# **Explore** it

#### A season of hope



Bible verses:

Isaiah 9:2-7

A new day is coming



Aim:

To discover the message of hope found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit:

Kindness



In today's session we focus on the promise given to Isaiah by God to share with the world.

Isaiah, a prophet, shared this promise with the Israelites – God's promise that, through the birth of Jesus, there was hope for the future. But they had to wait 700 years for this promise to come true.

Jesus brings hope to us all through the kindness he shares throughout the world.

#### Each child will need:

- Memory verse poster
- Memory verse wristband
- An envelope or jar; scissors and decorating resources like Christmas stickers and glitter glue (alternatively use paper, pens and sticky tape)
- Bible verses or Bible references handout
- Pens/pencils and paper
- Explore It ideas handout

#### You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: Kindness







In the original film *Back to the Future* Marty McFly travels back in time. It was recently made into a West End musical, but the film was first in the cinema back in 1985 – way before any of you were born! In the second film in the series (1989) Marty travels 30 years into his future ... to 2015.

#### Ask:

How many years ago was 2015?

#### Say:

So, Marty travelled into his future, which is (insert number) years ago for us. The following clip shows what people in the 1980s thought life might be like today. Watch the clip to discuss whether they were right or not.

#### Video

Back to the Future Part 2 Hill Valley, by Universal uploaded by MovieClips (1:57)

#### **Say:**

It's difficult to know what things will be like in the future and often the only thing we can do is guess.

#### Ask:

What do you think the world will be like in 30 years' time?



#### **Say:**

Our song for this week reminds us that our hope is found in Jesus. No matter what we face, no matter how confusing life becomes, we can always be certain that God is by our side.

#### Song

'Hope' Kids worship song by Allstars Kids Club (3:50)



#### Say:

Throughout our *Explore it* sessions this month, we are going to look at five different themes linked to the Advent season. They are hope, faith, peace, joy and love. Today we are going to think about hope.



#### Ask:

- How would you describe hope?
- What kinds of things are you hoping for?

#### Say:

The Israelites had been waiting for a very special person, the Messiah, to arrive for a very long time. This person, who turned out to be Jesus, would lead them and help connect them with God. But even though they tried, no one could predict the future to know exactly when he would arrive.

#### Say:

Although we are thinking about the birth of Jesus, our Bible story today happened around 700 years before he was born. When God wanted to tell his people something important, he would use someone called a prophet and give them special messages to share with the people. Our prophet for today is Isaiah.

#### Video

Isaiah God's Story by Crossroads Kids' Club (4:02 secs)

#### Ask:

- What is a prophecy? A prophecy is when God makes a promise and tells us something important or something that is going to happen in the future.
- What was the most amazing prophecy that God told Isaiah?

#### Read:

'Now those people live in darkness.

But they will see a great light.

They live in a place that is very dark.

But a light will shine on them.

God, you will cause the nation to grow.

You will make the people happy.

And they will show their happiness to you.

It will be like the joy during harvest time.

It will be like the joy of people

taking what they have won in war.

Like the time you defeated Midian,

you will take away their heavy load.

You will take away the heavy pole from their backs.

You will take away the rod the enemy uses to punish your people.

Every boot that marched in battle will be destroyed.

Every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed.





They will be thrown into the fire.

A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For ever, Prince of Peace.

Power and peace will be in his kingdom.

It will continue to grow.

He will rule as king on David's throne and over David's kingdom.

He will make it strong,

by ruling with goodness and fair judgement.

He will rule it for ever and ever.

The Lord of heaven's armies will do this

because of his strong love for his people.'

(Isaiah 9:2-7 ICB)



- How do you think the people felt when Isaiah told them what was going to happen?
- How long did the people have to wait for Isaiah's prophecies to happen?
- Do you find it difficult to wait for things? Do you think you could wait 700 years for something?
- What do you think made the people keep believing and hoping that Isaiah's prophecy would come true?

#### Say:

The people knew that no matter how long they had to wait, God would keep his promise to them. They were used to having leaders who used fear and violence to stay in charge. God promised that King Jesus would be different.

Display the Kindness sign.

#### Ask:

In what way does Jesus show kindness as he guides his people?









Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the promise God gave Isaiah to share with the people.

Display the *Memory Verse* poster for the children and hand out the wristbands. Share the memory verse together. You may want to make up some actions with the children to help them to remember the verse.

#### Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,
Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

#### Say:

Throughout the Bible we are reminded of God's promises, and during December we will look at a different promise each day.

#### Promise jar/envelope

Explain to the children that they will be making a promise jar/envelope so that they can read one of God's promises each day of Advent in December. There are two options: the full Scripture verses (ICB) or the Bible references.

