

'Good Tidings of Great Joy'



**A Christmas Nativity Celebration
for use in Residential Homes**

E lizabeth Stacey

Aim

The aim of this service is to bring the message of Christmas in a way that enables residents to participate fully and enjoy fun doing so, as well as rekindling some happy memories.

Memory Box

Use a memory box as a focal point, and fill it with objects to help with the story you are telling.

Select a box large enough to fit in everything you are planning to bring. It is better if the box has a lid. Cover the box and lid with Christmas paper.

Things to bring:

*Head dress for Joseph
Head dress for Mary,
Bring a baby doll
A cradle for the manger (optional)
Head dresses for angels
Head dresses for shepherds
Head dresses x 3 for kings
4 Advent Candles and 1 Large White Candle
Enough small Christingle candles with holders
One for each person present
Christmas Song Sheets*

To put inside the memory box

For Joseph & the Shepherds:

Use striped tea towels and men's ties or elastic to hold them in place.

For Mary:

Use white or blue piece of material to cover her head with elastic to hold it in place. Wrap a baby doll in white and give it to Mary to hold. The cradle is optional, as there may not be enough space to put one out and you may not have one.

For the Angels:

Using silver tinsel, make circles to put on angel's heads. These can be sewn together or just taped together with Sellotape beforehand.

For the Kings:

Cut out some gold and silver card to make 3 crowns. Decorate with jewels, or scrunched up coloured tissue paper stuck on diamond shaped card. Decorate small boxes for Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh and bring them with you. *(remember they have to fit in the memory box)*

Please remember to bring:
Advent Candles & stand
Matches or lighter
Christingle Candle holders
Small Candles

To start the service

(Questions are printed in bold, spoken words are in ordinary black print and italic words in brackets are for instruction)

Leader: Welcome everyone to our Christmas Celebration.

Often, at this time of year, many little children are taking part in acting out the Nativity play at school or church, and how lovely it is to watch them do it.

Well today, I wasn't able to get some younger children to come along because they are at school, but I thought it would be good for us to have a go and do our own Nativity play.

I have a memory box here (*show memory box*) and in it are all the things we will need to do this.

Did any of you have a Nativity play in your school?
(Give Seniors a chance to respond to any of the questions)

Do you remember what part you played?

I'm hoping everyone will take a part today, including the staff.

Do you remember what part you played at school?

(Tell them a story-example): I remember playing Mary when I was **about 5 or 6 years old. I didn't have to say anything, but I had to hold a** little doll in my arms and rock it gently while everyone around me sang:
(encourage them to tell their stories of School Nativity Plays etc).

Before we sing our first carol, Who would like to be Mary?
(Take the head dress for Mary out of the memory box, and carefully secure it on Mary's head)

Is there anything else you think Mary should have that I may have in the memory box?

(Bring the baby out of the memory box and give it to her to hold and place a cradle on the floor in front of her if there is room)

And who will be Joseph?

(Take the tea towel and tie out of the memory box and put it gently on Joseph's head, and secure with tie or elastic)

Now we are ready to begin.

We know the story well.....Mary and Joseph have arrived in Bethlehem, but there is no room for them, except in a stable.

Let's sing together a carol that tells the story beautifully:

Carol: O little town of Bethlehem

(Chose one of the team by name, and by prior arrangement to be an angel and take a circle of tinsel out of the memory box and put it on his/her head)

Bible Reading: Isaiah 9:6 NIV

(Ask the Angel to read the Bible passage)

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Carol: Silent night

Leader: We need 2 or 3 shepherds?

(Bring 2 or 3 tea towels out of the memory box with ties and choose 2 or 3 men, (helpers included) to be shepherds, and help dress them before the reading)

Narrator: *(ask someone to take the role of Narrator and read)*

There were shepherds living out in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, *(angel appear or come forward at this point)* and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified.

Angel: *(ask the Angel to read this part.)*

Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of Bethlehem a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Leader: Before we sing our next carol we need some more angels.

(Bring more tinsel circles out of the memory box and give to helpers, residential staff team members, and others)

(Have as many angels as possible to include everyone who wants to take part in dressing up. Make sure you have at least 3 people left to be the Kings later)

Carol: While shepherds watched their flocks by night

Narrator: When the angel had left them and gone to heaven, the shepherds said to one another:

Shepherds: *(say together)*

Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

Narrator:

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in a manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Narrator:

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Carol: Away in a manger

Leader: Who would like to be one of the 3 Kings?

(Ask the 3 people left, (by name if you can) and select 3 crowns from the memory box and crown them)

Narrator or other reader:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked,

'Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?

We saw His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. He found out from them the exact time

the star had appeared and sent them to Bethlehem to make a careful **search for the child. 'As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship him.'**

They went on their way, the star going ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed when they saw the child with His mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped Him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Carol: As with gladness men of old (or other carol of your choice)

Leader: We are going to pray together a Prayer of Thanksgiving. At the end of each section I will say Jesus has come, and I would **like you to join me in praying, Thank You Father.'**

Let's pray:

God our Father, we listen again to the story of Christmas, and we are glad that Jesus has come to be our Saviour and our friend. We have heard how Mary laid her baby in a manger.

Jesus has come. Thank you Father.

We hear how the Angels sang over the Bethlehem hills:

'Glory to God; Peace for the world.'

Jesus has come. Thank you Father.

We hear how the shepherds hurried to see if what the angels had told them was true.

Jesus has come. Thank you Father.

We hear how the wise men came to bring their worship and their precious gifts.

Jesus has come. Thank you Father.

Leader: In our churches each Sunday in December before **Christmas day, we remember Christ's coming and light one of** four candles of Advent. Today we will light all four candles.

(Ask 4 team members to light a candle and say the appropriate words below)

First candle is the candle of HOPE

because - Jesus is our hope.

The second candle is the candle of PEACE

because - Jesus is our peace.

The third candle is the candle of JOY

because - Jesus brings joy

The fourth candle is the candle of LOVE,

because Jesus is love.

(Leader lights the centre candle and says)

This is the CHRIST candle.

This candle, represents Jesus - the light of the world.

We receive His light and share His light with each other.

(Leader, please ask Team members to distribute Candles and holders to residents, then after they light their candles from the Christ candle to share their light with the resident's candles)

Solo: Light of the world you stepped down into darkness

(Ask someone to sing this Solo for you, and encourage residents to look at the light from their candles and remember Jesus, the light of the world)

Say together:

Jesus is born; Jesus has come. Jesus is our salvation.

Prayer:

Lord, we greet Your birth with wide-eyed delight. You are precious beyond words, and our world needs Your presence, and we need Your presence.

You are God's gift, His greatest gift, silently delivered to every human heart. Amen.

Sing together: O come all ye faithful

Blessing: (Leader)

The joy of the angels, the wonder of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child, fill your hearts this Christmas time; and the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, be with you now and in the years to come.

(Used by permission)

Amen.

Some residents, staff and church team join together and celebrate the Christmas story in local residential home





For further details please contact: Liz Stacey
liz@winbap.org.uk Telephone: 01962 808783

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