star appeared (the star appears) so they followed it, and followed it, and followed it, all the way to the stable.**

Sing: We Three Kings or Star Carol. Get the star to lead the kings all around the church before finally stopping in front of the stable.

**By the time they eventually got there everybody else had left but they heard all about the shepherds and the angels and all the other visitors. They all knelt in front of the tiny baby Mary and Joseph had called Jesus and gave him their presents.**

Let the three children with the presents open the boxes

**Excuse me but I think you've got a little confused there that should be myrrh not a mirror! You just can't get the staff these days! (Swap mirror for a bottle, labelled "Myrrh".)**

**Everybody agreed that in all the time, in all the world there had never been a birth quite like it, or a baby quite so special but that was just the beginning. If you think this story is incredible you want to hear about the rest of his life - making people walk who couldn't walk, making people see who couldn't see, and feeding thousands of people with a couple of sandwiches. But the best bit was right at the end... but that's probably best kept for another day. For today, let's just remember how special it is that God's tiny little baby came to earth for us, and think how brilliant it is that our great big God was born, just like us.**

Sing: Away in a manger, At this time of Giving (Talk or prayers if you want to.... Followed by a final hymn)

# What would you give?



## Unlocking real life stories of urban people

This part is to get people sharing their everyday life experiences. The Bible comes later! Don't forget! These questions are just to get you started. It's OK not to use them all. And it's OK to add some of your own!!

Give out the **cartoon picture** (page 7.2) to each person in the group  
Ask **“What do you see?”** for example, a Christmas tree, wrapped presents.  
Then ask **“What is this picture about?”**

- ? Are these presents in someone's home, or somewhere else?
- ? Who has wrapped them?
- ? What do you think might be inside?

Ask **“Does this ring any bells with real life?”**

- ? How do you feel about giving Christmas presents to others?
- ? How do you feel about receiving presents?
- ? Do you have any memories of presents that have brought you joy?
- ? Do you have any memories of presents that have made you feel uncomfortable?
- ? Have you ever given someone a present with a special meaning?
- ? Have you ever received a present with a special meaning?

Ask **“What links can you see between the real life stories shared in this group?”**

## Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

This part is to help people link their stories with a story in the Bible.

Give out copies of the Bible story, **What would you give?** (page 3)  
Ask for a volunteer, or volunteers to read it to the group.

*Matthew 2 v1,2, 9-11*



**Can you make any connections between your stories and the Bible story?**

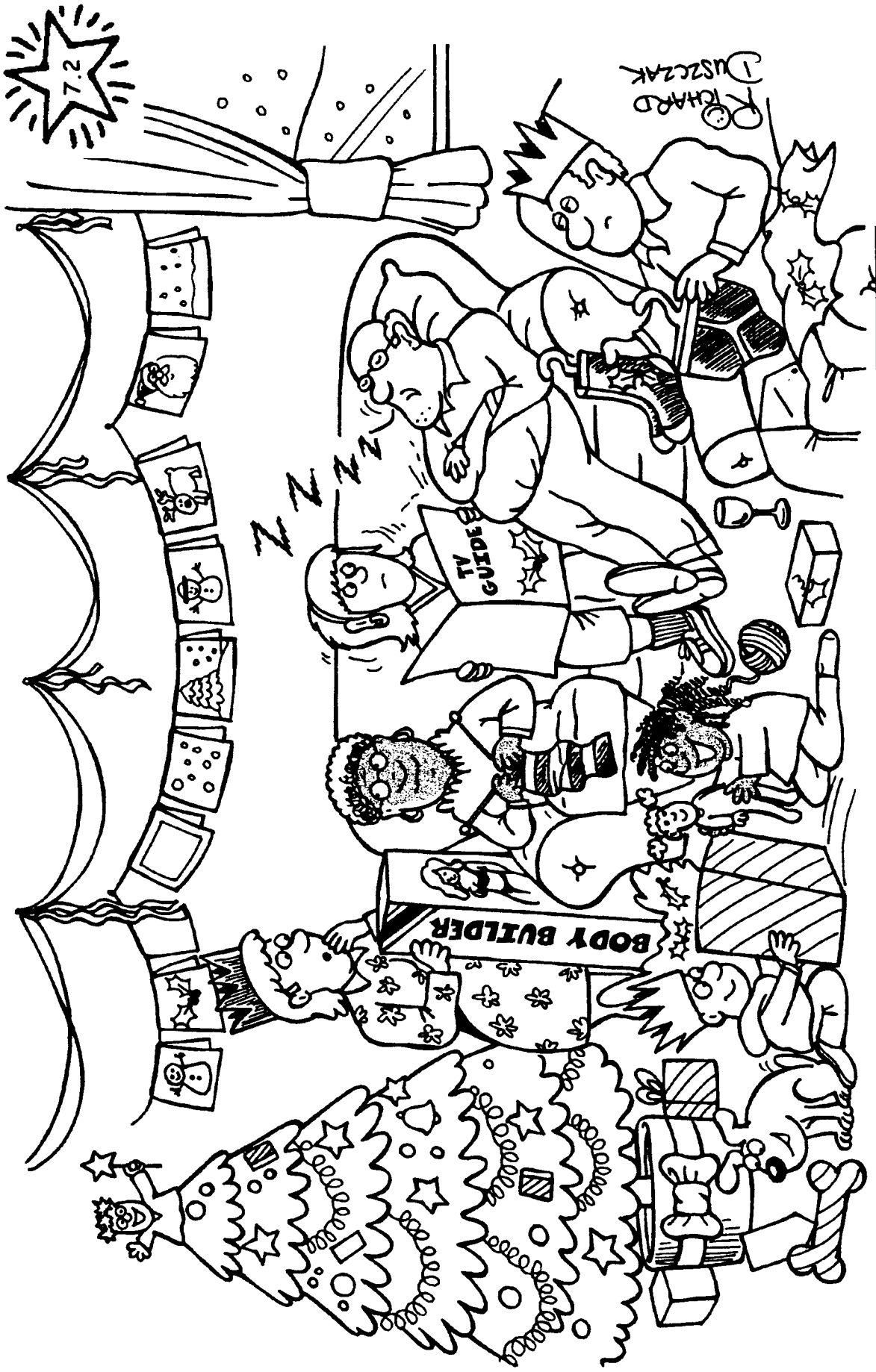
What light does the story of the wise men give to our own stories?  
What light do our own stories give to the story of the wise men?

## Releasing life changing skills and confidence

This part is to help people think about changes for themselves and others.

**“What difference will this make for us, our family, our friends and our neighbours?”**

For another session you could use at Christmas, along the same lines as this, see “Living with the Miracle maker, pages 2-4

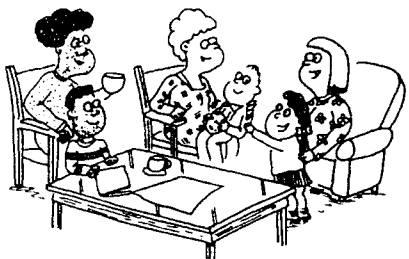


RICHARD  
DUSZCZAK



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## The See and Know First Christmas



*Song: Ding Dong\**

This is the story of the very first Christmas when God sent his son Jesus to earth. One day a long long time ago, a woman called Mary was visited by an angel. The angel told Mary that she was going to have a baby—a special baby which she must call Jesus.

*Song: With Jesus in the family\**

While the baby was still in Mary's tummy, Mary and her husband Joseph had to leave their home, and go on a long journey to a little town called Bethlehem.

*Here we go up to Bethlehem, to Bethlehem, to Bethlehem  
Here we go up to Bethlehem,  
On the first Christmas morning.  
(To the tune of "Here we go round the mulberry bush, children walk round)*

But when they got to Bethlehem, they could not find anywhere to sleep! At last an innkeeper said they could sleep in his stable. So it was in this stable with the cows and donkeys around them that Mary gave birth to her special baby. And she called him Jesus.

*Song: God loved us so very much.\** [as this is sung, an adult places the baby Jesus in Mary's arms]

*Song: Night night little boy\**

Meanwhile in the fields, shepherds were busy looking after their sheep:

*Song: Baa baa black sheep*

All of a sudden an angel appeared. The shepherds were very frightened, but the angel told them that they must go to Bethlehem and find the special baby Jesus. The shepherds did as they were told and they were very happy when they found Jesus...

At the same time far, far away, wise men were watching the stars—and they saw a big new star. "A king has been born! A king has been born!" they cried. And they set off to find this new King. The special star showed the wise men the way until at last they found the baby Jesus.

