

Be a STAR

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION DAY & LUNCH

A collection of ideas, resources and guidance
for planning a Christmas Celebration Day &
Community Christmas Lunch



Christmas
Appeal 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this resource which has been produced to support your Christmas Lunch, whether this will be held on Christmas Day or another day over the Christmas period.

Our Christmas ministry and hospitality in our Corps and Centres of course serves all ages, but this resource created by our Older Peoples Ministries Team in collaboration with our Community Services Team has practical guidance, tips and resources to support your ministry.

A Christmas Service outline and additional resources have been created to help you with delivering the Christmas message and we hope that at such a busy time for you this will act as a supportive tool.

There is a suggested timetable of events for the day to help you structure the Christmas Celebration & Lunch for your guests with ideas to help make the event inclusive for everyone, no matter their age.

Volunteering is key for the success of such a day and information for Befriending Volunteers is found at the end of this resource. For further details around volunteering please see information provided by Wendy Wasel, Volunteer Development Manager on OurHub.

We truly hope this resource is helpful to you and thank you all for being stars to others who would otherwise be lonely and isolated over the Christmas period.

May God bless your ministry and Happy Christmas!

Ali Thornton-Dean
Outreach Mission Partner
On behalf of Older People's Ministries & Community Services

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TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR RUNNING A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION LUNCH

Christmas is a beautiful time but also a very challenging time for many. These tips and suggestions are simply to help us all think about how we can make it a good experience for all those attending. It may help to take a moment to imagine you are the one attending the Christmas Celebration Lunch on your own and think about the feelings that you might have; if socialising is not easy, you have never been into the building before, if Church has not been a positive experience or if Christmas brings back some difficult memories. This will help you to be a good host and get the right people in the right volunteering roles to ensure that everyone feels safe and secure.

When thinking about who to invite and getting your message out to those who need it most consider asking Corps members to invite neighbours and/or liaise with external agencies in your locality, eg Health & Social Workers, Housing Department, schools, local community groups and local Lifehouses. Identify local members of Enabled (Fellowship of Endeavour) via Chris Stringer & Paska Moore, Community Services Team.

Following government guidance with regard to Covid19, please be clear to all guests prior to the event what your procedures will be. For example, if face coverings will be required when walking around in communal areas and if social distancing will be expected. We urge you to follow government and local guidance when the time comes, whilst all the time being aware that corps members, volunteers and guests will have different views on this. However, whatever decisions you put in place are to be adhered to by all attending.

PRAY!

Gather your staff and volunteers for prayer before the guests arrive. Those using this resource throughout the UKI Territory will have access to a united prayer so that those who are attending will be prayed for and the whole celebration day and lunch is underpinned by prayer. Prayer is powerful and prayer acknowledges our need of God's help.

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SETTING THE AREA

Create a comfortable atmosphere moving chairs from the outside of a room into small clusters so that no one is left out. Have coffee and tea ready for people arriving as a welcome and music playing as people enter creates a feeling of festivity but also can break through the silence when there aren't many people there. It also always people to just listen and calm themselves if this is all new to them. If possible, have a screen playing the words and music so that people can see what the words of the carols/songs are. Be aware of those who may have told you they find noise in a confined space difficult, could there be a quieter space identified in the room, if you are expecting families then space and toys would be something to consider.

GIFTS & CARDS

Have gifts ready wrapped with tags for all guests. Gifts could be chocolate, gloves, scarves etc. Perhaps ask for donations from the corps and ask people to buy something they would be willing to wear themselves. Volunteers can be used to wrap the presents/write the tags and also a personalised Christmas card for everyone. If you have the names of guests in advance write their name inside the card and on the envelope as this is so much more personalised and means so much to many. Choose Christian themed cards as this may be the only card some of our guests receive.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers come in all ages and there is always a part someone can play. Ask people to write cards, wrap gifts, get the children of the church to decorate brown paper bags for teatime treats for guests to take home. Ask a volunteer to create little menus for the tables. You will need volunteers to befriend the guests, to welcome, to invite people, to wash up, to cook, to serve... the list is endless so don't do it all yourself, get the whole church family involved. If you can create a team of volunteers ensure that people know they can do 'come and go volunteering'; meaning if they are washing up they don't have to be there all day, if they are cooking, let them leave once the meal is served, if they are transporting people they don't have to stay until they take them home again, they can come back! People are generally more likely to volunteer if they

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have a time limit than for a full day. For people who volunteer who would normally be the ones invited to the meal, let them know they are needed and ask them to take on a befriending role (see attached befriending volunteer guidance). For more information on volunteering please speak to our Volunteer Co-ordinator or Community Services.

