



# Classroom Prayer & Reflection Activities

## Theme: Advent & Christmas

*Suggested activities – choose 4 of the following*

### 1. Preparing Hearts

What is Christmas all about? Why do we celebrate Christmas?

During Advent, Christians prepare themselves for Christmas. They don't just write lots of cards and go shopping! They also prepare their hearts by stopping and taking some time to think about the Christmas story, saying sorry for the things they've done wrong and making room for Jesus in their hearts.

**Be still and think about the Christmas story. You may have some books or pictures that could help you do this. Take a paper heart and reflect or pray about what you might need to change in your heart to make you ready for Christmas. You could write about this or draw a picture of someone who you are thinking about, who is important to you, about onto the heart shape if you want to.**

### 2. Angels

The Angels brought messages to different people in the Christmas story: Mary, the Shepherds and Joseph. When they told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus the Angel said: *"Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."* (Luke 2: 10)

Sometimes when things are scary or aren't going so well, it can be difficult to be joyful, but even when things are tough, we can usually find something to be joyful or thankful for.

**Think about what gives you joy or make you happy. What are you thankful for? If you would like to, write about or draw something that brings you joy or that you are thankful for on a scratch card as a prayer or reflection. (Or you could make a paperchain of angels and write on them.)**

### 3. Mary & Joseph

Mary and Joseph faced lots of difficulties when Jesus was born, first of all Mary was told she was going to have a baby when she wasn't expecting that! Joseph was told to take Mary home as his wife and look after her, then they had to travel to Bethlehem when Mary was pregnant, and they couldn't find anywhere to stay, so their baby ended up being born in a stable. Even after Jesus' birth Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt to keep the baby Jesus safe.

Through all these trials and tribulations, Mary and Joseph must have been worried and concerned about what they should do, but they both continued to trust in God. Mary said: *"I am the Lord's servant, ... May your word to me be fulfilled."* (Luke 1:38) and Joseph *"did what the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."* (Matthew 1:24) And later, Joseph *"got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt"*. (Matthew 2:14)

What things are worrying or concerning you at the moment? There will always be worries or uncertainties during life, but Christians believe that if they trust in God, like Mary and Joseph did, he will always be with them, helping them through difficult times.

***Is there is anything that is worrying you or concerning you at the moment? If you'd like to, you can write or draw it onto the angel wings as a thought or prayer. If you'd like to, you could ask God to help you with your worries and concerns as you put the wings into a box.***

**(A bubble tube or blown bubbles could also be used)**

#### 4. Immanuel

Immanuel, one of Jesus' names, means 'God with us'. (Matthew 1:22) Jesus is God's only son, but he was also human and was born as a child and lived on earth among us.

Christians believe that God sent Jesus to live among us, to help us, to show us what God is really like, to show us how much God loves us and that he forgives us when we sin or do things wrong. That means that when we sin, and then say sorry to God, we are always forgiven.

**Take a stone and hold it in your hand. Have a think if there is anything you would like to say sorry for, or maybe someone has done or said something mean to you and you would like to try and forgive them. When you are ready, you can take the stone to the bowl or water and put it in there to show that you are sorry or that you would like to try and forgive.**

#### 5. Shepherds

The Shepherds were the first people that the Angels told about Jesus' birth.

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord suddenly 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 cause great joy for all the people.'* (Luke 2:8-10)

Once the shepherds had heard this they decided to go and find the baby and, after they had seen him, they told all people they saw about the child.

How do you feel when you hear good news? What if that good news is about you? How can you share good news about things that are happening? Do you let other people know when they are being the good news?

**Have a think about some good news you've heard about recently. This could be about a person or an event that has happened. Write or draw about it onto a 'thumbs-up' post-it. You might like to say thank you for the good news. Don't forget to share the good news with others!!**

#### 6. Magi

The Magi or wise men brought gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus. What gifts has God given you? What things are good in your life? What things are you good at? We are all different, so we all have different gifts.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit gives them different gifts, so they like to say thank you to God for the gifts given to them and they ask Him to help them to use those gifts to help others.

**Take a bauble and think of a gift you have. Write or draw it onto your bauble, thinking and maybe praying about how you might use your gift. If you have a tree, you can hang your bauble onto it as a thought, wish or a prayer.**

#### 7. Simeon and Anna

After Jesus was born, his parents took him to the temple as was the custom at that time. There they meet two people: Simeon and Anna.

Simeon had waited in the temple for many years and had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. When he saw Jesus, he took him in his arms and gave thanks to God for keeping his promise.

Anna was a very old prophetess who also worshipped at the temple. She came and saw Jesus and gave thanks to God for him.

Both Simeon and Anna had waited and worshipped at the temple for a very long time before they met Jesus, sometimes it must have been difficult to wait, but they were both rewarded for waiting.

Sometimes it's good to be still and wait quietly. We often have busy times in our lives. How are you feeling today?

**Take time to be still and to be aware of your feelings. Take a glitter jar, shake it, then place it back onto your desk. As you watch the glitter settle down, take some time to think about or reflect on your feelings. You might also like to talk to God in your head about how you're feeling right now.**

#### **8. Born in Poverty, then refugees**

Jesus was born in a stable and placed in an animal feeding trough rather than a cosy warm cot. Many families around the world have children who are born into poverty and do not have access to basic things we take for granted like food, shelter, a warm bed, suitable clothing and toys.

After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to flee to Egypt to keep Jesus safe from Herod. Today we call people who have to flee from danger in their own country 'refugees' and they also will have left behind their homes, belongings, work and families.

What can we do to help these people? Christians believe that they can pray about these situations. There are also practical things that we can do: like donating to a foodbank or giving (either money or toys, home items and clothing) to a charity that helps those in poverty and refugees. Can you think of any other ideas?

**If you would like to, think about how you could help those living in poverty or refugees. Write what you can do onto a post it note and stick it onto one of the houses. You might like to share with an adult what you plan to do, so that they can help you.**