*Song: Twinkle, twinkle little star*

Let us pray— *Song: Open them shut them\**

Thank you God that you loved us so much that you gave us Jesus on that first Christmas day long long ago. Amen.

*Song: Away in a manger*

*\*these songs are from See and Know, words and music on page 8.2*

# See and Know First Christmas songs



①

F (C) (F) (C) (F) C F

Ding-dong goes the bell, we're glad that you are here.  
Ding-dong goes the bell, we know that God is near.

The chords in brackets ( ) are optional extras.

②

(A) (D) (D) (D) (A) (A)  
With Je-sus in the fa-mi-ly, Happy happy home, happy happy home  
Happy happy home, With Je-sus in the fa-mi-ly, Happy happy home  
Happy hap-py home

③

C C F C F

'Night night lit-tle boy God loves you. He's watch-ing  
o-ver you the whole night through.



④

D (Bm) A D  
God loved us so-ve-ry much, that He sent His Son to earth,  
D (Bm) A (Em) (A) D *Link to 5*  
He came down as a ti-ny ba-by show-ing God's great love  
A A' D A (Em)  
He had two lit-tle eyes and one lit-tle nose,  
A D D A (Em)  
two lit-tle ears and one lit-tle mouth, two lit-tle hands + two lit-tle feet,  
D A D  
Just like you.

⑤

(spoken) C G C (clap) G  
O-pen them shut them. Give a lit-tle clap. X X X X X  
O-pen them shut them. Fold them in your lap.

Used with kind permission of See and Know (Bradford)

# Christmas Eve at Home with three under five year olds!



Ruth Sharples Weston tells her story  
of Christmas 2000 ...

After tea, after the mess had been cleared up, after the children were washed and ready for bed and we had tidied up the living room for Santa, I turned the lights down low and said, "Lets light the candles."

"Oh yes! Oh Yes!" they cried.

So we lit the candles dotted about the room while we sang the first verse of *Away in a manger*.

The nativity was set out in an old orange box with strips of newspaper—the straw of today's inner city homeless? I said: 'Let's look in the nativity box!' And we all went over and had a look.

"What is missing?" I asked. Mary, Joseph and all the animals were there - but where was the crib? So we began to hunt for the baby Jesus in the crib. All the presents were in and around the tree and when we looked on the tree there was a red Christmas stocking and inside it was the crib with baby Jesus in it -

Jesus was our Christmas present from God!

I then produced a baby doll.

"Who does this baby doll remind us of?" I asked the children.

"Jesus!" came the reply.

So we sang: *God loved us so very much\**

After this I wrapped the baby up in a blanket and gave him to my two and a half year old son. He held him, and rocked him in his arms ever so gently, and we sang with him:

Night, night, little boy,

So we sang: *God loved us so very much\**



My son was so pleased and proud to hold the baby Jesus and rock him to sleep.

Then we gently placed the baby in a small cardboard box: Jesus had no home or proper bed to sleep in when he was born. We made him properly comfortable, and there he slept amongst all the presents under the Christmas tree.

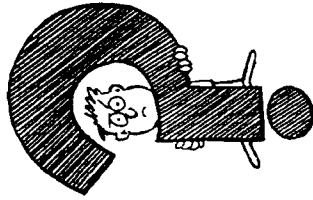
Finally we sang 'Happy Birthday to Jesus' and the children danced as we sang.

This was the best Christmas Eve a Mum could ever wish for.



\*See and Know; words and music on page 8.2

# Some questions to get you talking together ...



**Unlocking**  
? How comfortable are you with the things that go on in your family?

**Revealing**  
Jesus family history had some "skeletons in the cupboard". (If you want to explore this further, look at the Bible stories of Tamar; Ruth; and David and Bathsheba.)

? Can you see any parallels with the stories you've already shared?

**Releasing**  
? What does this mean for you this Christmas?

(Please take care of confidentiality if you're using these questions.)

**Unlocking**

- ? Have you ever broken religious rules?
- ? Have you ever broken social rules?
- ? Have you ever taken a risk?

**Revealing**

When Mary became pregnant, she was breaking the religious and social rules of the time, and was risking a precious relationship with Joseph

? Can you see any parallels between your experiences, and that of Mary?

**Releasing**

? What does this mean for you this Christmas?

**Unlocking**

- ? Can you name any places with a bad reputation?
- ? Have you ever lived anywhere with a bad reputation?

**Revealing**

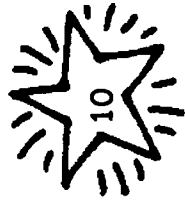
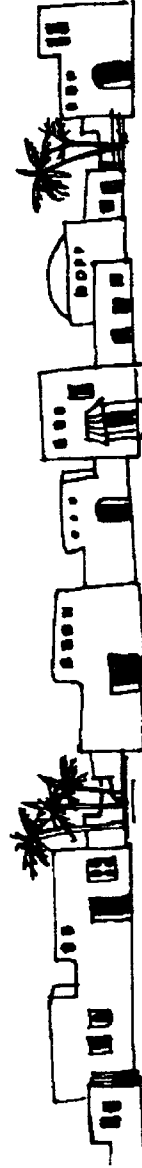
Jesus was born in Bethlehem

His earthly family were from Galilee—a place with a poor reputation.

? Can you see any links between the situations you've talked about, and the situation of Jesus birth and family life?

**Releasing**

? What does this mean for you this Christmas?





# A gift for the neighbourhood



The aim of this is to encourage people to consider their locality, and where the nativity story links with the local area.



## What do we need?

A map of your neighbourhood:

If you're involved in a community audit, you might like to use the map you are already working on.

Otherwise, you'll need a large sheet of paper, with the main roads and places marked on it.

Also, you will need some **coloured paper**, **felt pens** and **scissors** for each group. You'll need copies of the Bible passages (pages 2,3,4) if you want everyone to have a copy, and you'll need copies of the characters on page 11.3 (enlarge

It works best if you are in groups of 6-10 people.

If you're using this in a housegroup, stick together. If you're using it with a church, break into groups—possibly asking one person in each group to make sure everyone gets their say.

If you're dividing a larger group, there are interesting insights if people are divided according to whether they live in the area, or only worship in the area. Or you may prefer to divide in a more ad hoc way.

## Unlocking real life stories of urban people

Ask individuals in the groups to think about **What is there in your area? What is going on?** Draw it / symbolise it (write words if you must!) on sheets of coloured paper, and cut them out. Children and adults can be involved in this activity.

This part is to get people sharing their everyday life experiences.

The Bible comes later!

These questions are just to get you started.

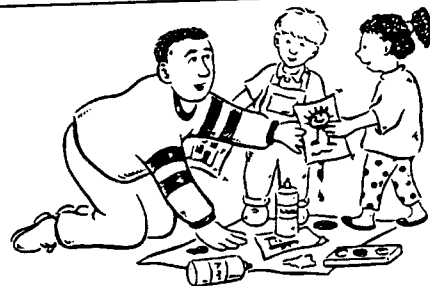
It's OK not to use them all, and it's OK to add some of your own!!

You will now need a small group "in charge of" the map—preferably those who actually live in the area. People can then come to the map and, with the agreement of those in charge of the map, place their symbol on it. (You may like to stick things to the map?)

Ask all involved then to stand around the map and look at it. **Is anything missing? Does anything need changing?**

Then, returning to small groups:

What is life like round here?  
What do you like? What don't you like?  
How would you describe the area?  
What special events have happened around here?



## Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

This part is to help people link their stories with a Bible story.

Read the story of Jesus birth (page 2)  
You may like to do this in small groups, or with the whole church.  
Also, read the stories of the wise men and shepherds (pages 3 and 4).

At the same time, the pictures of the characters on page 11.3 can be prepared—coloured and cut out.

The wise men are those who come from outside, and are people who have spent a lot of time studying.  
Take pictures A and B. Where will you put them on your map?  
Encourage discussion about where these should go; the group who live in the area have the final say.



The shepherds are those who are looked down on by others. They are doing a job no-one else wants to do, and are paid a low wage.  
Take pictures C and D. Where will you put them on your map?  
Continue to encourage discussion.



Mary and Joseph are in temporary accommodation in Bethlehem; they are a young couple, with questions asked about the legitimacy of Mary's baby.  
Take picture E. Where will you put it on your map?



The angels announce Good News.  
Take picture F. Where will you put it on your map?



Spend time looking at the map, and where Jesus would be born in your neighbourhood.  
The song "Meekness and majesty" played or sung here may be appropriate.  
You may like to ask people if they want to comment on their reflections.

