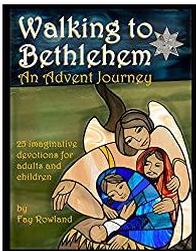


**Be aware that many of these are shared freely on the understanding they are not to be used for profit.**

### Advent

**Faith At Home Advent** is a free resource to help children and their families' journey together through Advent. Each week has a Bible reading or two. There is a family activity suggested for Sunday – Friday of every week. Sunday is always reading and talking about the story together. This been put together by St Albans Diocese -

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/faith-at-home-for-advent-2020.pdf>



This is available from Amazon and has imaginative daily readings and prayers for adults and children with relaxing colouring, crafts and music.

It costs £5 but would be a good Christmas gift to help families get into the Christmas spirit at this difficult time.

**Advent Windows** – A way for households to visit scenes taken from the Nativity story that are displayed in windows, front gardens, the school yard, businesses, the library or shop windows in their local area. You could offer a downloadable map with the scenes marked on, a quiz sheet to fill in, and at the end of the trail a QR code to link them to some resources for activities at home & answers. There are so many ways to do this.

Peterborough Diocese has put together a great Nativity Trail. If you would like a copy email [laura.webster@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:laura.webster@rochester.anglican.org).



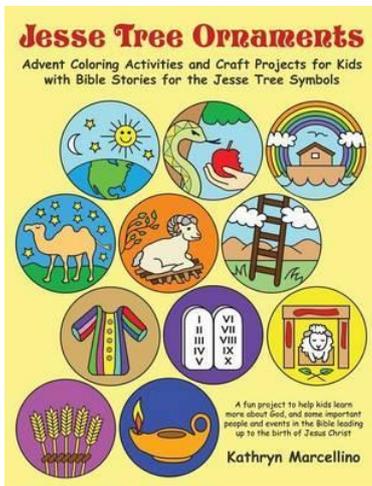
If you want some more inspiring ideas and images go to Advent Windows, Creech St Michael - you will need to scroll back to December (Advent Windows did Easter too!) or Toton Advent Windows on Facebook.

Or consider theming it around Christmas Carols. People choose a carol of their choice and decorate their window for that carol. Each night a new carol is revealed (from the 1st-24th December like an Advent Calendar). Again produce a map of all the windows so that people can see when and where the windows will appear.

**Muddy Church** have put together an ADVENTure with the characters of the nativity story in a downloadable format using QR codes.

<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/muddy-adventure>





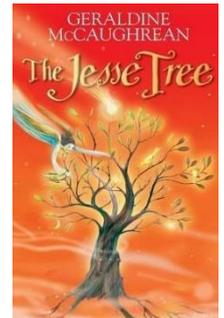
## Jesse Tree

A Jesse Tree is used in advent to tell the story of the Bible until the birth of Jesus. There are lots of resources which can be used either within families or church.

You could make or colour an ornament each day throughout Advent. Bath & Wells have a lovely version ready to use

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Jesse-Tree-for-Children-Youth-and-Families-revised-2019-proofed.pdf>

Or read the story this book is aimed at 5-9's.



The Muddy Church Team have put together a Jesse Tree Advent-ure with challenges every day.

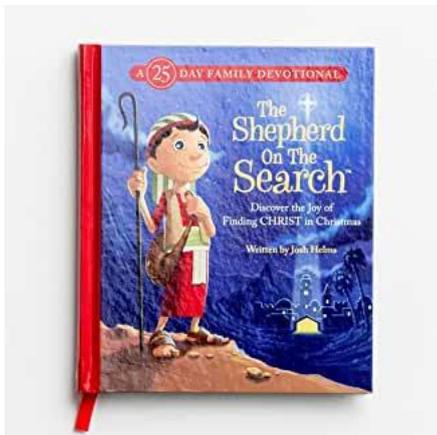
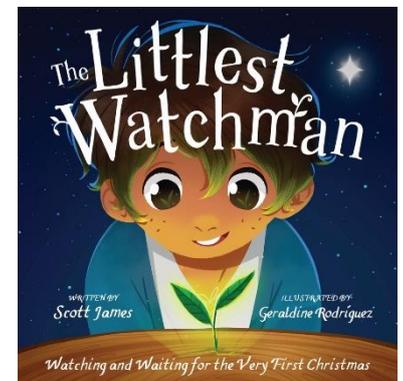
<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/muddy-church-jesse-tree>

Another year consider making a few each week within Sunday Clubs, telling the stories as you go!