Ask the children to decorate their envelope or jar. If you don't have stickers or glitter glue, the children can draw their own decorations on paper and stick them to the jar with sticky tape.

The children then cut out all the Bible promises, fold up each one and put them into their jar/envelope. Each day of Advent they can take out a promise and share it with the people at home.



Ask the children to share some of their hopes for the future and prayers they are waiting for God to answer. When the group have shared, then ask them to promise to pray for each other over the coming week.

You may also want to share with the children that 10 December is *Human Rights Day*. This day celebrates respect for everyone, and you could use part of this reflection time to pray for those whose human rights are not being respected.



Share the following song together based around the words of Isaiah 9:6-7 and then bring the session to a close in prayer.

#### Song

'Isaiah 9:6-7' (lyric video) by The Corner Room (3:10)



Remember to send home the Explore It ideas for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



# **Explore** it

Advent: Session 1

#### A season of hope

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Isaiah 9:2-7



Aim:

To discover the message of hope found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit: Kindness



During the session your friends shared their hopes for the future and the prayers they are waiting for God to answer. Spend time praying for each member of the group.

Don't forget to take a Bible promise out of your promise jar/envelope and read it each day.



#### **Discuss**

Chat with the people at home about what life was like 30 years ago.

- What were the telephones and TVs like?
- What were the popular toys, cars or clothes?
- What music did people listen to?
- What might life be like 30 years from now?
- What are your hopes for the future?



**'Hope' Kids worship song** by Allstars Kids Club





#### Memory verse

Children & Youth

'A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

Kids Alive! Online - salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



#### A season of hope



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#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

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He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



#### Start it

Today we are going to think about the message of hope found in the words of Isaiah.



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#### Tell it

Isaiah was a prophet who shared messages from God with the people. Long before Jesus was born, Isaiah described what Jesus would be like.

Share a child-friendly version of Isaiah 9:2-7 or watch the following clip which shares the story of Isaiah.

God keeps his promises Isaiah 9 by GCFKids Eugene (2:11)

Sit in a circle, share the memory verse, and ask the group to share together:

- How did Isaiah describe Jesus?
- What does the word 'hope' mean?
- How do you think the words of Isaiah helped the people to feel hopeful about the future?
- How did Jesus show kindness as he lived his life on earth?
- How can we show kindness to others?



#### Sing It

'Christmas song' by Saddleback Kids (2:34)

**'Wonderful Lord' (official video)** by Doug Horley (3:13)

#### **=**□ Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Act out the different ways Isaiah described
   Jesus. Use the memory verse to help you.
- Name something you feel hopeful about.
- Draw a picture showing three ways you can show kindness to others this week.
- See if you can create a fun way to remember how to spell Isaiah's name.

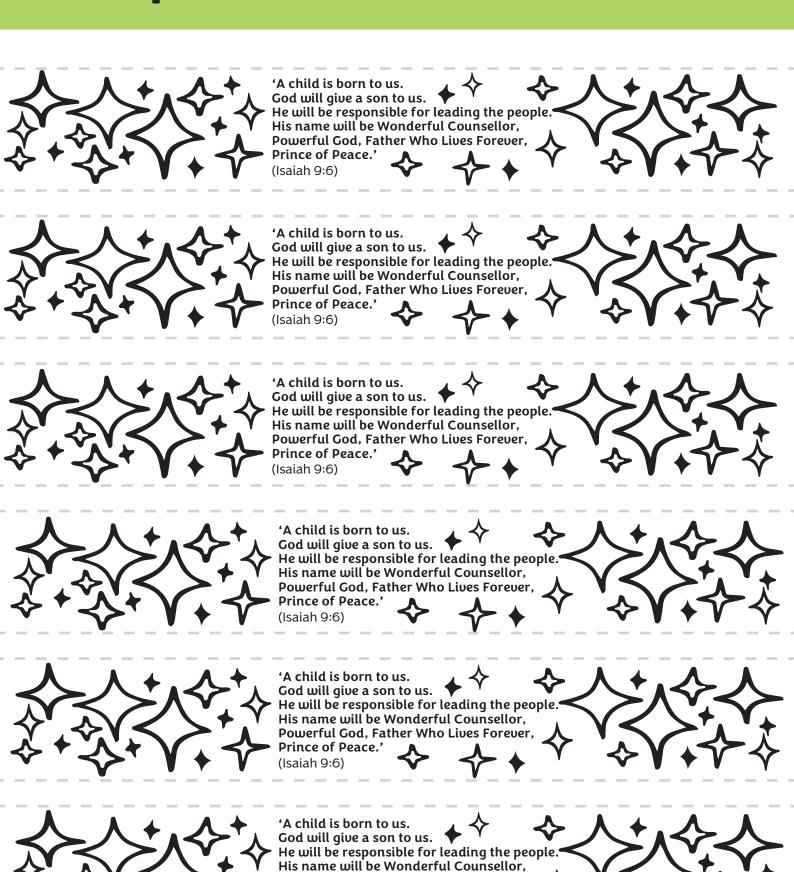


# S S

SExplore it

#### Advent Session 1: Memory Verse Wristband

# **Explore** it



Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever,

Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6)