## Releasing life changing skills and confidence

Ask the groups to think about:  
**What does it mean for Jesus to be born around here?**

This part is to help people think about changes for themselves and others.

You may like to use the map as a focus for prayer.

Each person could place a lighted candle onto the map, as they pray for those who live there.





A



B



C



D



E



F



# Giving Myself

**You will need:** a nativity scene  
glass nuggets—one per person (or something similar)

**The idea** is to use a 3-dimensional nativity scene, and encourage each person to consider where they would put themselves.

## What to do

Give each person a glass nugget.  
Ask them to think about where they are in the scene.....



- Hanging around some distance away, wondering what's going on?
- On the edge, looking in?
- With the wise men—thinking about what they've seen and heard, and working it out with their minds before venturing any further?
- With the shepherds—often feeling left out of things, and looked down on by others, but getting a feeling that God wants them involved.
- With Mary and Joseph, committed to a relationship with Jesus, and knowing that with him life is never going to be the same again.
- Keeping out of sight in the corner of the stable, perhaps half hidden under the straw—wanting to be there, but not wanting anyone to know.

.....or where?.....the individuals in the group can decide.....

## Where can I use this?

- We used it in an all-age neighbourhood Christmas party, in a home with people at very different stages of their faith journey. We left the nativity scene and a bowl of nuggets on a sideboard in the hall. We told everyone what it symbolised, and during the evening, as they passed, individuals and families placed their nuggets. People were free to participate or not, as they chose.
- You could use it in a home group, and encourage discussion about where people had put themselves. (If you repeated it a year later, you could discuss how people had moved during the year)
- You could use it in a church service as part of worship—members of the congregation offering themselves in worship, perhaps while singing a carol.

.....Where else?.....let us know how you use it, and we'll add it to our list!

# A Present for YOU



## THE IDEA:

To make presents which are valuable in terms of time and care rather than price



## What to do

- 1 Invite everyone to make a present for someone else in the group. Explain that it is not to cost much. You could include some of the following challenges:
  - Who can make a special present and spend the least?
  - Make a present with a limited amount of money, eg 50p or £1.
  - Design and make wrapping paper as well.
  - Have members of one family get together to make presents for another family.
  - Draw names out of a hat for who you give your present to.
- 2 Allow time for everyone to think about what they want to make, but be sure that everyone is certain about what they are going to do.
- 3 *Either:* Allow one or two weeks for the gifts to be made at home.  
*Or:* Give the next session over to making (or beginning to make) the presents.



## Discussion

What can we learn by making presents rather than just buying them?

How does it feel to spend time thinking about the person who's going to get the present, what they would specially like, and so on?

Which is better - to receive an expensive present or to have parents, friends, family spend time with you?



## Ideas for inexpensive makings

- Tissue/crepe paper flowers on pipe cleaners in a decorated cardboard tube vase.
- Plain paper towels cut into snowflakes, dipped in food colouring and pasted onto white paper when dry to make fancy place mats, wall hangings, greeting cards.
- Painted stones and rocks for paperweights.
- Necklaces from painted pasta threaded onto coloured shoelaces or wool.
- Odds and ends holders from boxes and tubes glued onto a base and decorated.



# TIME SWAP TIME SWAP TIME

**THE IDEA:**  
To think about giving  
time as a valuable  
present.



## What to do

- 1 Collect 'time promises' from the group. Give examples:
  - I will give one hour to clean someone's windows.
  - I will give two hours to help look after small children.
  - I will spend time drawing a picture for someone.

Then encourage everyone to chat together to come up with a promise that each one (except perhaps tiny children) could make.

- 2 Write all the promises on slips of paper and get everyone to sign their own promise. Parents/carers must also sign their children's promises.
- 3 Discuss giving time to others as an important gift.  
When has it been good to have others spend time with you?  
What would be the best 'time promise' you could receive this Christmas?
- 4 Leave the 'time promises' on display. Encourage people to take one that they would like to claim. They should go and speak to the person (or parent/carer) who made the promise.

## Please note:

It may not be possible to match up all the promises with people wanting to claim them. If this happens, try to arrange alternatives. It is important that children, in particular do not feel that their gift has been rejected. By working together as a group, everything can be worked out to the satisfaction of all!



## Alternative idea

### *Time for others*

Decide as a group what you could do to give time to a local organisation, eg, a group with learning disabilities or a residential home for elderly peo-

# Elvis Prezzie



## - a Christmas drama

by Liz Dorton

Elvis Prezzie is a hand/mouth puppet representing the concept 'GIVE'. This Christmas journey is Prezzie's journey of self-discovery. Adapt the characters, costumes and props to your own local situation.

### The Characters:

- Elvis Prezzie (P):** Puppet head with moveable mouth, glove for puppeteer's hand; head attached to a body with a large heart in a box; hands put through holes in box
- Money (£):** Large pound sign on a stick
- Butler (B):** A child helper
- Money Chummies (MC):** Children dressed as 'money' who accompany Money, wearing something shiny, gleaming, gold and silver to represent money, coins
- Wisemen (W):** Three actors carrying presents
- TV person:** Person dressed up in box as a TV
- Seven Lottery Balls** Children dressed up to represent lottery balls
- Christmas Cracker** Child dressed up to represent Christmas cracker
- Santa Card:** Sandwich-board card with child's head poked through hole
- Christmas Tree with Presents:** Adult dressed to represent Tree with children as Presents
- Mother and baby:** From audience

### You will need:

- selection of wrapping paper for different occasions displayed on coat hangers
- shopping catalogues
- contents of Christmas cracker
- binoculars
- sack of 'presents' and stockings for filling
- large Bible
- large gift-wrapped box with 'Jesus' on outside and placards and cross inside
- music: tape of lottery music, heart beat, upbeat music to end with



*(Enter Prezzie in a box. He wakes up.)*

**P:** Who am I? What am I doing here?

*(Enter Butler with a choice of wrapping papers for different occasions hanging on wire coat hangers.)*

**P:** I'm sick of this! There must be more. I must find out what I mean, why I'm here.

**£:** I can help you. You are very important. You are what you're worth in money...  
*(Calls) Money Chummies! Money Chummies! (Enter Money Chummies)*

**MC:** *(Chanting)* You're sweeter than honey. You're what you're worth in money.  
You're sweeter than honey. You're what you're worth in money.

**£:** Yes, this is your golden age. You're famous. There's even books written about you.  
*(Butler shows shopping catalogues. Money prompts MC in second chant.)*

**MC:** *(Chanting)* Buy me, buy me, come and try me! Bigger, better, more and more!  
Buy me, buy me, come and try me! Bigger, better, more and more!

**£:** And you're on TV every fifteen minutes.

*(Enter TV who speaks advertisements while MCs continue to chant. Money prompts MCs in third chant.)*

**MC:** Yes, you're famous...You're famous. But don't forget to name us.  
Yes, you're famous...You're famous. But don't forget to name us.

**£:** And now there's a whole TV programme once a week dedicated to you. You're a national craze. Millions of people worship you and even pray to you.

**P:** Oh yeah. How? *(Money prompts MCs in fourth chant)*

**MC:** You know I'm a sinner. Now make me a winner.  
You know I'm a sinner. Now make me a winner.

**P:** *(Brightens up)* How does it work? This is more like it.

**£:** Well, people pay money to have you.

**P:** You mean they buy a present for themselves. What do they get?

**£:** Money.

**P:** They pay money to get money?

**£:** Well, only a few get all the money.

**P:** Oh, the poorest?

**£:** Well, not exactly.

**P:** Who chooses?

**£:** These balls.

*(Enter Seven Lottery Balls. They dance to lottery music.)*

**P:** But this isn't fair - what about my heart? No, no, there must be more than this.

**£:** OK, OK...your heart! You want to give pleasure to others. What better time than Xmas? A time of loving cheer and good will...the best time of the year. Well, how about something modest? What about a cracker?

*(Enter Christmas Cracker. Two children spin CC. Money prompts MCs in chant.)*

**MC:** Buy me, buy me...(etc) *(MCs crouch behind CC) One! Two! Three! BANG!*  
*(MCs leap out in an explosion. A child stands up and tells joke with cracker hat on and holding out tiny cracker trinkets.)*

**P:** *(with binoculars looking at trinkets)* Is that all?

**£:** Or for something more substantial... *(Calls) Santa! Santa!*

*(Enter Santa Card with sack of presents; fills stockings)*

**£:** Now Santa is full of fun and romance and goodwill. He's the great giver in the sky - your saint, your hero! Look at all those presents - you fill all those children's stockings and make them happy. *(Money prompts MCs in a chant)*





MC: Buy me, buy me...(etc)

P: But Santa's just a fantasy. He's not here and now.

