



at HOME

Advent/Christmas
November/December
2020

..... Christ Centered – All Age – Celebration – Creativity – Hospitality



Hello! It's almost the end of 2020 and what a year we have had! We could never have imagined it! As we come to the end of the year our thoughts, prayers and hearts go out to all those who are back in lock-down and to those who have suffered sickness, loss or have struggled with life during this time.

We reckon we are probably all ready for some Good News! And here it is JESUS! Jesus is our good news. Jesus our gift from God to save us, to bring us eternal life and so we can have the fullness of life in God. As we head towards Christmas ready to celebrate Jesus' birth, as Christians we have Good News to share with our family, neighbours and the world. That is the best gift we can give to others – to share God's love for us in Jesus with those about us.

So forget Santa, reindeers, snow, and even 'Rudolf the red-nose' song, and make your Christmas all about Jesus. If ever there was a time for that Good News, it is now! This edition of Messy Church at Home focuses on Advent, which is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. There is of course something in here for Christmas too! Advent is a great time to help children and others to understand the true meaning of Christmas and to bring the good news of Jesus to our hurting world.

As you celebrate the birth of our savior Jesus may you know God's peace, joy, hope and love.

We hope you enjoy this Messy Church at Home.

God Bless

Messy Church Team



Getting ready for Messy Church at Home:

Think about a special place that is in your home that you feel close to God. It might be in a special chair, or in your garden. It might be where you read stories with your family or sitting out on the verandah looking at the view. Wherever it is, it is wonderful to have a God space in your home.

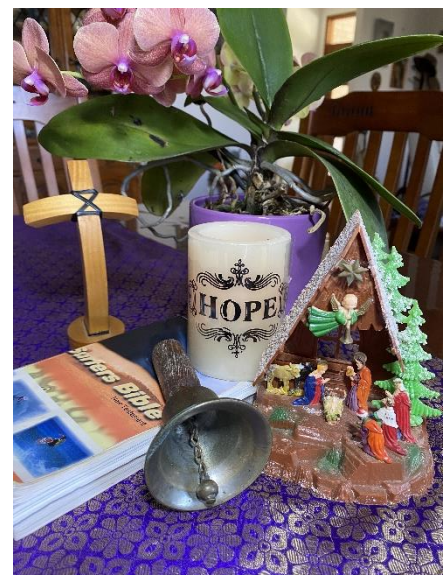
This month for Messy Church at Home you are invited to make a special God Space where your family or household can gather round to begin Messy Church. Traditionally the colour for Advent in the Christian year is purple. So you can put down a purple cloth and decorate it with things that help you to think about how you get good news or symbols of good news that you have received.

Your symbols or pictures could be set around a cross or a battery candle. Use the candle to begin your Messy Church at Home time together by 'lighting' the candle and someone saying, 'We light this candle to remind us that Jesus is the good news for our world.'

Then use our Messy Church at Home greeting and say to each other 'welcome to Messy Church, we are glad you are here'. ☺



Our family set this worship focus up on the dining room table. With a favourite Bible, a 'comfort and joy cross', e-candle, an old bell that was my great-aunts school bell (to ring out the good news) and old nativity scene that been in our family a long time (Jesus is with us forever) and flowers symbolising joy. For the Celebration time in Messy Church at Home, we will sit around the table to read the Bible story & say the prayer.



Celebration

Good News

Read the story from the Bible – You can read them one at a time over the four weeks of Advent or read the stories together.

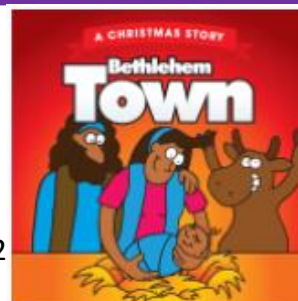
The birth of Jesus foretold in Luke 1:26-38; Mary's song Luke 1:46-56;

Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem Luke 2:1-5; the Birth of Jesus Luke 2:6-2

Then events after Jesus was born are found in Matthew chapter 2 with the visit of the Magi and the Escape to Egypt.

Australian author and illustrator Andrew McDonough has four books that tell parts of the Christmas story, including when Jesus family escaped to Egypt. Jesus was a Refugee.