WELCOMERS AND BEFRIENDERS

Take time to let befrienders introduce the guests to who they will be sitting with for their Christmas meal. It can be daunting going into a new place, with new faces and not knowing who you will sit with. Create name places so that people know they have a special place just for them to sit for their meal and ensure that everyone knows who they can go to for help and advice during the day. Give each guest a 'specific befriending volunteer' who they can go to throughout the day should they need any help or support. Ensure each guest know where the toilets are and where they can get a glass of water.

Have a running order of events for the day so that everyone can see this. However, for those guests who may not be able to read, please outline the timetable for people at the start of the day. People generally feel more comfortable if they know what is happening and when it will happen.

SETTING THE TABLE

Use table cloths, napkins, place settings, little menus and a table decoration in the centre, even if it is safe, self-contained candle (if this is safe to do so). Ensure that gravy boats are given on the tables, rather than pouring on someone's meal for them. Place sauces and bottles of drink (ie Shloer) on the table for people to help themselves. Let's make it special. It may be the only time some people are joined with others around a table. Have small vases or jam jars of fresh flowers dotted around and these could even be given as gifts at the end of the day to those volunteering as a thank you.

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DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

We have all being created unique. Some of us love to chat, others not so much. That's ok – it's human nature! Some of us love to play games, other not so much. Some of us love to watch others playing and participate by watching rather than doing. That's ok too – it's human nature.

Accept that everyone is different but try to facilitate enough time for befrienders to chat to the guests and whilst encouraging people to be part of the day, not to alienate those who are happy to sit back and watch.

TIME FOR TEA!

Have teatime goody bags ready for people to take home. It would be helpful if this bag was big enough to get their gift in so they aren't worrying about how to carry everything. The smallest things can embarrass people. Try to keep away from supermarket plastic bags and go more with a festive theme or brown bags decorated by the children.

FOOD ALLERGIES/MEDICAL ISSUES

Be aware of food allergies and check the Guest Information Forms carefully. This also includes gifts like chocolate. Check that you're not sending someone living with diabetes home with lots of chocolate or someone with a peanut allergy a box of chocolates that could have diverse effects. Be accommodating to all dietary requirements including gluten free as all can be accommodated for relatively easily.

TRANSPORT

Before offering transport to guests seriously consider whether this is feasible, whether you have the resources to offer the provision and whether guests and volunteers would feel safe to share a vehicle, it may be that guests will need to find their own

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transport but you could provide the contact details for any free local bus service, each Corps will be different.

If you plan to use your Corps mini-bus then you would follow the guidance already in place in relation to the training needed for the driver, maintenance of the vehicle, Risk Assessment for Use of Minibuses COVID guidance, see also guidance for Drivers Checklist – All documents can be found on OurHub Safe Mission Folder.

If you are asking volunteers to transport guests to the celebration event you will need to check with them that they have a driving licence and that their insurance will cover the activity, consider the need for a second person, are they an established volunteer, volunteer checks, be clear as to expectations around the picking up and dropping off, offer a contact at the Corps in case the guest is not there on their arrival at the address as you may be busy welcoming other guests. Be clear as to whether their mileage will be reimbursed, what the rate will be (45p pm) and the expenses form to complete.

If you are providing transport via volunteers using their own cars you will need to ensure the use of face coverings and check that volunteers and guests do not have COVID symptoms. Windows need to be open at least partially if possible, air must not be recirculated.

FOOD HYGIENE & TRANSPORT GUIDANCE

- **SAFER FOOD**
- **Food Allergens**

Food Safety PDF Document
provided by Safe Mission Unit



Food Safety.pdf

(New legislation as of October 2021 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland requires all food businesses to list all ingredients on pre-packaged food including allergen labelling on foods packaged for sale on the premises. This does not apply to open food)

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- **Safe Mission Risk Assessments.**

All of the below can be found on OurHub Safe Mission Folder.