£: OK, OK, you want reality and heart? Well, you can't do better than loving parents giving presents.

*(Enter Christmas Tree with Presents)*

£: Look at *these* presents - they're much bigger under the tree.

*(Money prompts MCs to chant two separate chants in two groups. The chants get louder and louder.)*

MC: Buy me, buy me...(etc, as before)

You're sweeter than honey...(etc, as before)

P: BE QUIET!! STOP IT!! STOP IT!! I can't stand any more. I'm worth more than my worth in money. My heart is aching...there must be more.

*(Exit Money and MCs leaving P alone and despairing. Enter Wisemen with presents whistling 'We Three Kings'.)*

P: What are those presents? Going to an Xmas party?

W: No!

P: Are you Santa's dwarfs?

W: No!

P: Lottery winners?

W: No!

P: Well, what are you doing with those presents?

W: Taking them to a special King who's just been born.

P: A bit mingeey, aren't they?

W: Look, he's not that kind of a king. You can read all about him in this book. *(Gives B a large old Bible and exits. B places the Bible in front of P and exits.)*

*(P is alone. He turns pages, reads and reminisces about his own childhood...and remembers various landmarks. This section can be elaborated and ad-libbed.)*

P: Here's a word 'creation' - food given to the animals... Oh no! Eve gave me to Adam but she shouldn't have... Cain and Abel both gave me to God but Cain was jealous of his brother's present and killed him... Here's another word for give: 'sacrifice' - giving that costs, that hurts sometimes... Here's another: 'offering'. What's this? ...God so loved the world that He gave His only son... His name was Jesus... I remember.

*(Enter mother and baby, walk across the stage and exit. Enter group of children with large gift-wrapped box with 'Jesus' written on the outside.)*

P: I remember... This is what it really feels like to be alive. I remember being given and given out of Jesus' life. I felt fantastic, really good.

*(Children take placards out of box with these words written on them:*

|         |             |             |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| JOY     | HEALING     | FRIENDSHIP  |
| STORIES | JUSTICE     | CELEBRATION |
| FOOD    | TIME WISDOM | LOVE        |

*There is the sound of a heart beat and a cross is raised out of the box.)*

P: *(Thumps his heart)* ...His life...!

*(All exit, dancing to upbeat music.)*

# Parents under pressure

**THE IDEA:**  
To take a new look at TV adverts at Christmas time



## What to do

- 1 To prepare, make a video of TV adverts which are aimed at people buying Christmas presents. These should mostly be adverts for children's goods, but include a couple of others too. Show the video.
- 2 After showing the video, discuss the adverts:
  - Which ones do the children like/want?
  - What do the advertisers do to make their products look good?
  - What messages are they trying to give to make you buy/want their products?

Talk about the cost of the items advertised and the pressure put on people to spend more than they can afford.
- 3 Give out large sheets of paper, pencils, pens and crayons and ask people to form small groups. Give each group a rubber band and get them to design a poster advert for it. The poster should aim to get children to ask for a rubber band for Christmas. For instance, they might try to bring out:
  - how many uses it has;
  - how collectable (one in every colour);
  - what you can do with it when it is linked on to others
  - how cheap it is
  - how much fun it can be!
- 4 After the posters are made, compare them and enjoy the laughter!



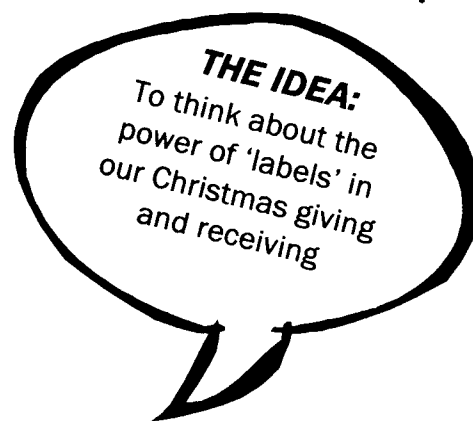
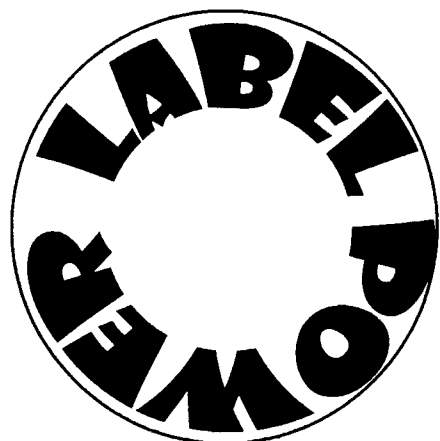
## Extra idea

The posters could be presented to a wider group/church family to show that rubber bands are now on the top of everyone's gift list for Christmas!



## Alternative idea

Use magazine adverts at the beginning instead of video clips.



## What to do

- 1 Ask what everyone would like for Christmas.
  - What are your top presents this year?
  - Why have you chosen them?
- 2 Have the group draw or cut from magazines their favourite labels or designer logos. Make large posters of these, two or three people working together. Get them to draw speech bubbles around the edge of the posters.



## Discussion

- Why does having the right label seem important to people?
- Why are similar items at a lower price not just as good?
- Who are the winners in this situation?
- Who are the losers?

Take time to look at the posters and then get people to fill in the speech bubbles with what they want to say about them. You could ask some guiding questions:

- How does the poster make them feel?
- What is important about it?
- What does it say about the way the power of designer labels is used?
- Is there any way out of the situation?

# CHRISTMAS CRACKERS!



## Aim

The aim of the game is to give away all your Christmas presents. When you have done this, the true meaning of Christmas will be revealed!

## You need

- One A4 games mat for every player (sheet 18.3 backed by 18.4 - photocopy)
- A set of Bible cards (sheet 18.5 - photocopy and cut up)
- 12 'Christmas presents' for each player to start the game (sheet 18.6 - photocopy and cut out as many as needed)
- For a truly wacky game, play with real presents: collect 12 items for each player - the kind of things people will give each other for Christmas, eg, toys, socks, jumpers, CDs, books, soap...anything to hand that fits the bill.
- You also need about 6 spare presents (paper or real) for the centre pile.
- One sheet of instructions (sheet 18.7), detailing moves to be made for each number shown on the dice - enlarge this if you wish.
- Dice: large foam dice are ideal, or make your own Christmas one from card (sheet 18.8)

## Preparation

- Have all the players sit in a circle (4-6 players are enough for one game). If you have a large group, divide into teams of 4-6 players, each with a leader.
- Give each player a playing mat (Why not colour them in before you start as an extra activity - adults will enjoy this, too!) All mats must start off tree-side up.
- Now hand out 12 presents to each player - these are to be put on top of the tree picture.
- Place the Bible cards face down in a pile in the centre of the circle.
- Place the instruction sheet in the centre where everyone can see it.
- Produce the dice and explain that you are all going to take it in turns to throw the dice and follow the instructions on the sheet next to the number you have thrown.
- The aim of the game is to be the first player to give away all your presents.
- Each time a present is given away, the giver must say, 'Merry Christmas!'
- The first player to give away all their presents shouts 'Christmas Crackers!' and turns over their playing mat to show the nativity scene. He/she then reads the verse printed at the top of the page.



