

Advent Adventures

(A workshop for school children)

This workshop was designed by Jane Wheeler and we offer our thanks to Jane and to Tina Venton of Carnmarth South Deanery for their permission to share it.

Preparing for Workshops

- Choose your date
- Recruit some volunteer helpers (Talk to your safeguarding officer about doing this safely)
- Contact the school/s you wish to invite, it is best to do this by popping into the school or by telephone in the first instance
- Set the date/time/number and age of pupils with the school
- Follow up the invitation with an email using the Template (1) to provide information. Attach the flyer for teachers (3)
- Choose the activities you would like to offer (6) – you can, of course, design your own
- Familiarise yourself and your volunteers with the risk assessment (4) you may need to edit this
- Confirm the programme for the day with the school (2) Remember to attach the completed Risk Assessment (4) as this will be useful for the staff.

Getting the church ready

- Organise an area for children to sit – on a carpeted area on the floor is ideal, but selected seats or pews works too
- Children should be able to see (and hear) you clearly as well as the screen if you are using one
- Have four areas prepared for your activities, with all the equipment needed for each activity
- Prepare the resources you need (enough for all children) depending on the activities you have chosen to do.
- Check your tech – it's a good idea to open any links and have videos ready to go with the adverts already run through.

NB the workshops work equally well without a screen, you will simply have to read the creation story. The [BBC Teach](#) version has a transcript, but any child friendly version of the bible works well.

Session Timetable

- Children arrive with school staff, invite the children to sit in a group where they can see the screen (or book if your church doesn't have a screen)
- Welcome staff and inform them of the whereabouts of toilets, you might want to offer hot drinks to staff. (Not mentioning toilets to the children directly will avoid an immediate rush and lengthy queues)
- Staff to sit with/behind children
- Introduce yourself and your volunteer helpers to the children
- Talk about the children's experience of Advent (calendars etc) and ask what they are waiting for

- Talk about what advent means to you and your church and what we are getting ready for (The notes kindly shared by Tina Venton and Jane Wheeler from the South Carmarth Deanery will prove very helpful here) (5)
- Read / Show the story of Christmas pausing after each section to discuss this with the children.
- Ask school staff to create four groups from the children and direct each group to an activity
- After 15 minutes, rotate the groups to the next activity (You may want to ask the class teacher to get the children's attention)
- Repeat until all groups have completed all activities
- This might be a good time to offer the children refreshments if you wish to do this*
- Return all children to the space by the screen and look at some of the decorations and prayers for other people. Light the candle. Quiet for a few seconds. Think about Advent - what are we getting ready for? Can you remember the reason for Christmas? Pause to think about Jesus, the son of God, being born in a stable. I wonder.... Try to remember Jesus when you are opening your Advent calendar
- The whole event should last between 90 and 120 minutes depending on how long you spend on the practical activities.

Things to remember

- The school staff are responsible for the children's behaviour – any issues refer to the class teacher
- Take the opportunity to chat to staff about any other activities that go on in church for young people, ask them to put a flyer or your service times on their school newsletter
- It's useful to find out who the RE lead teacher is so you can communicate directly with them about other activities or invitations
- Don't forget to tell the children about events going on in your church over Christmas, particularly those aimed at children.

*Many churches like to offer refreshments to children, but this can cause issues – some children may have allergies or medical issues and some parents prefer their children not to have squash etc. It's a lovely thing to do (and very popular with the children) but always check with the school before you set this up.

NB A stationary box is available for loan from the Old Cathedral School, it contains stationary, scissors etc for 30+ children, please contact Clare Green for information about this, or about the support we can offer in running your workshops. clare.green@truro.anglican.org

The Jesus Story Book Bible is a wonderful video resource that can be used as an alternative to the BBC Teach version. It is in three parts and totals about 15 minutes running length. It may be a little long for younger children, but is great for Y2/3 who have a greater concentration span. You can find it here:

YouTube clips for Jesus Storybook Bible

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2y2FJqsv_8 Birth of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fqMhLApCmA> Visit of the Shepherds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCDmNTxE-Us&t=64s> Coming of the Kings