You can find Andrew McDonough's stories at lostsheep.com.au



Reflection

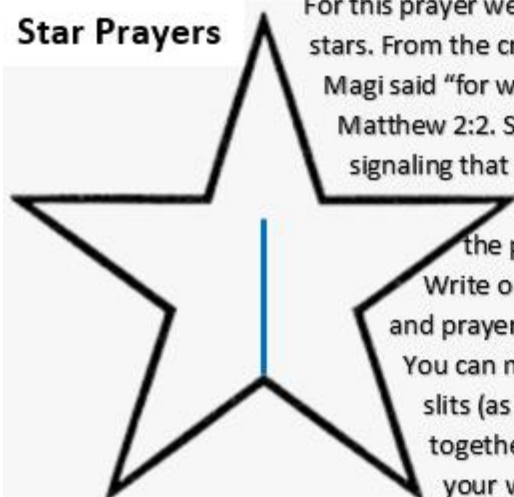
There are lots of things to think about when you read the Christmas stories.

Think about the characters in the story: Mary, Joseph, their families, Cousin Elizabeth, the Roman occupying army, angel, shepherds and of course, Jesus. What does each character tell you about God's GOOD NEWS?

Here is an example in the story of Mary, a young girl who loved God, living her life in the village of Nazareth, engaged to Joseph, being told by an angel who said she will be the mother to a child named Jesus, and 'he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High'. That is BIG NEWS for her and GOOD NEWS for the world. But Mary accepts what the angel told her and sings a song praising God. What strong faith Mary had to go through all that and can still praise God!

Talk about: the other characters in the Christmas story and God's GOOD NEWS for them!

Star Prayers



For this prayer we are using stars. There are 60 verses in the Bible that mention stars. From the creation story in Genesis 1:16, to the story of Jesus where the Magi said "for we saw His star in the east and we have come to worship Him" in Matthew 2:2. Special star appearances in the sky were often seen as signaling that something special was happening or about to happen.

So enjoy making these star prayers. Begin by tracing around the pattern and cut out the stars. Write or draw prayers of thanks, and prayers for others on the stars. You can make the stars 3D by cutting slits (as marked) and sliding the slits together. Use the stars to decorate your worship focus.



Creativity

Advent Wreath

Advent means 'coming', and during the Advent season, Christians prepare for Jesus' coming, this year from 29 November and finishes on Christmas Day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Each week we light one candle to remember the four qualities or gifts that Jesus brings to our world. The candles on the Advent wreath symbolise hope, love, joy and peace.



Resources: Play dough (about 2 cups)
Sturdy paper or plastic plate
5 candles – it is a good idea to use e-candles
Artwork (stable, wise men, shepherds, angels) photocopy onto card
(you can laminate to make it last longer and stick into the play dough, leaves, gum nuts, or other decorations)

Tools: Coloured pens to colour the art work and scissors to cut them out.

- How:**
1. Colour in the art work and cut out - remember to leave space on the bottom of the picture to stick into the play dough. Laminate if you can at this point.
 2. Make a thick sausage out of the play dough and place around the edge of the plate to form a ring and join up the ends.
 3. Position the candles. Leave the 5th candle to add in on Christmas day.
 4. Position the art work in between the candles.
 5. Decorate with leaves and gum nuts, or other decorations.

On the next pages are prayers for each week of Advent.



Creativity

Pictures for the Advent Wreath:



Creativity

Lighting the Advent candles

1st Candle of Advent

This first candle is the candle of **HOPE**.

Say: 'As we light this candle, we remember the hope we have in Jesus and we have hope because of God's promise to be with us always'. Light the first candle.

Each person share one thing that you hope for this Christmas.

You can share a thank you prayer.

2nd Candle of Advent

This candle is the candle of **PEACE**.

Say: 'As we light this candle we remember that Jesus is the one who brings peace to our lives. Lord make me an instrument of your peace'. Light the first and second candles.

Share a way that you could help bring peace to your family, your school or your work. Pray for places that need God's peace.

3rd Candle of Advent

This candle is for **JOY**.

Say: 'As we light this candle we give thanks for the Joy that Jesus give us. Joy to the world! The Lord is come!' Light the first, second and third candles.

Share something you can do to bring joy to your family at Christmas.

Pray a thank you prayer, thanking God for all the things and people who bring you joy.

4th Candle of Advent

This candle is the candle of **LOVE**.

Say: 'As we light this candle we remember that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. Light the first, second third and fourth candles.

Share a way that you can show your love for others this Christmas.

Pray for those people who show you love, and pray that God will help you to love others.

Christmas Day – the Christ Candle.

Add a candle to the center of your wreath.

Say: 'As we light the Christ Candle we remember that Jesus is the Light of the world. Jesus is the light shining in our dark world.'