1. **Part B Activities – Reopening Cafes, Coffee Shops and Hot Meal Drop In Sessions**

2. **Part B Activities – template**

- **Guidance of Drivers Checklist (Mini Bus)**
- **Use of Minibuses COVID 19 guidance**
- **Information for passengers for community transport services**

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A SPECIAL FOCUS ON INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Christmas can be a very difficult and lonely time for people living with a disability. A research by Office of National Statistics shows that 13.9% of people with a disability often or always feel lonely compared to 3.4% of people without a disability. Below are tips that you can use to ensure that your Christmas event is fully inclusive.

Tip 1: Participation and Engagement

- Ask people in the Corps if they know anyone with a disability who may benefit from joining on the day.
- Use different medium for sending out invitations in order to reach diverse people in your community for example emails, cards, letters, social media.
- If possible, follow up invitation with a telephone call or visit.
- Ask people, what, if any, support they might require on the day.
- Ask people what they would like to see included in activities. Consider offering a mixture of different activities with different facilitators.
- Include the programme of the day with the invitation so that people are aware of what to expect.

Tip 2: Accessibility and space

- Provide information about transport to the venue.
- Arrange accessible parking spaces or drop off.
- Ensure the building entrance, activity rooms and bathrooms are accessible.
- Allocate a volunteer at the entrance to welcome people and offer support when required.
- Provide space for easy movement for wheelchair users, those with guide dogs and mobility aids.
- Remove clutter and trip hazards from rooms and aisles.
- Make sure signage is clear, easy to read and placed at a height that everyone can see.
- Provide a space where mobility aids (i.e. rollators) can be stored.

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Tip 3: Communication

- Ask people for their preferred method of communication.
- Provide materials in alternative formats such as large print or braille.
- Ensure that font sizes are large enough to be read easily.
- Ensure that there is good contrast between the colour of the font and the background (i.e. yellow font on a blue background).
- Provide both verbal and written instructions using short and simple words with symbols and images.
- Avoid putting text on images as this can make it harder to read.
- Provide support to those that may need verbal prompts and sign language.

Tip 4. Offer variable menu selection

- Ask people if they have food allergies or dietary requirements on the invitation.
- Include some possible different types of diet such as gluten free, soft diet, any allergies.
- On the menu offer a variety of foods, snacks, treats and cakes.

Tip 5: Noise & sensory awareness

Be mindful that too many people in a place can cause sensory overload for some people living with a disability. For example, people with anxiety, autism or hearing loss may find the event overwhelming and struggle with overcrowded rooms or noise.

- Offer breaks between activities.
- Reduce visual distractions, noise, sound and ensure that lighting is suitable for those on the autistic spectrum.
- Consider holding activities in smaller groups.
- Consider using a buddy or having a support volunteer during activities.
- Provide a quiet room or space for people who wish to take some time away from the noise.

‘A special focus on including people with disability’ written by Paska Moore, Community Services

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SUGGESTED WORDING FOR INVITING GUESTS

Dear

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION LUNCH

You are invited to join us for Christmas celebrations and lunch on_(Insert Date here)

Christmas is a time when we remember that people gathered together to celebrate the birth of Jesus long ago and so we warmly invite you to join with us. We know it can be difficult for those who haven't joined us before so if it is your first Christmas with us please don't worry, it was our first time once too, so we do understand and hope you will be able to come and celebrate.

You are invited to join us for coffee between 10am – 10.30am and our short morning celebration service starts at 11am. Lunch will be served at 12noon and the afternoon will finish at 2pm. (There will be some teatime treats for you to take home with you.)

Should you require transport please make your request on the attached form.

Christmas Blessings from

(Insert first name and Corps to personalise this)

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CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION LUNCH GUEST DETAILS

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Preferred name to be called by:

Do you require transport to attend the Christmas Celebration? Yes / No

(Please delete as necessary)

(Remove if you as a Corps are not able to provide transport)

Do you have any food allergies or are there any foods you can't eat for medical reasons? If so, please provide details

Is this your first time coming along to the Christmas Lunch Celebration with us?