## To play

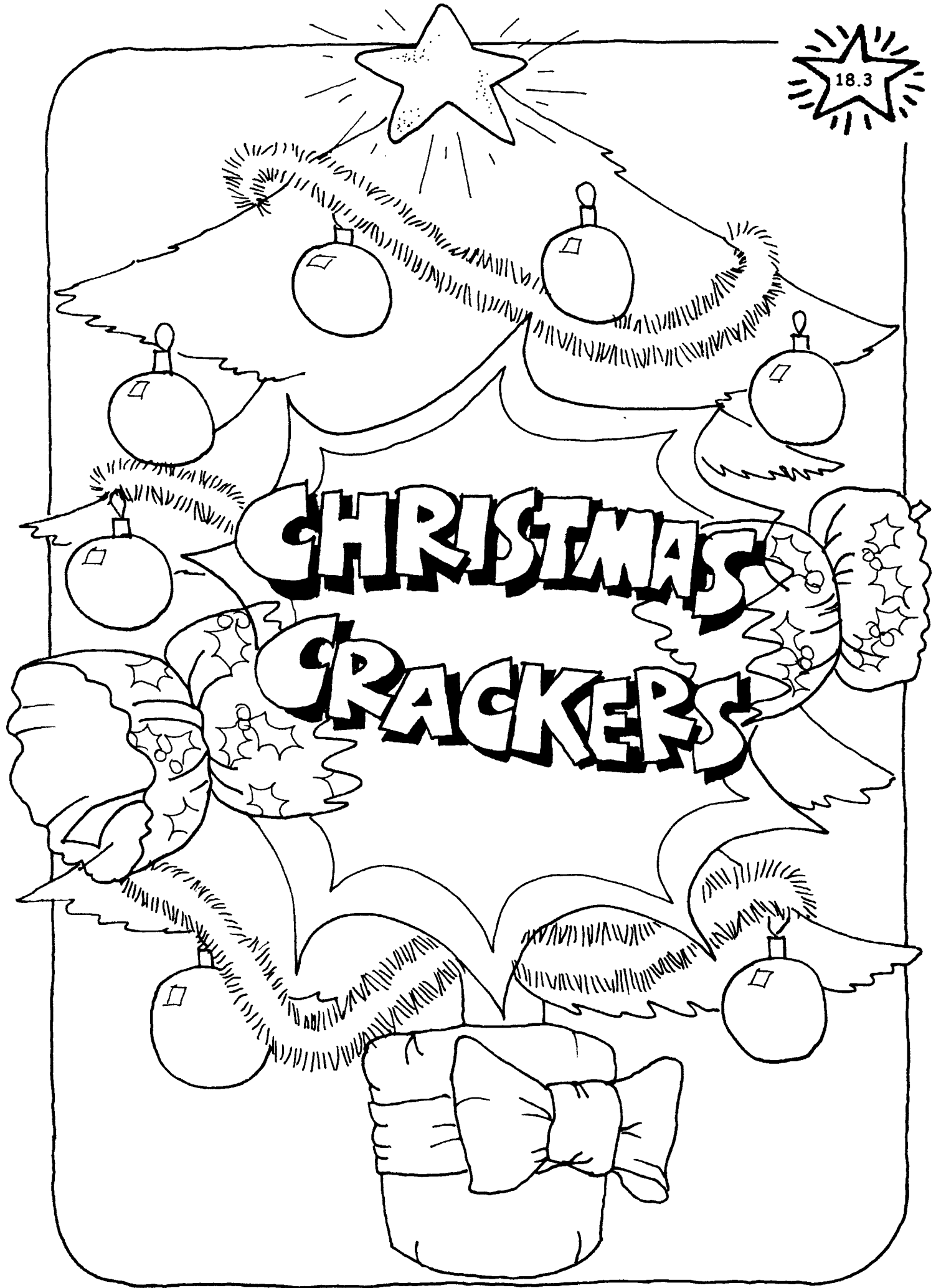
Go around the circle, taking turns to throw the dice and follow the instructions.

- 1 If a player throws a 1 or a 5, the team leader takes a Bible card from the centre and reads it aloud. There are blanks in the verses and the player must guess the missing word(s). (Since these are all variations on 'give', it should not be too hard!) If the player guesses the word correctly, he/she can discard a present. The leader then repeats the whole verse, including the missing word(s). If the player can then repeat it correctly, he/she can discard another two presents. Replace the card at the bottom of the pile.
- 2 If a two is thrown, the player throws the dice again.  
If it is an odd number, he/she *takes* a present from the players on either side of him.  
If it is an even number, the player *gives* a present to the players on each side.
- 3 If a three is thrown, all the other players get up in turn, run around the circle and give you a present, shouting, 'Merry Christmas!'
- 4 Throwing a four means the player takes 3 presents from the centre pile.
- 5 Follow the instructions for No. 1.
- 6 If a six is thrown, the player gives a present to each of the other players, walking around the circle and saying 'Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas everyone!'

## Bible cards

The texts on the cards are:

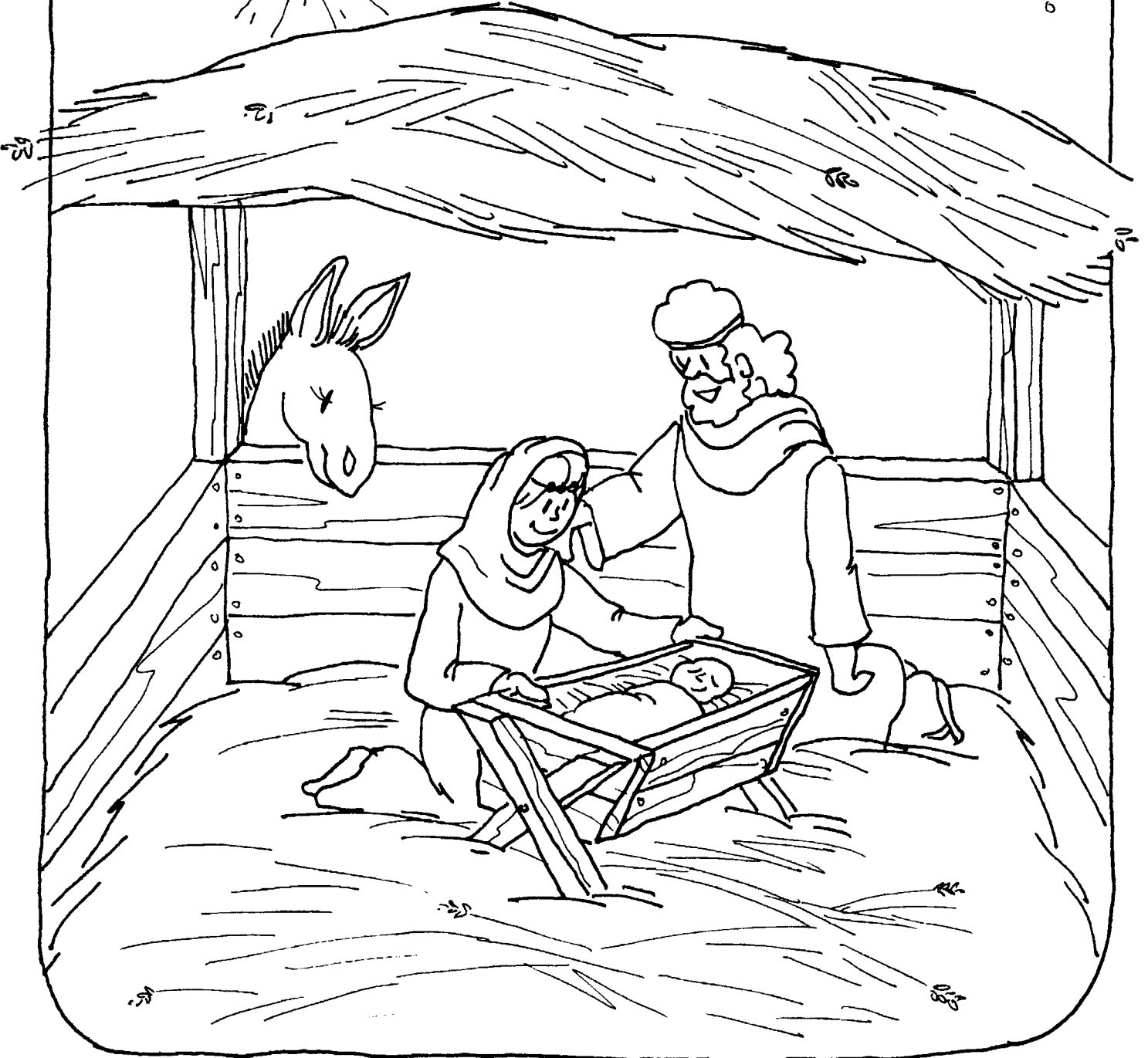
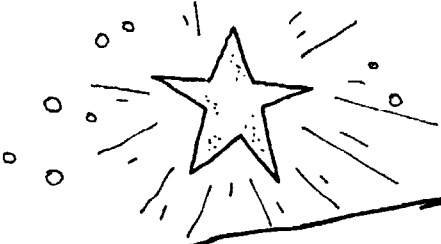
- Acts 20:35 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'  
Matthew 5:42 'Give to the one who asks you and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you'  
Matthew 10:8 'Freely you have received, freely give'  
Matthew 19:21 'Sell your possessions and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven'  
Luke 6:38 'Give and it will be given to you'  
John 16:23 'My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name'  
1 Thess 5:16 'Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances'  
Provs 25:21 'If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, if he is thirsty, give him water to drink'



