

nativity



play on the word

Hello!

Thanks for downloading this resource pack! I hope it gives you some fun ideas and inspiration for making the most of Christmas with your children.

I've got some suggestions for how you might use this resource but please feel free to pick and choose activities and tweak anything to suit you and your children.

nativity stories

There are five stories designed to tell the Christmas story from the moment Gabriel shares the news with Mary all the way to the visit from the Magi. They are short and use simple words to make it easy for our little ones to understand.

In our family we do one story a week and will be starting on November 29th and ending on January 2nd. This means we spend five weeks through December on the stories.

The play ideas will work whether you use these stories or stories from your favourite Children's Bible.

story telling ideas

Below each story you will find suggestions for interactive ways of telling the story.

For story time, choose a time of day when your child is most likely to be able to concentrate. Maybe that's first thing in the day, maybe it's bedtime, maybe it's mid-morning while you have a snack. We do ours during pudding at teatime while they're trapped in one place!

Whenever and wherever you do it, try to create a little bit of a routine and a special feel. You could sit on special cushions, say the same prayer each time, have a bag that you bring out each time for props - anything that acts as a cue to your child that this is something fun and exciting and different from usual.

At pudding time when we're ready to do our story we say, "Thank you God for our food, thank you for your book and thank you most of all for Jesus". We get our props out and say, "ready boys?!". We do the story through twice.

There are lots of reasons for trying to make our stories interactive:

- It keeps children's attention
- It really helps young ones understand while they are developing their language and comprehension skills. We want to do all we can to make it simple for them!
- For our family it's essential for enabling our eldest son, who has a learning disability, to understand.
- It helps children join in and have fun as they learn about Jesus
- It helps kids remember what they're hearing and store it in their minds.
- You can reinforce the main point by communicating it using more than just words.

•It's really enjoyable and will make you laugh together as a family!

Our tips are suggestions! We use sign-language but you can use any expressive gestures that help you communicate. It's important to do it in a way that feels like *you* (and doesn't make you cringe with embarrassment!) and that appeals to your kids.

Some suggestions take a bit of preparation, so read through in advance just in case!

play

There are *lots* of play ideas! To make it easier for you to find the right thing for your child, I have listed play ideas under headings like babies, angels, stars, shepherds, etc. Each section has a number after it so you know which week's story it goes well with.

make

In this section, you have got lots of templates for craft, instructions for activities like making a twinkly star bottle and recipes for Christmas treats. I'm no expert at this stuff but I do know that sometimes having something you can just print, pick up and cut out really helps in the busyness of family life!

advent calendar

Here you will find an object and play idea for each day of December.

This year we're going to hang numbered baby socks on a line of string and each will have an item in it to help us in our play. We'll look in one sock a day along with our usual advent calendar.

In each sock will be a different object - maybe an item we will use in a craft that day or an object to prompt conversation or hint at what the day's activity will be.

I've written down what we're doing - including dates, what the object will be and what play it links to. Obviously this can be done with any method you like - little envelopes hung on string is cheap, quick and looks lovely.

I have done enough for the whole month to give us enough to go on during the Christmas holidays! You don't need to use it all!

All the play ideas referred to in the calendar are explained in more detail in the play resource.

nativity characters

If you don't have your own nativity set, here is a simple way of creating one. Just print out the figures, colour them, cut them out and wrap them round a loo roll/half a kitchen roll tube. I'm going to be doing this as part of our play each week. To get these characters you need to download a separate PDF from the resources page on the website.

Use your figures for play and as fun props in story time.

Get in touch:

If you have any questions or comments, visit www.playontheword.com and let me know what you think. I aim to respond to all comments where possible.

If you want to get in touch directly, email me alicebuckley@rocketmail.com and I'll do my best to get back to you. Unless, of course, it's Christmas eve!

This resource pack is **completely free** for you to use with your family - print, play and enjoy! If you want to use this in another context (e.g. Toddler groups, talks, services, etc.) please send me an email before - thank you!

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nativity stories

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 **story telling ideas**

An angel visits Mary - Luke 1:26-38

Mary was surprised when an angel came to see her!

“Don’t worry!”, said the angel, “God has an important job for you.”

“You will have a baby! A special baby! God’s baby!”

“Call him Jesus - God to the rescue!”

“Really?!”, said Mary.

“Yes!”, said the angel, “God will do it!”

“WOW!”

story telling ideas

Mary (**show Mary**) was surprised (**gasp! Look surprised!**) when an angel (**we make the angel swoop down, whistling as he flies**) came to see her!