YES/NO (Please circle)

Is there anything you wish to tell us to help make your visit more comfortable for you?

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In case of an emergency please provide details of someone we can contact and please state their relationship to you:

(If you prefer us to not contact anyone please leave this blank)

In case of an emergency and a situation arising where we need to seek medical help on your behalf, please state below any medication that an attending medical person would benefit from knowing:

Would you like us to keep you informed of any future events that may be happening?
YES/NO (Please circle)

Signed Date

PRINT NAME HERE PLEASE

.....

Any details provided will be only used for this event unless you have indicated that you would like us to keep in touch with you in the future.

(All your details will therefore be disposed of after the event)

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SUGGESTED TIMETABLE OF THE DAY (4 HOURS MAXIMUM)

Time	What's happening	Further Information
9.30am	Gather volunteers/staff for United Prayer	Explain that this will be used throughout the UKI Territory to pray for those guests who will be joining us.
10.00am	People start arriving	Have coffee/tea ready and a nice welcoming seating area. Have music playing or a screen with words of Christmas Hymns or pictures playing.
10.30am	Coffee & Gift Opening	Have a small gift wrapped and tagged personally for each guest with a hand-written Christmas Card on a Christian Theme to ensure that if this is the only card someone receives that it is a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.
11.00am	Christmas Service	Service plan and sermon outline provided
11.45am	Comfort break and time to 'Meet your neighbour'.	Befrienders to guide people to meet who they will be sitting next to for the meal.
12.00 pm	Christmas Lunch	See guidance for set up, tips and suggestions.

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Time	What's happening	Further Information
1.15pm	Christmas fun & games 'Time to watch & play'	Remind volunteers/staff that for those who don't want to join in that's ok as many find enjoyment in watching others being part of something.
2.00pm	Time for home	Packed tea/goody bag ready to be given to each guest. If possible do not use plastic bags but brown paper bags or something that looks more special. Perhaps the children of the corps could decorate brown bags for people and personalise them.

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UNITED PRAYER FOR ALL THOSE ATTENDING CHRISTMAS LUNCHESES

Dear Father God

As we gather as your hands and feet on this day of celebration, we pray for all those who will come and be part of worship and activities this Christmas.

We pray that you will give courage to those who are nervous and anxious.

We pray you will comfort those who feel pain today due to the loss of a loved one.

We pray you will use us to bring joy, unconditional love and a welcoming smile to all who will enter our buildings.

We pray for those who will remain within their own homes who are unable to gather with others. May they feel your presence surrounding them.

We pray for those who do not know you as Lord and ask on this day of celebration that their hearts will be open to your love for them.

We pray for each other as your workers on this earth. Strengthen our hands, calm our anxious thoughts, renew our spirits and unite us as your people.

We place ourselves into your hands asking for your protection, peace and power to cover us and remain with us as we serve you.

Lord hear and answer our prayers in the name of Jesus.

Amen

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CHRISTMAS SERVICE OUTLINE

The Bible Readings are contained within 'The Nativity' Sections

Luke 2:1-18 & Matthew 2:1-12

- **Opening Video clip** – 'See the Star' <https://youtu.be/m4rdZZ3i2RM>
(This allows time for people to get into their seats)
- **Welcome** everyone to sharing Christmas together
- **Carol – O Little Town of Bethlehem** - Salvation Army Song Book Number 118
<https://vimeo.com/479989509>
- **Prayers** – (Ask some of the Corps children to join you with their parents and lead prayers)

Light the advent wreath if you have one (all the candles to be lit)
- **'The Nativity – Everyone is welcome'** (Part 1) – See resource attached
- **Carol – It was on a starry night** – Salvation Army Song Book Number 112
<https://vimeo.com/477970307>
- **'The Nativity Continued – Who followed the star?'** (Part 2) – See resource attached
- **Short Thought – Be a star - Come and adore!**
- **Carol – O come all ye faithful** – Salvation Army Song Book Number 116
<https://vimeo.com/479922075>
- **Closing Benediction**

'May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen' (Justus.anglican.org.uk)

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SHORT SERMON OUTLINE

THEME – BE A STAR!