# **Explore** it

#### Advent Session 1: Memory Verse Wristband

'A child is born to us.
God will give a son to us.
He will be responsible for leading the people.
His name will be Wonderful Counsellor,
Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever,
Prince of Peace.'
(Isaiah 9:6)

'A child is born to us.
God will give a son to us.
He will be responsible for leading the people.
His name will be Wonderful Counsellor,
Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever,
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God will give a son to us.
He will be responsible for leading the people.
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Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever,
Prince of Peace.'
(Isaiah 9:6)



# Explore it

He will be responsible for leading the 'A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. people.

Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 *ICB*)





| Romans 8:28      | Psalm 37:23-24    | Isaiah 41:13        |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Isaiah 26:3      | Proverbs 3:5-6    | Isaiah 41:10        |
| Matthew 11:28-29 | James 1:2-3       | Isaiah 54:10        |
| Exodus 14:14     | Psalm 37:4        | Philippians 4:19    |
| Psalm 9:9-10     | Jeremiah 29:11    | John 3:16           |
| John 16:33       | James 1:5         | Joshua 1:9          |
| Deuteronomy 31:8 | Mark 11:24        | Isaiah 40:29        |
| Isaiah 40:31     | Philippians 4:6-7 | 1 Corinthians 10:13 |



# SExplore it

| 'When a man's steps follow the Lord, Cod is pleased with his ways. I am holding your God. Cod is pleased with his ways. If he stumbles, he will not fall, because the Lord holds his hand.'  Psalm 37:23-24  I am the Lord your God.  I am the Lord your God.  And I tell you,  "Don't be afraid. I will help you."  Isaiah 41:13 | Trust the Lord with all your heart.  Don't depend on your own understanding.  Remember the Lord in everything you do.  And he will give you success.'  Trust the Lord unith you.  Don't be afraid, because I am with you.  Don't be afraid, because I am with you.  I will make you strong and will help you.  I will support you with my right hand that saves you.'  Isaiah 41:10 | "The mountains may disappear, of troubles. But when these things happen, you should be very happy. You know that these things are testing your faith.  And this will give you patience.'  And this will give you patience.'  And this will give you patience.'  Says the Lord who shows mercy to you.'  Says the Lord who shows mercy to you.'  Isaiah 54:10 | 'Enjoy serving the Lord. he will give you what you want.'  Psalm 37:4  'My God will use his wonderful riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need.'  Philippians 4:19 |
|---|---|--|--|
| 'When a ma' 'We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people God called, because that was his plan.'  Romans 8:28  | 'But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom.' James 1:5 And he   | ""Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest. Accept my work and learn from me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will find rest for your souls."  And this   | 'You will only need to remain calm.  The Lord will fight for you.'  Exodus 14:14   |



# Explore it

He protects them in times of trouble. The Lord defends those who suffer. Those who know the Lord trust him. He will not leave those who come to

# Psalm 9:9-10

But be brave! I have defeated the world!" Jesus said: "I told you these things so In this world you will have trouble. that you can have peace in me.

# John 16:33

He will be with you. He will not leave you 'The Lord himself will go before you. or forget you. Don't be afraid. Don't worry.

# Deuteronomy 31:8

They will walk without becoming tired.' They will run without needing rest. But the people who trust the Lord They will be able to rise up will become strong again. as an eagle in the sky.

# Isaiah 40:31

"I say this because I know what I have I plan to give you hope and a good planned for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you. I don't plan to hurt you. future.""

# Jeremiah 29:11

Remember that I commanded you to be You give peace to those who trust you.' You, Lord, give true peace. You give peace to those who depend on you.

strong and brave. So don't be afraid. The Lord your God will be with you

everywhere you go.'

# Isaiah 26:3

Joshua 1:9

The Lord gives strength

to those who are tired.

"So I tell you to ask for things in prayer. And if you believe that you have received those things, then they will be yours."" Jesus said:

# Mark 11:24

And when you pray, always give thanks. Do not worry about anything. But pray And God's peace will keep your hearts and ask God for everything you need. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.' and minds in Christ Jesus.