“Don’t worry!” (**do a 'calm down!' gesture with your hands!**), said the angel, “God has an important job for you.” (**say "important" in an announcing voice and try to look important - shoulders back, chin up!**)

“You will have a baby (**pretend to rock a baby in your arms!**)

A special baby (**gesture "special" - maybe do thumbs up and rock baby!**) God’s baby (**point up and rock baby!**)”

“Call him Jesus (**draw a 'J' on the palm of your hand with a finger of the other hand - go down your index finger and along the curve of your thumb, this will be our sign for "Jesus"**) - God to the rescue (**fist in the air like a flying superhero and say it in a booming voice!**)”

“Really?!”, said Mary. (**look confused and surprised**)

“Yes!”, (**nod lots**) said the angel, “God will do it!”

“WOW!” (**look amazed and cheer and whoop!**)

Jesus is born - Luke 2:1-7 & Matt. 1:25

Mary and Joseph walked and *walked* and **walked** all the way to Bethlehem.

While they were there, Mary had her baby. A special baby. God's baby!

Mary made him warm and comfy and put him in an animal food bowl for a sleep!

Joseph said, "the baby is called Jesus - God to the rescue!"

story telling ideas

Mary and Joseph (**show your characters**) walked (**make them walk a bit**) and walked (**a bit more!**) and **walked (and a bit more! Sigh as though you're worn out from all that walking!)** all the way to Bethlehem.

While they were there, Mary had her baby. A special baby. God's baby! (**show your Jesus character and do the same gestures as the previous story**).

Mary made him warm and comfy (**wrap baby Jesus in a little cloth**) and put him in an animal food bowl for a sleep (**find a little container that can serve as the manger - a Tupperware thing will be fine!**)

Joseph said, "the baby is called Jesus - God to the rescue!" (**do the same voice and gestures as the previous story.**)

The shepherds hear about Jesus - Luke 2:8-20

It was dark in the fields and the shepherds heard their sheep: “Baa!”.

Suddenly, FLASH! A shining angel appeared and said,

“A baby has been born! A special baby! God’s baby!

Go to Bethlehem and see!”

So the shepherds ran and *ran* and **ran** all the way to Bethlehem.

“Wow!”, they said, “We have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!”

story telling ideas

It was dark (**cover your children's eyes or get them to do it themselves**) in the fields and the shepherds heard their sheep: “Baa!” (**encourage your child to "baa" along with you**).

Suddenly, FLASH! (**flash a torch or suddenly take your hand away from your child's eyes**) A shining angel appeared (**same whistle and swoop down as in the first story**) and said,

“A baby has been born! A special baby! God’s baby! (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)

Go (**say in a big voice and point**) to Bethlehem and see!”

So the shepherds ran (**make your figures run**) and *ran* (**a bit more!**) and **ran** (**and a bit more! Sigh as though you're worn out from all that running!**) all the way to Bethlehem.

“Wow!” (**look amazed**) , they said, “We have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!” (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)

Simeon sees Jesus - Luke 2:21-35

Mary and Joseph took tiny Jesus to the temple to thank God for their baby - a special baby - God's baby!

Simeon was there. He was God's friend.

Simeon had been waiting for God to come to the rescue.

Simeon knew Jesus was special.

He cuddled him and said, "What a great day! I have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!"

story telling ideas

Mary and Joseph took tiny Jesus to the temple (**walk them to a temple made of building blocks**) to thank God for their baby - a special baby - God's baby! (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)

Simeon (**show Simeon**) was there. He was God's friend (**do a gesture like shaking hands with yourself!**).

Simeon had been waiting (**look at watch**) for God to come to the rescue (**fist in the air**).

Simeon knew Jesus was special (**do the sign for Jesus and give thumbs up**).

He cuddled him (**either show your figures hugging or do some snuggling with your child**) and said, "What a great day! I have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!" (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)

Wise men follow a star - Matt. 2:1-12

One dark night some wise men saw a brand new star!

“Follow that star!!!!”

They followed and *followed* and **followed** all the way to Bethlehem.

The star stopped where the baby was - the special baby, God’s baby!

They gave Jesus presents:

Shiny gold and smelly frankincense and myrrh.

“Wow!”, they said, “We have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!”

story telling ideas

One dark night (**hands over eyes**) some wise men (**show your wise men figures**) saw a brand new star (**show your star from the make resource**)!

“Follow that star!!!!”

They followed (**make your figures follow the star a little way**) and *followed* (**a bit more!**) and **followed** (**and a bit more! Sigh as though you're worn out from all that following!**) all the way to Bethlehem.

The star stopped (**stop the star where Jesus is**) where the baby was- the special baby, God’s baby! (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)

They gave Jesus presents: (**lay down three presents**)

Shiny gold (**show your child some gold coins or shiny gold jewellery - plastic is fine!**) and smelly frankincense and myrrh (**use scented squeeze bottles from the make resource**).

“Wow!” (**look amazed!**), they said, “We have seen Jesus - God to the rescue!” (**do the same gestures as in the previous story**)