Try pinterest for different ways to make the decorations.

**The Littlest Watchman:** it is a book helping children 4-11 prepare for Christmas.

They have also produced an advent calender which can be used to make a 'Jesse Tree' <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-littlest-watchman>



**The Shepherd on the Search ( a bit like the Elf on the Shelf)** is another advent resource to use in families. Make, buy or adapt a shepherd and he journeys around the house until Christmas day when he finds his way to the manger! With a book and an advent calendar (from Amazon).

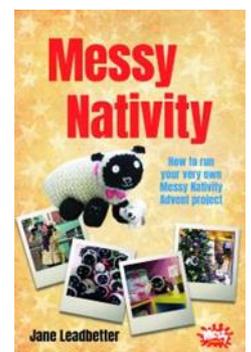
The family can then download a different activity to do each day from their website. He also has a pinterest page of ideas!

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/dayspring/shepherd-on-the-search/?lp=true>

**Knit-i-vity! How knitted sheep can bring Jesus baaaaa... ck into your shopping centre!**

The Messy Church team have reprinted this for 2020 with the Messy Nativity Advent project.

- Hunt for knitted sheep in shops around town
- Go house-to-house with the Christmas story
- Perform a Messy Street Nativity play.



## **Family outdoor Christmas shepherd vigil.**

(as alternative to usual indoor family services and only if safe and in line with current restrictions) If you have access to some green space on your premises, ask a small number of families to gather (inviting children to come dressed as shepherds) with blankets, hot drinks and snacks, sitting in their respective family groups. Ask young people connected the church to help organise and steward the event, leading some children's activities/entertainment.

Plan your event for dusk, and as it begins to get dark ask young people and other congregation members to act out the annunciation to the shepherds. If possible, use lighting or PA equipment to add a sense drama. Include some short readings and reflections with reference to those who (like the Holy Family) do not have warm and safe homes this Christmas. Finish with prayers and an invitation to share with their friends and family, that the Saviour has come into the world, that light shines in the darkness and they can go and meet Him themselves this Christmas time.

**Posada as a Family.** Los Posadas (The Inns) is a South American traditional where Mary and Joseph move from house to house during advent, ending up in the church. This year it could look different with each household making (or is given) their own set of nativity figures. They could decorate toilet roll middles or jenga blocks, repurpose playmobil characters, anything! Then the characters move around the house, getting closer to the stable as they go. You could add characters in as you tell their bit of the story as you travel through Advent. You could ask families to take photos and post on social media as their characters travel around. Or talk with your local shops and ask to move the Holy Family from window to window during Advent. Make up a sheet/download for families to take with them on the journey to the stable. Consider the church being the end of the trail. The Diocese of York has put together lots of good covid-secure examples.

<https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/5055/ideas-for-advent-posadas-in-a-time-of-covid.pdf>

## **Countdown To Christmas** from John Hardwick



A fun Puppet Advent Nativity could certainly be loads of fun with rocking angels, brave shepherds, cool Wisemen a baddie King Herod tell the real meaning of Christmas, Here is a quick snippet of some of the songs and action! Watch this space for more to come and share the good news! Consider primary school teachers using it daily on their interactive screens with the children excitedly watching and singing along! Or as an advent present so children and grandchildren

will be ready to watch and enjoy and have a daily focus will be on the 'real meaning of Christmas'!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 7WMIAsoTYU>

## **Community Connections**

Find a way to connect with local people.

One church is planning on leaving wooden tree decorations around their neighbourhood (in a plastic pack with a Christmas card and explanation), encouraging families to hang them on their tree. You could use pens to decorate with Hope 2020 or similar. The plan is to repeat this in subsequent years for families to build up a collection. Amazon Is one source but even better if you make your own.

Christmas Angel – is on the same line but this is a knitted angel left for others to find. Look on their website for the pattern. [www.christmasangel.net](http://www.christmasangel.net)

Mother's Union in Chichester is encouraging members to make stars and leave them with a label to bless families in this unsettling time. They could be hung on trees or fences to be collected.

Consider setting up **nativity stations** around your church for families to join in with. Booking slots to allow space. Spiritual Child Network has come up with a great trail – designed for more normal times, but easily adaptable for our current circumstances.