# Philippians 4:6-7

For God loved the world so much Sod gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, that he gave his only Son. but have eternal life.'

# **John 3:16**

Isaiah 40:29 But you can trust God. He will not let you But when you are tempted, God will also are the temptations that all people have. be tempted more than you can stand. 'The only temptations that you have Then you will be able to stand it.' give you a way to escape that to those who are weak.' He gives more power temptation.

# | Corinthians 10:13 Children & Youth

# Explore it

#### A season of faith



Bible verses:

Luke 1:26-38
The Virgin Mary



Aim:

To discover the message of faith found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit:

**Faithfulness** 



In today's session we are going to think about faith and how we can follow Mary's example of faith in our own lives.

God's people waited a long time for Jesus to come to earth. They had heard God's promise from Isaiah, and now it would come true through Mary, a young woman with a lot of faith.

Mary put her faith in God because she could trust in his faithfulness.

#### Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- A sheet of A3 coloured one side blue, and a sheet of A4 white paper, glue, scissors, thick cotton/ string, coins to draw around (2p and 10p may work well) and flesh-coloured pencils (optional)
- Explore It ideas handout

#### You will need:

- A small prize for the quiz winner (optional)
- Today's fruit sign: *Faithfulness*
- To watch Mary and Jesus Christmas Craft uploaded by Andrew Meinzinger



Start with a Christmas quiz for the children. Explain that they are trying to guess the most common answer to get the highest points. After each question, pause the clip and encourage the children to write down their answer and any points it earned. You don't need to use them all but there are ten questions in total. If possible, have a prize ready for the winner.



#### Video

Christmas top five quiz Fun Christmas Quiz by Games 4esl (6:35)



#### Say:

Today we're learning about faith, especially the faith Mary showed when she trusted in God. Our song reminds us to walk by faith, just like Mary did.

#### Song

'Walk by faith' by PCBC Kids (3:28)



#### Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the promise God made to his people. Isaiah shared the news that the Son of God would come to earth to be with us. Let's share it together.

#### Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

#### Say:

The people had to wait a really long time for that promise to come true. In our last session we learned about Isaiah who talked about Jesus 700 years before he was born. The very last book in the Old Testament was written by Malachi, and he was talking about Jesus 400 years before he was born. There are lots of good reasons why God waited as long as he did to send Jesus into the world.

Either watch the following clip with your group, or discuss two of the possible reasons God might have waited so long to keep his promise.

#### Video (option one)

Between the Old & New Testaments by Time of Grace Ministry



**Watch: 0.00-1:37** 'So maybe that's why God allowed such a gap before sending his son to be the saviour from our sins.'

#### Discuss (option two)

- Thanks to the Greek Empire, and Alexander the Great, everyone now spoke the same language - Greek.
- Thanks to the Roman Empire, there were good transport links everywhere.

#### Say:

As we discussed in the last session, waiting can be hard. Sometimes we get frustrated when we are waiting for God to answer our prayers and we want things to change.

#### Ask:

- What do you feel like when you know something is going to change but you are waiting for it to happen? Can you think of any examples?
- How do/did you react when change is on the way?

#### Say:

Before God could send his son to live on earth, he needed to make sure everything was in place. God's people waited a long time for his promise to come true. Their strong faith in God helped them to keep believing that he would keep his promises.

#### Say:

Like many other Jewish people, Mary was waiting for God to keep his promise. I wonder if she knew what a large part she would play and how much faith she would need to be part of the story.

#### Read:

'During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."

'But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

'The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob for ever. His kingdom will never end."

'Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

'The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the



Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!"

'Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.'

(Luke 1:26-38 ICB)

#### Ask:

- Gabriel came to tell Mary that her life was going to completely change. What did Gabriel say straight away to reassure Mary? (v28)
- Have you ever felt confused, like Mary, about things changing in your life?
- What did Gabriel say to Mary when he saw that she was confused? (v30)

#### Say:

God had two important messages for Mary:

- God is with you.
- Don't be afraid.

#### Ask:

- How do you think Gabriel's messages helped Mary to keep her faith in God's plan for her life?
- How does Gabriel's message help us to have a strong faith today even when things are uncertain?

#### Say:

Mary had no idea what the future would hold or how the people around her would react to her pregnancy. She put all her faith in God and promised to do exactly what he asked of her.

#### Read:

'Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.'

(Luke 1:38 ICB)

#### Say:

God does amazing things when we put our faith in him. We can trust him to look after us, no matter how many changes we face.



Display the Faithfulness sign.