Light all four Advent candles and then the Christ Candle.

Together tell the Christmas story.

Pray a special prayer. Thank you God for Jesus. For the hope and peace that Jesus brings, for the joy we can know and the love Jesus has for each of us. Pray for all those who are sad or lonely this Christmas.



Creativity

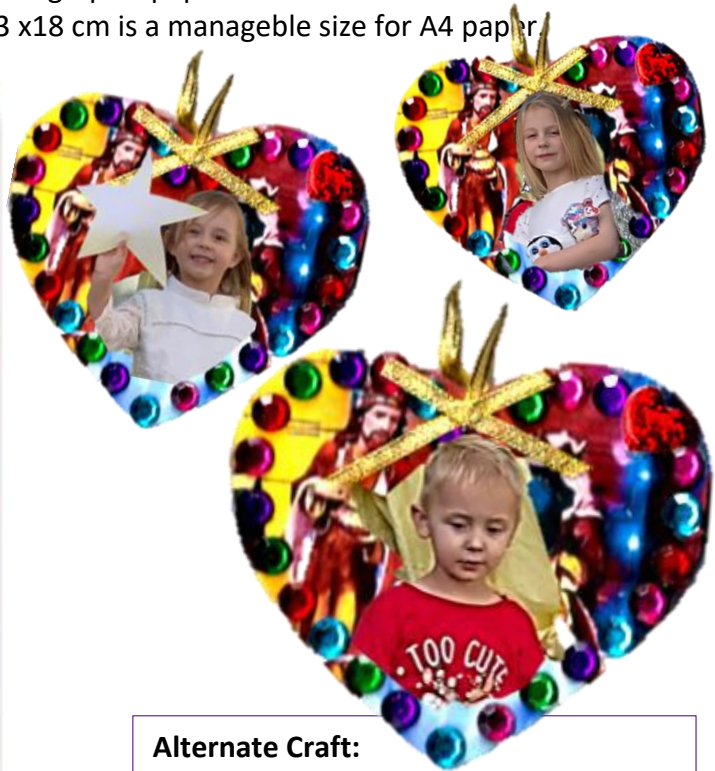
Christmas Canvas

- Resources:
1. Dress your family up for a Nativity photo
 2. Take your own photograph
 3. 1 X Matte photographic paper
 4. 1 x Canvas 13 x18 cm is a manageable size for A4 paper
 5. Paper sealer



Method:

1. Take a photo.
2. Print photo on matte paper (not ink jet)
3. Cut the photo to fit the canvas – allowing for edges to fold over to wrap around the sides of the canvas and onto the back.
4. Glue your photo into the canvas with PVA & Clag mix, wrapping the sides of the photo around the canvas to give a 3D designer look.
5. Seal the canvas with the paper sealer.



Alternate Craft:

Photo Decorations.

Materials: wooden shape, glue, paper sealer, bling jewels, ribbon.

Method:

1. Drill a hole in the top of the shape.
2. Glue the photo onto the shape. (could make it double sided with a second photo)
3. Seal back & front. (Use small amount)
4. Leave to dry.
5. Decorate the photo shape with bling jewels
6. Attach a ribbon for hanging.

Talk about: Share a special memory that you have of Christmas. Tell a Good News story that you have about Christmas.

Creativity

Nativity Biscuit



- Resources**
- Milk Arrowroot biscuits
 - Brown icing
 - Fried Noodles (Chan's)
 - Chocolate melts
 - Jelly Baby
 - White fondant Icing (could also use fruit straps)
 - Writing Icing (optional)
 - Longer Noodle for hanging a star (or use spaghetti)
- Tools**
- Bowl and spoon
- How:**
1. Roll out a small piece of white fondant.
 2. Wrap the Jelly Baby in the fondant.
 3. Melt the chocolate melts and mix in fried noodle just enough to coat the noodles.
 4. Place a spoon full of noodle/chocolate mix on the Milk Arrowroot biscuit and while it is still melting place the 'baby' into the 'straw'
- Optional:**
1. Using some rolled out fondant cut out a star and make a small hole in it
 2. Carefully thread one end of a longer noodle into the star, and the other end into the noodle mixture.
- Talk About:** When has someone shared good news with you?
How can you share the Good News of Jesus with others this Christmas?