Introduction

Well our nativity scene is all set now. Our Characters are in place and thank you to everyone who took part in building our nativity this morning and helping us to remember the amazing story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas Day is a reminder of what our friends called 'The main event'. It's a time when we are reminded of the Birth of our Saviour Jesus, yet so often Christmas becomes something far removed from what it is truly all about.

The Decorations, the meals, the trees, the lights in the high street, the chocolates... whilst all very festive they don't speak about the star of the show, Jesus.

Isaiah 9:6

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

If you're looking for a star to follow – choose Jesus.

Jesus is Wonderful. So wonderful that he chose to give his life for you and me. He did not stay a baby in the manger but grew into a man who died so that we might live with him in heaven.

Jesus is Mighty. He is our shield, our protector. He is greater than anything or anyone else and his power has no end.

Jesus is Everlasting. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. His love has no limits, his love has no ending. Jesus is forevermore your Saviour and your God.

Jesus is Peace. He can calm the storms of doubt and distress. He can bring peace into our troubled lives. He can do what others cannot.

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If you're looking for a star to follow – choose Jesus!

You can be a star too.

Imagine for a moment that we are back in Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus and the door of the stable is open. You peep inside and you see Mary and Joseph. Mary is cradling her baby but Joseph turns and he sees you and he beckons you inside. You then have a choice to make. Do you step away from the Baby King or do you step forward and come closer to experience what it is like to be in the presence of a King. The choice is yours and even though there is no big stable door here today to push open, Jesus still wants you to come in and be close to him because you are loved by him, you are wanted, you are precious. He came to this earth for you.

Conclusion

So in these moments before we sing our final carol, let's just stop, let's be quiet, let's look upon the baby Jesus one more time and remember that whether we identify with Mary - the young mother, faithful and pure. Joseph – parent and guardian, strong and courageous. The Shepherds – poor, tired, cold out on a hillside or the Wise men – bowing low, awe struck at the sight of the new king, proudness gone, humility overtaken them. Whoever you are, whoever you identify with, there is a place at the manger for you. Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Follow this with the Final Carol – O come let us adore him

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THE NATIVITY – NARRATED

Preparation - You will need:

- Two people to act as narrators (using the script below)
- A nativity set with individual character pieces which include: Mary, Joseph, Jesus, shepherd(s), Angel(s) & 3 Wise men (Kings)
- A table set at the front of the congregation with an empty stable for the nativity characters to be brought to.
- A Christmas present bag containing a star decoration or handmade silver star

Before the service give each of the individual nativity characters to different people who are willing to bring their character up to the empty stable when they hear their nativity name. (This is a great way of getting people involved and is part of the story that everyone is welcome.) **Note for the wise men:** Tell them to wait for the correct entrance in the story as the words 'wise men' are used a few times before it is their time to come forward.

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EVERYONE IS WELCOME! (PART 1)

NARRATED STORY ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS (Based upon Luke 2:1-18)

(Emphasise the words in CAPITALS)

- Narrator 1 Right, it's time for the main event!
- Narrator 2 The main event? What do you mean? We've already opened presents, surely that was the MAIN event?
- Narrator 1 No, the main event is about remembering WHY we receive presents, please don't tell me you've forgotten that? If you've forgotten that you've forgotten what Christmas is truly all about.
- Narrator 2 No, I've not forgotten but I do LOVE presents. By the way did everyone receive a present?
- Narrator 1 Yes, of course they did! No one is left out today when it comes to receiving a present and a beautiful meal and do you know why?
- Narrator 2 Go on enlighten me!
- Narrator 1 Because everyone is important, and everyone is welcome. Which leads me onto the MAIN event because you see everyone was welcome at the MAIN event.
- Narrator 2 Can we stop calling it the MAIN event please? I think it's time to say what it truly is... It's the birth of Jesus.
- Narrator 1 Yes, that's right, at the birth of Jesus everyone was welcome from poor humble shepherds to wealthy wise men – some people even think they were Kings!

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Narrator 2 Here we go then, oh and just to remind people you are all welcome! Also, if you have a character from the MAIN, oops sorry from the Birth of Jesus, when you hear your character's name you know what to do!

Both Narrators look at each other, smile and nod

Narrator 1 Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. So everyone went to their own town to register.