<http://www.spiritualchild.co.uk/schoolchristmastrail.html?LMCL=GB7See&fbclid=IwAR2WHsCH1uCpKwRH5WVCDJ-mafA7fyd3L9m7EI6rddIKnrSK3FZ2k0ND2fo>

Rotation.org has also got some great ideas for nativity trails

[https://www.rotation.org/topic/advent-bible-story-walk-through-nativity-trails?reply=645198538692181301&fbclid=IwAR2-T3Q6ki3S\\_ZX087OhCS6HwdOQwIGkW6GnaXQHdD6oZKQIT2WAflwvMMI#645198538692181301](https://www.rotation.org/topic/advent-bible-story-walk-through-nativity-trails?reply=645198538692181301&fbclid=IwAR2-T3Q6ki3S_ZX087OhCS6HwdOQwIGkW6GnaXQHdD6oZKQIT2WAflwvMMI#645198538692181301)

Or consider setting it up using QR codes to direct people to a story and a carol for each station....

Or set up a trail for families to follow around the church yard with their torches looking for 'clues' - characters from the nativity perhaps? Or letters spelling out a word at the end? Families could then receive an Advent/Christmas gift at the end? It's dark from 4 so could be from 4-6?

Here is a Nativity Trail someone offered for sharing from a few years back – great to see how good it could look.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/951188848699906/permalink/974262516392539/>

**Free Bible Images** has pictures you can use to make a trail.

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/search/?theme=Christmas>

## **Schools at Christmas**

As many of our schools will be reluctant or unable to visit our churches, or even have a visitor in to tell the Christmas story do consider what you could offer. You may be able to offer a virtual Christmas assembly. Or offer to pay for a really professional retelling of the story.

**Rhema Theatre Company** have created a series of short films telling the Christmas story which would be great for school Collective Worship or RE. [www.talesfromthemiraclebook.co.uk](http://www.talesfromthemiraclebook.co.uk)

Or **CRiBS** have a Christmas play which usually visits primary schools every year but this year is available online. They are asking for a donation to make it available for schools or church outreach. A trailer is imminent with the link ready for 7<sup>th</sup> December. [www.cribsonline.org](http://www.cribsonline.org)

Or John Hardwicks Countdown to Christmas will be fun for schools, see above.

**Comfort and Joy** resources. The Church of England's national Christmas campaign is producing lots of great resources including video reflections for young people in December. These can be used as conversation starters in small groups, incorporated into a service or shared on your social media pages.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/preparing-advent-christmas-2020comfort-and-joy>

## **Christmas Crafts – send home or use in worship.**



A printable nativity scene on an a4 sheet of paper! Very cute. <http://madebyjoel.com/?s=nativity>

Another nativity scene being freely offered wherever they can be used. Grouped on 4 sheets because they were initially designed to build up the nativity scene over the four Sundays of advent:

## The Bible Chat Mat –



Christmas edition is a great way to share the story of the birth of Jesus from Luke chapter 2, whether around a meal table or sitting on the sofa at home, or in a church or school group. A cartoon sheet with hidden angels and sheep with loads of nativity details to chat about.

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/youth-children/resources/bible-chat-mat/>



Home Bargains is selling these stickers for 79p with 5 of each character.



And Baker Ross has a good selection of stickers and crafts with a nativity theme.

## Advent Craft Bag

Put together a small bag of crafts for a family to do in the advent period. Pinterest is a great place to start for ideas. Think of adding a small book with the story.

**Advent Wreath** for families to colour in and then light at home from Inclusive Church Birmingham's website.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10158420325266690&set=gm.980755655743225>

## Crib / Nativity Service Ideas

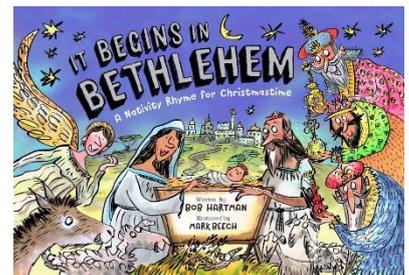


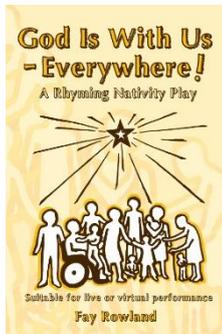
**Bible Society** has free resources for a new 'pop-up' nativity as well as the instant nativity scripts from previous years. Easy to use with a script and visuals. There is a book of the story that can be given away.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/landing/nativity-resources/>