Playing Mat Front

**F**or God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

John 3:16



It is more blessed  
to **BLANK** than  
to receive

Acts 20:35

**BLANK** to the one  
who asks you, and do not  
turn away from the  
one who wants to  
borrow from you

Matthew 5:42

Freely you  
have received,  
freely **BLANK**

Matthew 10:8

Sell your possessions  
and **BLANK** to the  
poor and you will  
have treasure in  
heaven

Matthew 19:21

**BLANK** and it will  
be given to you

Luke 6:38

My father will  
**BLANK** you  
whatever you ask  
in my name

John 16:23

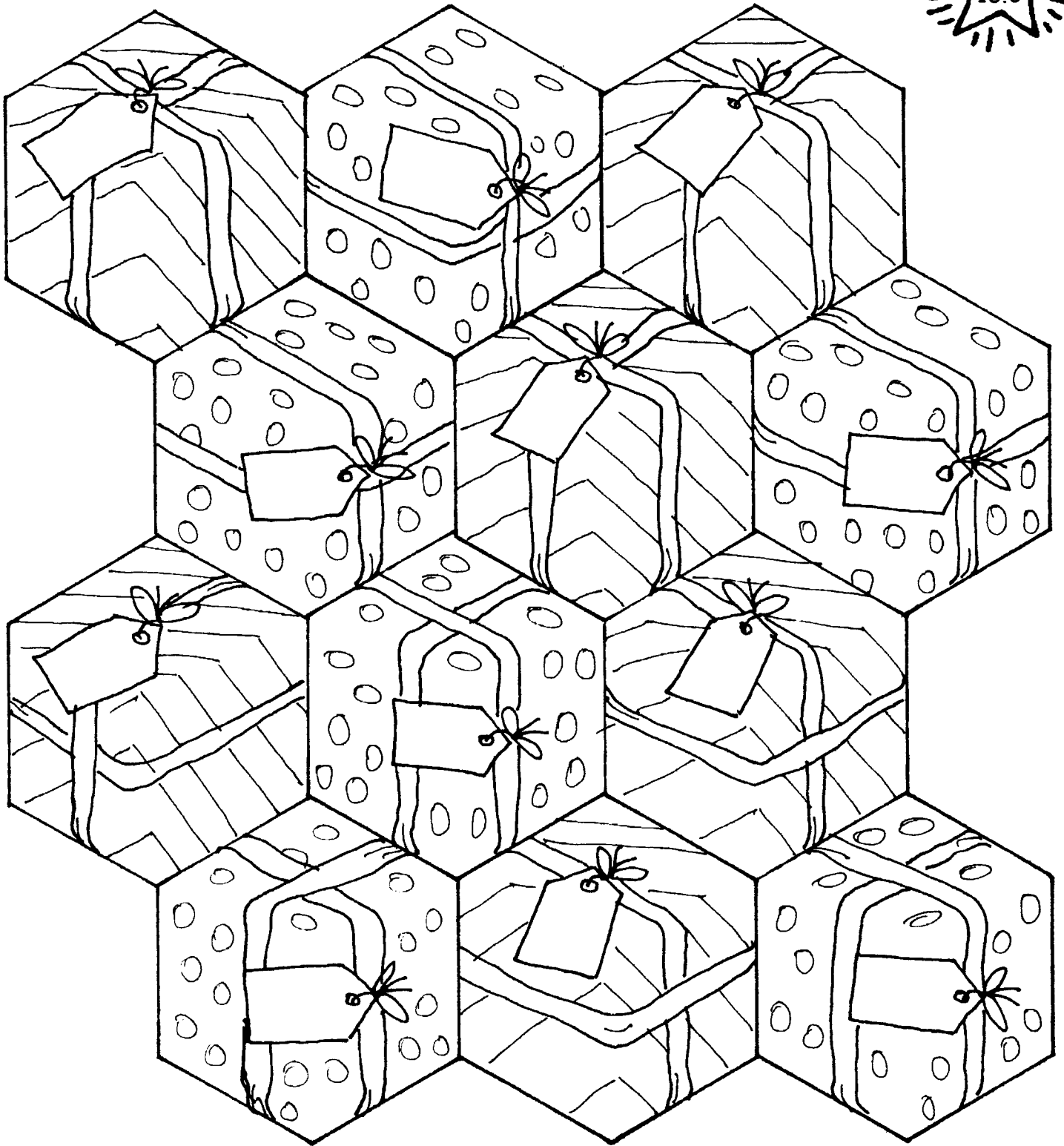
Be joyful always,  
pray continually  
**BLANK** thanks in  
all circumstances

1 Thes. 5:16

If your enemy is  
hungry, **BLANK** him  
food to eat, if he is thirsty  
**BLANK** him water  
to drink

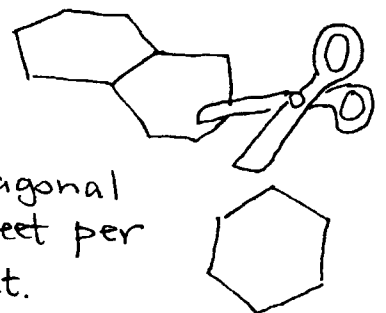
Proverbs 25:21





Presents Sheet

Cut out 12 presents along hexagonal grid lines. You need one sheet per player and one spare sheet.



# CHRISTMAS CRACKERS!



Here's what to do when you

throw a - "



**Bible Blanks!**

Leader takes and reads a Bible card aloud. What's the missing word?

- Put a present in the centre pile if you're right.
  - Repeat the whole verse correctly and put 2 more in the centre pile!
- 



**Visit your neighbours**

Throw the dice again.

- 1, 3 or 5? - Take a present from the player each side of you.
  - 2, 4 or 6? - Give a present to the player each side of you
- 



**It's Party Time!**

All the other players get up in turn, run round the circle and give you a present, shouting "Merry Christmas!"

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**Go carol singing!**

And collect 3 presents from the centre pile!

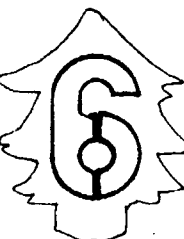
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**Bible Blanks!**

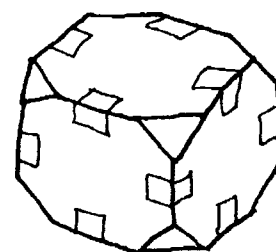
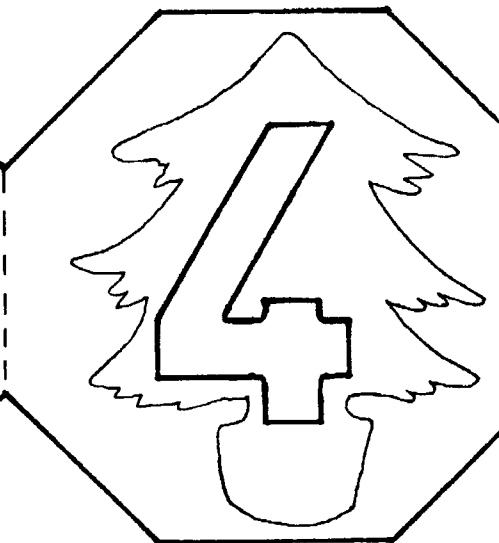
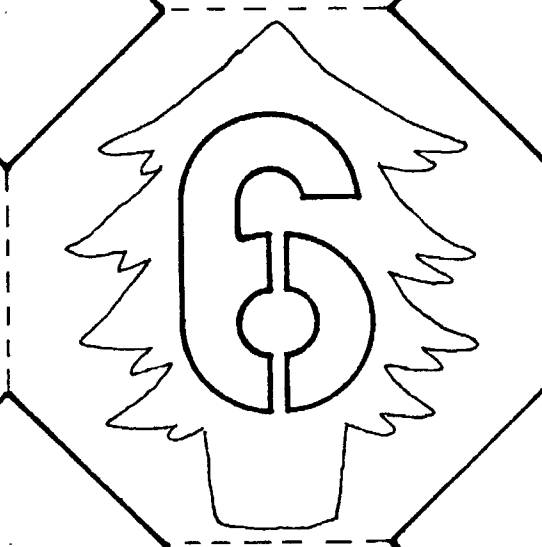
As for no 1

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**Santa Claus comes!**

Play Santa and give a present to all the other players. Walk round the outside of the circle saying "Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas everybody!" as you do it.



Cut out along solid outline. Score and fold on dotted lines. Tape together joining edges.