Narrator 2 So, **Joseph** went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went to Bethlehem with **Mary** as they were to be married and Mary was expecting a child.

Joseph and Mary are brought to the empty stable and placed wherever the people want to place them.

Narrator 1 While they were in Bethlehem the time came for the baby to be born. Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son – and she named him **Jesus**. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them.

Jesus is brought to the stable

Narrator 2 Nearby, there were **shepherds** living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

The Shepherd is brought to the stable

Narrator 1 An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. But the **angel** said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will bring great joy to everyone.

The Angel is brought to the stable

Narrator 2 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you, he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: Go, and you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

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Narrator 1 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Both Narrators 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

Both Narrators pause and look at the stable

Narrator 2 I think you were right.

Narrator 1 I beg your pardon, did you just say I was right? Can I have that in writing?

Narrator 2 The birth of Jesus WAS the main event. That tiny baby in the manger changed history forever and do you know what I think I would have loved the most?

Narrator 1 No, what's that? The part when Jesus gets lots of gifts, because if that's what you're going to say you can't just yet as that comes after our next Carol!

Narrator 2 Actually no, what I think I would have loved the most is the sound of the angels singing glory to God. I imagine the sound was simply heavenly!

Narrator 1 Well looking around I think we have a few angels here today so let's sing our next Carol and it might just feel like you're back there on that starry night...

Sing the Carol 'It was on a starry night'

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THE NATIVITY CONTINUED

'WHO FOLLOWED THE STAR?' (PART 2)

NARRATED STORY ABOUT THE WISE MEN (Based upon Matthew 2:1-11)

(Emphasise the words in CAPITALS)

- Narrator 2 You were right again! They sang like angels! Now is it time to think about gifts again?
- Narrator 1 Oh they did! Well yes, it is time to think about gifts but there was so much that must have happened before the wise men brought their gifts to Jesus you know.
- Narrator 1 Really? What do you mean?
- Narrator 2 Well, they lived far away from Bethlehem which meant they needed to travel a long journey, so they will have had to get their camels prepared, loaded up with water and food so as not to get hungry on the journey and they didn't have any road maps or 'sat navs' in those days so they had to study hard.
- Narrator 1 Ah yes, they studied the stars didn't they? When I look up into the night's sky I find the stars fascinating and to think that one star led the wise men all the way to Jesus. That is incredible!
- Narrator 2 Yes I agree, in fact you could say it was 'STARTling' or even that they were 'STAR struck'.
- Narrator 1 Oh please! We get the picture. Well you're right the star did lead the wise men to Jesus, shall we see what happened and hopefully our stable will get a little bit more crowded as the wise men join in.

Both narrators look at each other, smile and nod.

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- Narrator 1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the time of King Herod, **wise men** from the east came to Jerusalem asking ‘where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’
- Narrator 2 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed and all of Jerusalem with him. He gathered the Chief Priests and the teachers of the law together and asked where the Messiah was to be born.
- Narrator 1 “In Bethlehem” they replied, “just as the prophet foretold”.
- Narrator 2 Then Herod called the wise men to him and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared.
- Narrator 1 He sent the wise men to Bethlehem asking them to report back to him once they had found the baby king, pretending that he too wanted to go and worship him.
- Narrator 2 The wise men went on their way and followed the star which stopped over the place where baby Jesus was.
- Narrator 1 On coming to the house they saw the child with his mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him.
- Narrator 2 They opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- Narrator 1 Thankfully they had a dream warning them not to go back to Herod so they did a detour and returned to their own country by another route!
- Narrator 2 Phew!

Both narrators look at the stable

- Narrator 1 I’m so pleased the wise men found Jesus and I’m even more pleased that they understood how to follow a star as I’m not sure I would know where to start!

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Narrator 2 Yes, me too! Well if we look at the nativity now it's getting quite crowded isn't it? So many different people who went to find Jesus and were welcomed in by his parents to meet their new baby. Quite a beautiful sight really don't you think?

Narrator 1 Yes, I agree, and it helps me to remember that this is exactly what God had planned. He wanted the ordinary every day people to share the wonder of the birth of Jesus. The shepherds who had to sleep on a hillside under the dark night sky, the angels who sang their praises to God, not forgetting the wise men, who had pots of money but who bowed down in that lowly stable because they were actually in the presence of a star! Jesus himself.