There is also a new book to give away as well as an animation (search on Youtube) that can be used in services. Read by Bob Hartman with illustrations by Mark Beech.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/bib-000519/?ymabii>





**God is with us Everywhere** Nativity for Covid times – either pre-record/distanced

<https://reflectionary.org/2020/10/05/god-is-with-us-everywhere-a-covid-safe-nativity-play/?fbclid=IwAR1zbNHeABrGskOIIcJv7L1OzbaW3xgD9IqWPYB9pzXv1wai-62TIZdHrD8>

“**Crib service on Zoom**” a complete service written by Margaret from St Albans Diocese. It has all the resources you will need to enable families to experience a traditional crib service in their own home. With music links, PowerPoint and prayer space ideas.

<https://stalbanscme.com/2020/09/22/crib-service-onzoom/>



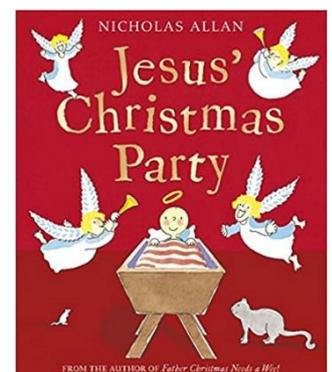
**A driveway, processional crib service.** This can be as grand or as simple as you can manage. You may be able to find a donkey, I am sure you could get a Mary and Joseph. Visit key driveways or public places in the parish and have a short, visible service in each place. Have prayers and candles safely available to the onlookers – people distributing them should wear gloves. Borrow a megaphone from your local school or purchase one from an online retailer. Stop and pray and/or have a soloist sing at key moments. On your prayer cards invite people to your: facebook/zoom/youtube/website activities. Don't be afraid of silence at points on your procession as you pray for your community and for people to know the love of God, and to remember those we cannot celebrate Christmas with. If you have the technology, stream your crib service from church online and to rooms around your community; maybe have a screen in your hall, pub, school hall etc. Maybe the baby Jesus could visit all the locations before he is finally placed in the manger. Each location with a screen could contribute to the liturgy – a prayer, reading or a soloist/small choir. (This is dependent on social gatherings being of a size where this is possible)

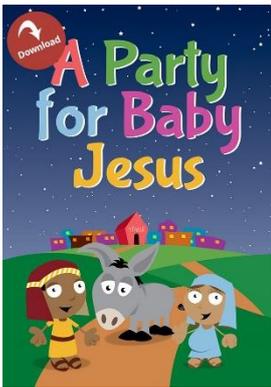
**Multiple (shorter and simpler) crib services** throughout the week leading up to Christmas Eve. If you clean between each service you could hold multiple services on Christmas Eve or on a weekday early evening. This depends on energy levels and how many you think you need and a signup sheet/Eventbrite booking/tickets to keep numbers safe.

**4-D Nativity:** Each child/family is given a party bag when they came in with objects that are then used during the service to help tell the story. Consider noise makers for noisy Bethlehem, glow sticks for angels in the sky, gold coins for special gifts etc. Also put in a Christmas booklet. This gives each family a bag of goodies to help them retell the story again.

It will still be possible for our congregations to take part in our nativities – as long as they stay in family groups, physically distanced.

The nativity from the innkeepers perspective. It can be adapted to make a nativity play. Find it on Amazon.

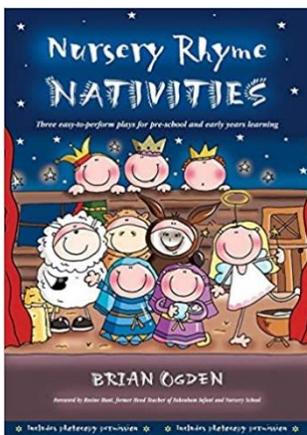
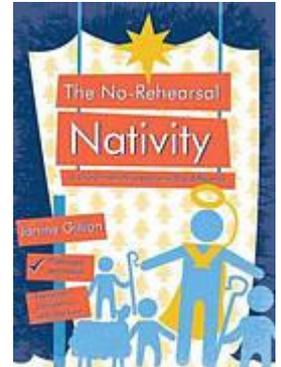




Care For The Family has produced this to use within toddler groups, but this could be adapted for Zoom or face book or even a physically distanced church service.