Dice Pattern

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHRISTMAS STORY



- some tried and tested ideas -

*- compiled by Pat Miller*

## A DRESSING-UP CHALLENGE

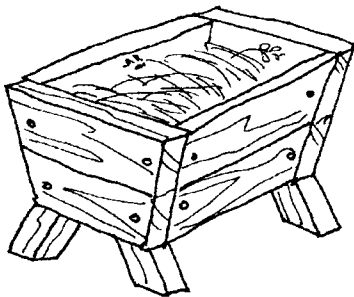
As young people arrived, we divided them into three groups. We gave each group brightly coloured paper, wrapping, crepe and tissue paper, gold card, foil, Christmas decorations and sticky tape. Their task was to dress up one group member as a Christmas item - eg, tree, present. We then had a Christmas quiz based on the Christmas story played as 'Pass the Parcel'. Each layer had a question and a Haribo as a prize. We gave each person a present: a chocolate bar wrapped in Christmas paper with a message on a card covered in plastic: 'Remember God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus' We sang some Christmas carols at the end. We were trying to get the group to see the impact of Jesus' birth and his coming and living among us. It's important to link the birth of Jesus with the whole point of why God sent him.



## A CHRISTMAS TABLEAU

We decided to produce a Christmas tableau with our children. We built up the picture by asking the children who they thought should be in the Christmas scene, then as they made suggestions, we dressed them up in character with hats, paper, dressing up clothes, etc, and placed them in the picture. Mary was given baby Jesus to hold. We told the group that we wanted to take a photo of the scene. Then a leader came forward with a beautifully wrapped present and pointed out that this also needed to go in the picture. It was suggested that as Baby Jesus was crying, maybe we could move him out of the picture to be looked after by someone else, then Mary could hold the gift. When the tableau was complete (ie, the children had no more suggestions to make), we took a photo.

We then talked about the picture we had created. What was wrong with our tableau? What was missing? The answer was that Jesus was moved out of the picture - the present took his place! It is good to give and receive presents at Christmas. However, without Jesus, there are no shepherds, no star, no wise men.... We proceeded to remove the relevant characters. The real meaning of Christmas is that Jesus came as a baby. Jesus is at the heart of Christmas.



## A MYSTERY EVENING

Have you ever thought about doing Christmas at a different time of year? We wanted our 11-14s to understand why Jesus came as a baby and how it impacts on what He can mean to them now.

We advertised the evening as a mystery evening. We decorated with Christmas decorations: trees, lights, Christmas cards... We had the kids queue up outside the room which was in darkness until they entered, then we switched the lights on. They were surprised!

We played an old tape of 80s Christmas songs and did a quiz based on these (you could use carols). We played party games and had the leaders dressed in reindeer antlers and Father Christmas hats. We looked at the image of Christmas from the Christmas cards and briefly about where Father Christmas began. We then read the Christmas story from the Gospels and asked them to perform a modern version. Mary gave birth to Jesus in a garage and baby Jesus, played by one of the boys, appeared through the bottom of her chair! We finished with giving them each a present and a verse.

# An alternative Christmas



**THE IDEA:**  
Deciding together  
how to 'do' Christmas  
differently



## What to do

- 1 Plan as a family, group or church to celebrate an alternative Christmas. Decide on what you want to achieve, eg:
  - getting back to the simplicity of Christmas
  - avoiding spending large amounts on presents
  - being environmentally friendly
  - taking the stress out of Christmas
  - supporting third world or fair trade
- 2 Agree to take certain actions to achieve your goal, for example:
  - think carefully who you choose to send a Christmas card to: don't send indiscriminately or simply because you've been given one!
  - make a big Christmas card for everyone in the group/church which is signed by everyone and displayed where it can easily be seen by everyone; give the money saved to a favourite charity
  - have your Christmas meal together
  - invite someone to your home on Christmas day who would otherwise be spending the day alone
  - instead of spending a lot on presents, give money to those in need
  - spend some thought and time planning a celebration on another traditional date instead of doing everything around December 25th; for example, why not try 6th January (Epiphany) or 5/6 December (St Nicholas)
  - make careful choices about how you use the time leading up to Christmas so as to avoid being caught up in the pre-Christmas scramble; allow yourself space and time for reflection on the meaning of Christmas - put aside, say, 15 minutes each day

# Talkabout Giving



**THE IDEA:**  
To look at our  
reasons for giving  
at Christmas



## What to do

- 1 Ask small groups to prepare a number of role-play situations:
  - Giving when you can't afford it because you love someone (see John 12:1-8)
  - Giving to keep up with the 'Joneses' - buying on HP and getting into debt
  - Giving because someone has given to you.
  - Giving to get something back.
  - Giving to show off (see Mark 12:41-44)

The Bible stories may be used where they are shown or modern parallels presented.

- 2 When the role plays have been presented, say that most people think of giving as a good thing to do. Can it ever be bad or have a bad consequence?



## Discussion

Talk about people's attitudes when giving, perhaps prompting with some examples:

- 'Can't afford it' - going into debt
- Duty and resentment
- To ingratiate yourself with someone
- To secure favours and/or friendship
- Because it's expected - everyone else does it
- To keep someone dependent on you.



## Alternative idea

Use the board game 'Christmas Crackers!' (Sheets 18 ff) to spark off discussion about attitudes to giving.

# Christmas Grand Slam



**THE IDEA:**  
A simple, fun game  
to play at Christmas

## You need

Resource page pictures (sheet 22.3), photocopied and cut up into playing-card size. Alternatively, use pictures cut from magazines or old Christmas cards. For the team version of the game, you need one set of pictures for each team.

You will also need a list of seasonal clues, for example:

- |    |                                      |                     |
|----|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1  | Something you sing at Christmas      | (carols)            |
| 2  | They followed a star at Christmas    | (magi/wise men)     |
| 3  | Something you eat at Christmas       | (turkey/mince pies) |
| 4  | Something you hang up at Christmas   | (decorations)       |
| 5  | It shone in the sky at Christmas     | (star)              |
| 6  | We give these at Christmas           | (presents)          |
| 7  | Something shiny at Christmas         | (decorations/star)  |
| 8  | They were in the fields at Christmas | (sheep/shepherds)   |
| 9  | A baby's bed at Christmas            | (manger)            |
| 10 | He has a red nose at Christmas       | (Rudolph/Santa)     |
| 11 | Mary rode on this                    | (donkey)            |
| 12 | Ring these at Christmas              | (bells)             |

All of these are illustrated on the resource sheet. Add pictures of your own if necessary to cover any clues you have added yourself (magazine pictures, old Christmas cards) - it doesn't matter what the pictures are like as long as there are lots of them and they are easily recognisable. Make your list as long as you can with as many 'fun' clues as possible.

## To play

### Team game

Place two jumbled up sets of pictures on two separate tables or on the floor, some distance apart from each other. Divide the group into two teams, invite a volunteer from each team to come forward.

Explain that you are going to read out some Christmassy clues. As soon as you have read the first one, the first two volunteers must run to their team's picture pile and find the matching picture.

Some clues will have more than one possible picture answer. This doesn't matter - they must just grab their chosen picture, run back to you and slam it on the table/wall.

Whoever gets there first wins a point for their team. Now compare the pictures: if both teams have chosen the same picture, they each get another point. Replace the pictures into the team piles and play again with another pair of volunteers.



### Whole group game

Play for fun with the whole group together, taking it in turns to run, select and slam a picture. See who can do it the fastest.

If space permits, the picture piles could be at one end of your meeting place and the slam table/wall at the opposite end, with team members having to run back and forth between the tables and pictures

Pitch the game to the ability level of the children. For an easier game, allow all the team members to help in choosing the appropriate picture for the playing member to grab. For a slightly harder game, add lots of 'red herrings' - pictures for which there are no clues.