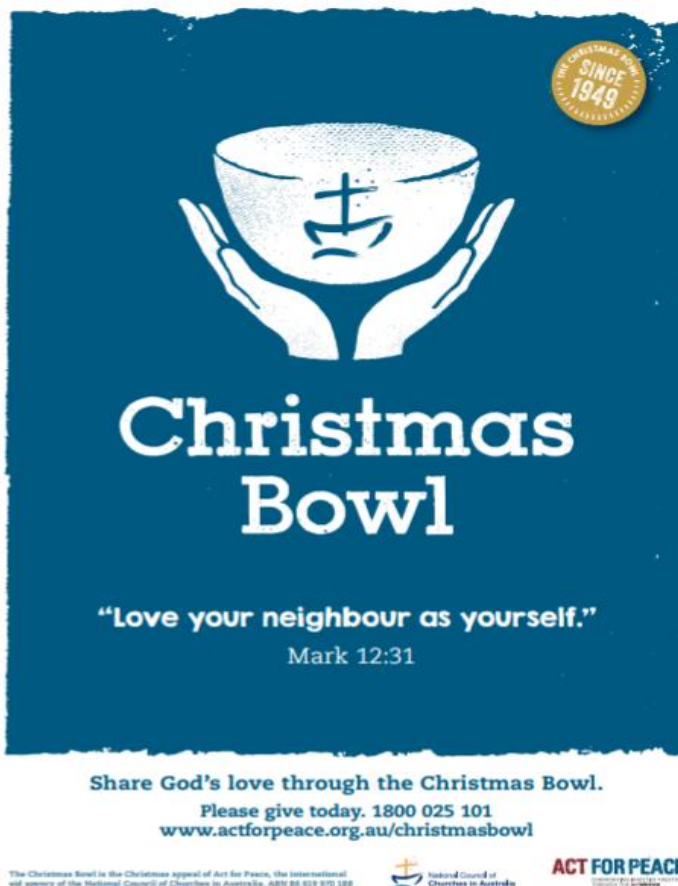
Creativity

Giving to Others this Christmas

This year it's been challenging for many people who are in need of support and Good News. This Christmas, there are many ways that you can give to others. It is rewarding as a family to plan how you can support others. And your gift of time or money can be the Good News that is needed.

Here are some ideas

- Consider as a family volunteering at a Christmas meal for homeless and disadvantaged people
- Shop at your local Op Shop for Christmas gifts or for things and clothes you can up-cycle.
- Give toys and gifts to appeals.
- Volunteer at a local Community Centre to wrap gifts.
- Give to the Christmas Bowl.



Donations to Christmas Bowl can be made to <https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/donate>
There are also lots of information and activities that can be downloaded on the web site.

What is the Christmas Bowl?

For decades, through the Christmas Bowl, Australian churches across denominations have been instrumental in responding to some of the most urgent crises of our time.

Last year, 1,200 churches celebrated the Christmas Bowl by bringing much needed shelter and medical care to communities affected by conflict and disaster around the globe.

This year, for our brothers and sisters in urgent need around the world, those already struggling as a result of conflict and disaster, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are catastrophic.

Through this year's Christmas Bowl we are actively responding to this crisis; coming together to stand alongside these vulnerable communities through this pandemic – and towards a more secure future – by providing vital food, medical care and support.

Your gift will support local partners around the world to both meet urgent need and create change that lasts.

(christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au)

Hospitality

Usually Messy Church finishes with a meal together. At Messy Church, the hospitality offered, reflects the welcome and hospitality that God offers us as members of God's family.



During Advent we usually decorate our homes, put up a tree and prepare special treats to share with family and friends. Here is a special Advent Pizza (in the shape of wreath not to hang on your front door but to eat! Enjoy.

Ingredients: Pizza base, Pizza sauce
Grated cheese and slices of cheese
Capsicum, Shallots (and any topping to suit)
Bacon (for the bow)

Tools: Pizza pan or similar, knives, cookie cutters (I found a Nativity Scene, or use stars, gingerbread people cutters.

Method: Prepare the topping. Cutting out the shapes.

Using a small bowl, mark the center circle and cut out.

Cut Joseph, Mary, Donkey from the center circle piece.

Spread base with sauce and decorate as desired.

Bake 15-20 minutes at 180°

Grace

Together, give thanks for the food.

(Tune - Jingle Bells)

Thank you God, Thank you God
For this special day
O what fun it is to say
Hi Jesus it's your day!



Blessing

As you finish Messy Church at Home here is a blessing to say together.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

(Hold out your hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God *(Put your hands on your heart)*

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit *(Hold hands)*

Amen *(raise arms)*



This resource is compiled by

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November 2020

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