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/faith-in-the-family/playtime/playtime-resources/a-party-for-baby-jesus>

The No-Rehearsal Nativity is available at Eden.co.uk – simple, fun and effective



The Christmas Three from Brian Ogden's Nursery Rhyme Nativities used three narrators (costume optional). You could replace the songs with Christmas Carols. Found it on Amazon.

Here are a series of pictures, by Julia Quinn, of the nativity using playmobil. They could be used for a service, sent to families in a pack, used as inspiration for lego building etc, or even sent into a school to help children tell the story themselves.



[https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3386876974740364&set=oa.2597918723851539&\\_cft\\_\[0\]=AZV4SnS3ljanItJ2XIONquPTuME05jhiU5nDBWWSd77YHJXisSNVCnh-qN5Ak5koQC-75bHMMIMZXG0jx2K1dNTnqPal3AzC\\_vWLEDuFzz5J92rE6awz8d7Rv\\_1YPolx9qbpJOpLIsWXdn1ntnTsUFLuvaB41TWfVJhlo4dazAKsLgAw5Jv3e4dKfHIHMWq-jOc&\\_tn\\_\\*bH-R](https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3386876974740364&set=oa.2597918723851539&_cft_[0]=AZV4SnS3ljanItJ2XIONquPTuME05jhiU5nDBWWSd77YHJXisSNVCnh-qN5Ak5koQC-75bHMMIMZXG0jx2K1dNTnqPal3AzC_vWLEDuFzz5J92rE6awz8d7Rv_1YPolx9qbpJOpLIsWXdn1ntnTsUFLuvaB41TWfVJhlo4dazAKsLgAw5Jv3e4dKfHIHMWq-jOc&_tn_*bH-R)

## Christingle

Please be aware that sanitiser is alcohol based and so can be flammable, keep it away from naked flames.

Look at the Children's Society for leaflets, tape, stickers, paper bags and advice at <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise-and-events/christingle/planning-your-celebration>

In this season families will need to meet around a table to make their Christingle for good advice on that look at Messy Church -reopening safely advice.

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/suggestions-returning-safely-messy-church-together>

Or if you would like to make your **Christingle Messy** use the resources they have prepared for 2020. There is a face-to-face version as well as an 'at home' version.

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-christingle-2020>

Or possibly make them during the service with the resources in a bag – prepared 72hrs ahead. Have boxed raisins/ haribo bags/etc, then pre-taped orange, and Sellotape cocktail sticks to the candle to stab into the

orange (cutting hole in the orange makes them all sticky in the bag). Also worth thinking of using glo sticks instead of candles because of blowing them out.

And for the really daring the Muddy Church team have put together a **Muddy Christingle** QR trail you may like to use.

<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/>

Or how about a **doorstep Christingle**? Drop a bag of Christingle components at each door and at a set time, every household in the street joins in and makes their Christingle. Possibly in just a few streets by starting with a flash-mob, pre-recorded carol to create attention, give out the bags to make the Christingles, and end by inviting the households to join in with a doorstep version of silent night.

The Reflectionary has a new talk for your Christingle this year – Christ in G-L-E.

<https://reflectionary.org/2020/11/02/christ-in-gle/?fbclid=IwAR3k8DC1p65NbxZUBqFO9L3QKIWdaahidbQsAr7i3XJS9qtEv6UA-tK4WsM>

There is the Christingle Organisers Form on Facebook for ideas.

### **Zoom Carol Singalong.**

Have an online Zoom carol singing party. People can bring festive food and drinks and gather in front of the monitor. This can work for all ages

Have people send in requests ahead of time. The leader finds choral settings of the requested Christmas carols on the A Church Near You resource Hub and has them all ready to go.

Help your social media presence by having a Facebook or Twitter poll of favourite carols. The leader shares their screen and clicks the “share computer sound” button, and plays each video.

Everyone mutes themselves and sings along at home. (It feels less silly singing alone if you have a choral setting accompanying you.)

After three or four videos, take a chat/refill your glass break and send people to breakout rooms for ten minutes.

Then come back and do another round of Christmas carols.