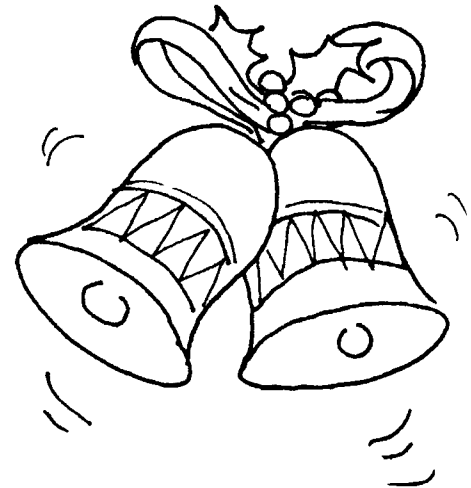
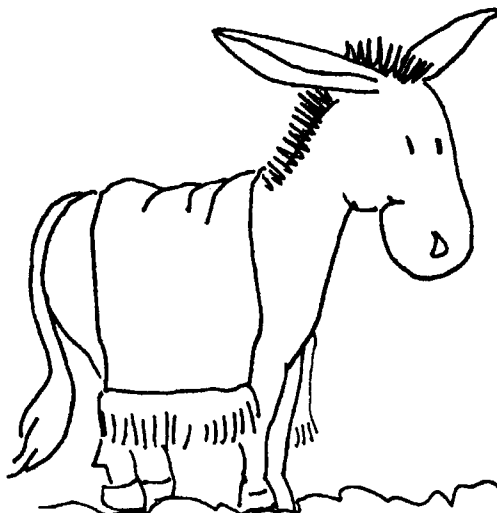
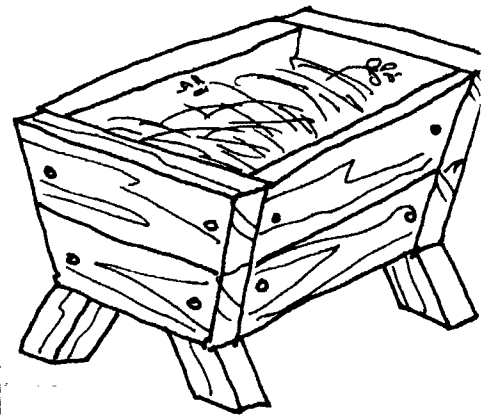
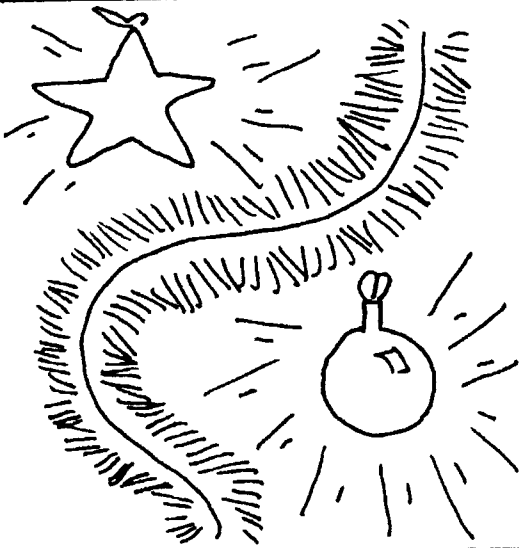
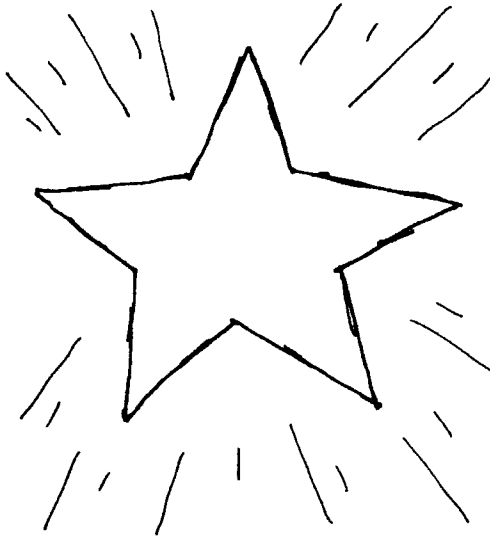
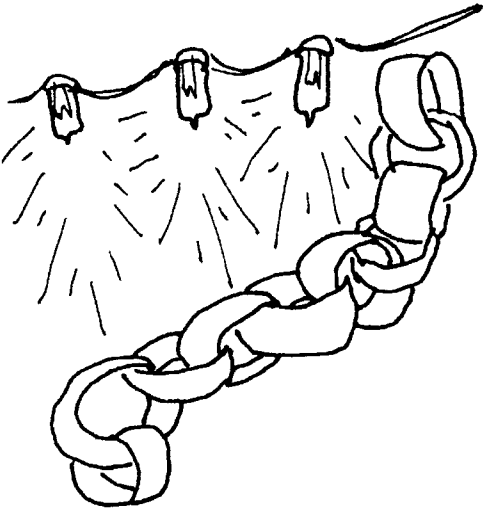
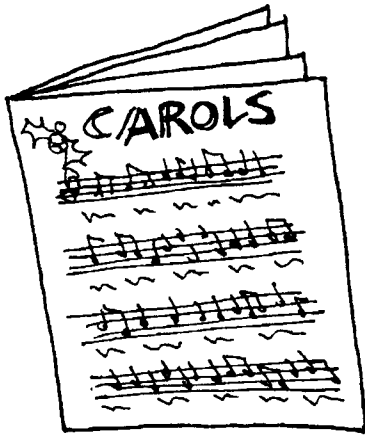
### Top Tips!

Some of the pictures were directly related to the Bible story of Christmas, others were not. Yet we associate all of the pictures with Christmas!

Discuss this, beginning by asking the children to help you sort the pictures out. Go through them together and ask the group to tell you which pile they belong in: actual, Bible story pictures or 'Christmassy things'. Why do we have 'Christmassy things' like these?

Point out that Christmas is a celebration of God's gift to us - Jesus. The other things in the pile are like party items - they have been added over the years as people have celebrated Christmas together in many different ways. There is nothing wrong with these unless we lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas under the pile of party things. Illustrate this by putting the 'Bible story' pile first under, then on top of the other pile.





# Unlock's method

These notes assume that a group leader has some basic experience and understanding of working with groups. A good small book with over 70 drawings (many humorous) is Once upon a group, by Michael and Maggie Kindred, Price £5 plus £1 P&P, from 4M Publications, 20 Dover Street, Southwell, Notts NG25 0EZ

## The usual method of Bible study

Most Bible studies begin with text, moving on to analysis of the text, and deduction of general principles. This provides a logical framework, and the person stores the information (in his/her mind, in note form or on disc) for use when needed. It requires a way of thinking and communicating which is based on book and lecture (linear) methods of learning. This is not appropriate for a growing number of people.



## Unlock's method of Bible study

### Unlocking real life stories of urban people

Starting from a cartoon picture, people share their real life experiences.



### Releasing life changing skills and confidence

Change happens as a result of linking real life experiences with the Bible.

### Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

They compare their real life stories with similar situations in the Bible

...leading to more experiences, and the process continues ...

Unlock's Bible study is based on stories—people's own stories and a Bible story. Be positive about everyone's contribution! There are no right and wrong answers when it comes to stories. If you've got some Bible knowledge, use it to help the group when it's useful—it's an added extra, not the starting point! You will need to decide as a group leader where you draw the line and say "No, you can't say that about this Bible passage." Our experience has been that taking risks and being positive about whatever people say brings new energy to passages you may have looked at many of times before, as the Biblical story engages with people's experiences.

# ABOUT CURBS...



## What is it?

CURBS stands for Children in URBan Situations. It is a Project which aims to provide resources and support for children's workers in inner cities and on outer urban estates, particularly those who are working with children who come from non-book, non-church backgrounds.



## Where does it Start?

These children need to meet a Jesus who makes sense in their street-wise, confused and often hurtful world. The core values which underlie the CURBS resources are about building relationships, building self worth, and about coming alongside and being Jesus. CURBS is about taking time: long-term commitment to the children, their families and to their community.

## CURBS has a three-fold aim

- To produce low-cost resources which start in the child's world, do not assume any Bible knowledge, are flexible, simple to use and photocopyable
- To provide on-going support and training for children's workers based in urban areas
- To network with groups and individuals who have an understanding of the spiritual and developmental needs of urban children for mutual support and enrichment.

## From the ground up

A key aspect of CURBS is our concern to be responsive to the needs and experiences of those working on the ground. We don't want to be just another attractive resource: we want to 'scratch where it itches'! Our resource team came together out of a common concern about the lack of resources and training to meet the needs of urban children. We are all practitioners. We haven't got all the answers but we hope that we are heading in the right direction. We welcome your ideas and input!



## Street ahead!

For its first three years, CURBS operated as a mission experiment within Scripture Union's Missions and Media Resources Departments. In the summer of 1999, CURBS became a charity in its own right while maintaining associate status with Scripture Union.

Over the years, we have established a firm base of interest, prayer and support. Our resources are used country-wide and even overseas. We train small and large groups. If you are interested in finding out more about CURBS - we'd love to hear from you!



# UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

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Price: £6

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'Christmas Grand Slam' is taken from *Zoe and Zak's Blue Games Kit* by Lesley and Neil Pinchbeck (available from CURBS)

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