Narrator 2 The main event is a great story isn't it?

Narrator 1 It most certainly is. *(Smiling)* I have a gift for you. Would you like it now?

Narrator 2 Ooh yes please, you know how I love gifts!

Narrator 1 gives Narrator 2 a bag with the star ornament or handmade silver star

Narrator 2 A star!

Narrator 1 Yes, a star to take home and remind you that we can all be stars with God's help no matter who we are. Go, shine bright and be a star!

END

Be a STAR

FUN & GAMES

Remember that not everyone will want to take part in games. Often people enjoy watching others having fun, and this becomes their own way of joining in and being part of the activity.

Whatever games you play, ensure that they are suitable for all ages and abilities. Try not to do games that require people to read things out loud as this can be daunting for many. With any games that you do play, ensure that clear instructions are given so that no one is left feeling embarrassed or left out.

Suggestions for Christmas Celebrations Games

Pass the Parcel

Choose an inexpensive gift—such as a box of chocolates to wrap up for the traditional game of pass the parcel. Try to include lots of layers but not too many that it becomes tiresome. In between each layer or wrapping add a bag of chocolate ‘Milkyway Stars’ which add to the theme of the day. Explain that if they win the stars they can either keep them to take home or give them away to another guest. The choice is theirs!

Christmas Pass the Ball

Gather the guests into a circle, each with a chair to sit upon, and have a ‘leader’ in the middle of the circle with a large soft ball. The leader throws the ball to different guests randomly, ensuring that everyone has a go without just going round the group one by one. When someone catches the ball, they have to shout out something about Christmas, eg. Baubles, Kings, Mary, Presents, Turkey, etc.

Be a STAR

Games are a great way of breaking the ice with people and making sure that people keep entertained and feel part of something. Some people love quizzes, while others hate them. If you decided to engage people in a quiz, ensure that everyone is in a team of 2's or 3's, so that no one is embarrassed if they don't know the answer.

And the main thing to remember is, this is about having fun - so getting people laughing and enjoying the game, or even laughing and watching those playing is the main aim of the 'game'. Often people love to play games but don't get the opportunity if they live alone, so give permission to play and have some fun. And one last thing... get the volunteers playing too. This makes everyone feel they are on the same level playing ground and everyone is equal.

Have fun!

Be a STAR



BE A STAR – BE A BEFRIENDING CHRISTMAS LUNCH VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for volunteers to come alongside our guests at Christmas, to sit with them, eat Christmas lunch together and simply be a friend.

This is a very important volunteer role as it takes someone with good listening skills, a heart for other's wellbeing and the desire to help someone enjoy their day at what can be a difficult time for many.

Some key guidelines for 'Be a Star Befrienders':

- Ask about your friend's day. How are they?
- We have two ears and one mouth so remember to listen twice as much as talking!
- Give plenty of time for your friend to talk, you may be the only one they have spoken to in a long time if they live alone.
- Share something from your day, especially if you have encountered some unexpected kindness.
- If you're struggling to get a conversation going you could ask 'which character do you think you'd have liked to be in the Christmas story?'
- Listen to any concerns or questions your friend may have – no concern is too small, and it can be helpful to share something even if there is no immediate solution.
- Offer encouragement where possible and try not to speculate.
- Encourage them to keep in contact with other friends and family as we start a new year.

Be a STAR

- Treat your friend with respect, politeness, kindness and honesty.
- Respect your friend's right to confidentiality.

Be a star and be aware...

- Your friend may not have good experiences of Christmas past.
- They may want to share stories of Christmas but they may not if this is painful.
- They may be bereaved of a partner, family member or loved one and they may find Christmas difficult.
- They may not be used to eating in a group setting so a gentle encouragement along the way may be needed and guidance to where they need to be seated etc.



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This resource is produced by The Salvation Army's Older People's Ministries Team in partnership with the Community Services Team in the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory, 2021.

The Salvation Army is a church and registered charity in England (214779), Wales (214779), Scotland (SC009359) and the Republic of Ireland (CHY6599).

Territorial Commander for the United Kingdom and Ireland: Commissioner Anthony Cotterill