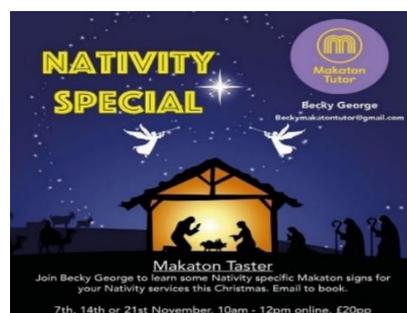
Think of online games with a message that you might play a PowerPoint based Christmas Quiz with a final question that allows for a 3 minute homily.

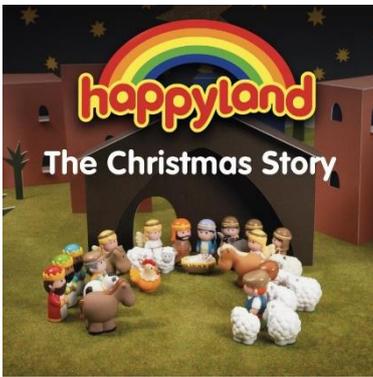
Remember to get word out of the service in plenty of time use QR codes (<https://forqrcode.com/>) to help people find the link to the service as well as making it obvious on social media.

**Car Park Carols** – [www.faithinkids.org](http://www.faithinkids.org) have a great idea for using a local supermarket carpark for a carol service – ay need to be done with other local churches but could be a great way to share Christmas with those who may be reluctant to come into our buildings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc128YBJQ-I&feature=youtu.be>

You may wish to learn some **Makaton** for the Christmas season to support those children who use it to communicate.





## ELC have created a Happyland Nativity set .

And to accompany it HOPE Together and Biblica have published a Happyland Christmas Story booklet (50p each). The 20-page booklet uses the popular Happyland characters and Glen Scrivener's nativity rhyme. There's also the specially-made Happyland nativity animation to share on social media, in schools and in church service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a4pxLGNDy8&t=3s>

[https://hopetogether.org.uk/Shop/Products/500770/Hope\\_Together/Books/The\\_Christmas\\_Story.aspx](https://hopetogether.org.uk/Shop/Products/500770/Hope_Together/Books/The_Christmas_Story.aspx)

**GodVenture** have produced a Faith at Home mini-mag (£6 each or 10 for £30) with 8 pages of activities and includes an A3 nativity colouring poster with a spot the difference nativity on the back, a Christmas story mini-book (32 pages) and a 25 Ways to be Thankful bookmark, with 25 thanks-prompts, one for each day in Advent

The activities include fun, creative and accessible ways to explore the Christmas story and pray together. [www.godventure.co.uk](http://www.godventure.co.uk)



## Websites with lots of Christmas ideas

The Reflectionary <https://reflectionary.org/2020/10/12/christmas-round-up/>

### Christmas Assembly Ideas

<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/search.php?term=christmas&ksval=7&order=aid&offset=0&restype=full>

The **Church of England** has started combining Christmas ideas on [https://padlet.com/mary\\_hawes/tzez57sc9hy8ufar](https://padlet.com/mary_hawes/tzez57sc9hy8ufar)

**High Wycombe YFC** have put together a series of resources to help you Unwrap Christmas. Includes videos and activity sheets.

[https://www.wycombeyfc.org.uk/christmasunwrapped/?fbclid=IwAR0FduA35JInlhHzQP\\_PokpIGUQ4LKpK4oVFgoA4j8pCeGNfTzPbmO6emgU](https://www.wycombeyfc.org.uk/christmasunwrapped/?fbclid=IwAR0FduA35JInlhHzQP_PokpIGUQ4LKpK4oVFgoA4j8pCeGNfTzPbmO6emgU)

## Songs for Christmas

### Baby Boy – New Wine Kids

"Hush (Shh!) There's A Baby,"

"Oh What A Glorious Night"

Nick and Becky Drake - The Angels Knew

Doug Horley – All the Angels Sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j9VXnHC-u0&fbclid=IwAR0ZAP2DgcIJqc05dAIS8tW2U1O6AfaFcu9uRSn3hOgoYn9GKOrFsSbFEO&app=desktop>

### OBB – Feelin' Like Christmas

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVa6ZMPMTkg&fbclid=IwAR05rQG\\_yewLUyH6NI6setOPcawB-FzmAh9Sjv4ysuno3bWGwE0kFeSbk9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVa6ZMPMTkg&fbclid=IwAR05rQG_yewLUyH6NI6setOPcawB-FzmAh9Sjv4ysuno3bWGwE0kFeSbk9s)