



Introduction

Christmas may feel different this year in terms of the family time and get togethers, but the story of Jesus' birth remains the same. This Christmas, there's even more reason to focus on the true meaning of the season as it shows us how much God loves us and can bring about hope.

The bible passage is from Luke 2:4-14

⁴ Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

⁵ Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, ⁶ and while they were there, ⁷ she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. ⁹ All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. ¹¹ This very day in King David's hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹² You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

¹³ Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: ¹⁴ "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God."

(Contemporary English Version)

Activities:

1. Christmas decoration

You will need: paper plate (ideally silver or gold colour), drawings of Christmas symbols or old Christmas cards.



Draw a spiral on the bottom of the plate and cut along the line, leaving a small circle in the middle. Make a small hole in the middle circle and thread through a loop of wool, making a knot in the other end of the loop so that the decoration will hang from the loop.

Make baubles to stick on the decoration using paper, on which you can draw Christmas symbols, or cut out pictures in a bauble shape from old Christmas cards.

Talk about: We decorate our homes as this is where so much of our Christmas celebration takes place. How do your decorations help you to remember the story of Jesus' birth?

2. Mary & Jesus

You will need: sheets of A4 blue paper and A5 white paper, some wool or string, extra paper, pens, scissors, glue stick

Starting with the long edges of the paper, concertina-fold the blue and white paper. Bend each concertina over in half, so that the ends meet and tie wool or string around the middle of each, so that a round head shape is left at the top. You can leave longer strings on Mary to look like her arms. Glue the middles of the fans together and fan out the folds to look like robes. Draw two circles to fit the head shapes on each figure created and add a tab for glue at the top of each face. Draw the features onto each face.



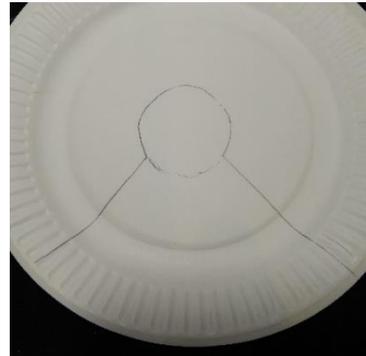
Cut these out and attach within the head holes of the figures with glue. Use plenty of glue to stick the baby Jesus onto Mary's robe and arrange the string arms.

Talk about: Many film and TV stories have super-heroes who 'save the world'. God did this through a tiny baby. What does this teach us about what God is like?

3. Make an angel

You will need: a paper plate, pens, scissors, glittery stickers, ribbon

1. Cut out the shape shown on the paper plate.
2. Draw and colour the angel's face and halo, or if you have some gold paper draw round the head, cut out and stick halo on the back.
3. Decorate angel's robe or cut out shape in Christmas paper and stick on.
4. You can decorate wings as well.
5. Stick angel's body between the wings.
6. Sellotape a loop of ribbon, wool or thread to back so you can hang your angel up.



An alternative angel can be made using: a toilet roll, paper, a pom-pom and pipe-cleaner.

Cover the toilet roll with foil, make some wings by drawing round your hands and cutting out the paper. Stick these onto the toilet roll. Stick one end of the pipe cleaner in the roll and make the other end into a halo some way above the roll. Stick a pom-pom onto the pipe-cleaner just below the halo.



Talk about: The angels brought the shepherds good news. While we don't want to deny the difficulties of this year, we don't want to forget the good aspects. What good times have you had this year which you could share with others as good news?

4. Make an edible candle

You will need: a mini swiss roll, fondant icing or butter cream to cover the swiss roll if desired, satsuma

If using fondant icing, roll it out and cover the mini swiss roll, then make a flame shape with some of the icing. Alternatively make some butter icing with butter and icing sugar and use that to cover the swiss roll. Stick a satsuma slice in the top for a flame.

Talk about: We light candles at Christmas and in church to remember Jesus as the light of the world. What are the ways in which God shines a light to show the way in a dark and dingy world and to give us all hope?



5. Map of the world

You will need: An outline of a world map in a circle, black card, paper clips or sticky-tac, something soft and thick, drawing pin

Put the world map on top of the black card and fasten them together using paper clips or sticky-tac. Put something thick underneath the card to protect the table you are working on. Follow all the coastlines of the map and the outline of the globe by pushing a drawing pin through the top sheet into the black card at 2-3 mm intervals. Separate the black card from the map and hang it up or attach it to a window.



Talk about: all the different countries which have a coastline that you have marked out. Consider how Jesus has brought light into the world. Talk about people you know, or parts of the world that need Jesus' life-changing

light this Christmas. What might you do as a family to help shine Jesus' light on them?

6. Messy Church Calendar

You will need: Messy Church dates for 2021 (see attached), A4 card, ribbon, pens

Paste the Messy Church dates onto an A4 card, with a ribbon hoop to hang it with. Decorate it with crayons, pens and stickers as you like.

Display so that you never miss a Messy Church date in 2021.

Talk about: Next year we have real hope that a vaccine will enable us to return to a time when we can meet face to face for Messy Church. What other things are you looking forward to next year?



7. Bobbing oranges

You will need: a large bowl or container of water; oranges or clementines

Put your orange or clementine in the water and watch it float to the surface. Peel the orange and try again – what do you think will happen? Watch as the orange sinks – wow! Enjoy a tasty snack. Orange peel is full of tiny air pockets; making the orange float to the surface when put in water! Removing the peel (and all the air pockets) means that the orange has greater density and will sink.

Talk about: God sent Jesus as a gift to the world – a gift for you and for me! Think about the orange peel enabling the orange to float. Jesus is like the orange peel with the air pockets – he wraps his love around us. And with him, all things are possible!

You might like to come to our Christingle on Thursday 24th December, where oranges play an important part in our celebration. If you can't get a ticket, come and collect a Christingle bag and watch on-line at our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq1RdXI27bTlompT6lCPoGQ>

Songs: Away in a Manger and Little Donkey

You may know these popular carols from singing at school or in church. Away in a Manger is our favourite Messy Church carol and Kay read a poem about Little Donkey at our Not the Big Christmas Sing. Here's some links to YouTube versions that are good to sing along to:

Away in a Manger: www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnwO_0DrpCk

Little Donkey: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVQPmtjHzh4

Messy Grace:

This is a prayer that we say at Messy Church to ask God to always be with us, as we look to follow Jesus in living our lives.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (hold out 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)

Be with us all (raise arms)

Amen (drop hands)

Next date: Friday 15th January 2021

www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/



2021 dates

Friday 15th January

Friday 12th February

Friday 12th March

Friday 16th April

Friday 14th May

Friday 11th June

Friday 9th July

Friday 13th August

Friday 10th September

Friday 8th October

Friday 12th November

Friday 10th December

All sessions start at 3.45pm:

On-line at

www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham

In-person (hopefully!) at

St Mary of Nazareth Church, The Avenue,
West Wickham. BR4 0DX

Activities, Song & Story

(and food when we can get together to share it)