Our fruit of the Spirit for today is faithfulness. We can always put our faith in God, and he will always be faithful.

#### Ask:

- In what ways was God faithful to Mary?
- How did God show that he could be trusted?
- How did Mary respond?

#### Say:

To remind us of the faithfulness of God, and the faith Mary placed in him, we're going to make a decoration for your Christmas tree.

The clip below shows you how to make a Mary and Jesus Christmas tree ornament. It is for the leader's use only but will give a clear idea how to make the ornament.

#### Video

Mary and Jesus Christmas craft uploaded by Andrew Meinzinger (7:24)



#### Sau

When Mary was facing big changes in her life, she decided to have faith in God and praise him. For our prayer today, we are going to listen to what Mary had to say in response to God.

#### Video

Christmas 2020 - The Magnificat by thisischristianaid (1:12)

To bring the session to a close, ask each child to think of one thing they would thank God for in a song of praise. When each child has shared, pray together as a group.



Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



#### Advent: Session 2

# **Explore** it

#### A season of faith

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Luke 1:26-38



Aim:

To discover the message of faith found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit: Faithfulness

> Children & Youth



Mary sang her own song to God to show how much faith she had in him. Have a look at Luke 1:46-55 and use Mary's song to help you create your own song of praise to God.



#### Create

Watch the following video and think of a way to create part of the Christmas story using animation. Ask the people at home to help you.

King's Kids at Home - Story of Mary & Gabriel (Luke 1:26-38) by King's Norwich



'Walk by Faith' by PCBC Kids



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God.

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



Kids Alive! Online - salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



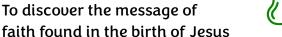
#### A season of faith



Bible verses: Luke 1:26-38



Aim: To discover the message of





Today's fruit: Faithfulness



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God.

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



#### Start it

Today we're learning about faith, especially the faith Mary showed when she trusted in God.



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#### Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Luke 1:26-38 or watch the following clip.

God's Story: Mary by Crossroads Kids' Club

**Watch 0.00-1:08** 'She trusted in God's plan even if it didn't make sense yet.'

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- What stories did Mary grow up listening to?
- Who did God send to tell Mary about Jesus? How did she react at first?

- What was Mary the first person to hear about?
- What kind of things did Mary sing about in her song of praise?



#### Sing It

'Mary's boy child' with lyrics by Christmas Songs and Carols – Love to Sing (4:01)

**'All through history' Nicky & Becky Drake** by Worship For Everyone (3:36)



Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Mary described God as powerful, merciful, just and a promise- keeper. What do these words mean? Think of an action to go with each of these descriptions of God.
- Find a friend to act out the moment when the angel appeared to Mary.
- Faithfulness is when we are loyal, reliable and consistent. Draw a picture to show what it might look like to be a faithful friend at school.
- Mary grew up listening to stories about God. Tell a friend your favourite story about Jesus.

# SALVARY & Youth

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# § Explore it

#### A season of peace



#### Bible verses:

Luke 2:8-20; John 14:27 Some shepherds hear about Jesus



#### Aim:

To discover the message of peace found in the birth of Jesus



#### Today's fruit:

Peace



#### In today's session we learn that God promises peace through Jesus.

It can be difficult to find peace in our world. People have many worries, relationships have times of disagreement and stress, and people can be unkind. God promises peace through Jesus – peace with God, in ourselves, with others and on earth.

God brought his peace to the characters in the Christmas story and reminded them that they did not need to be afraid.

#### Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper or square, white origami-sized paper see Action It
- Explore It ideas handout

#### You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: Peace
- To practise folding a paper dove, if this activity is selected



#### Sau:

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Roman Empire was powerful and ruled by Caesar Augustus. To discover more about the Roman Empire, have a go at the following quiz. See how many points you can get as you work together as a team.

#### Quiz

The Ultimate Romans Quiz by Beano.com





The Roman Empire was ruled by ruthless leaders, many of whom were willing to do anything to keep their power. That's not the kind of kingdom Jesus came to create. When Jesus was born, God let the world know that there was a new way of doing things. Let's sing the song together and discover more about the kind of kingdom Jesus came to earth to bring.

#### Song

'Go tell it' lyric video by Michael Sanders (3:39)



#### Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the promise God made to his people. Isaiah shared the news that the Son of God would come to earth to be with us. Let's share it together.

#### Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever. Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 *ICB*)

#### Ask:

- What do you think the people imagined when they heard the words 'Prince of Peace'?
- How would you describe peace to someone who had never heard of it?

#### Sau:

In the dictionary there are three definitions for peace:

- 1. a state of freedom from war or conflict
- 2. a state of quiet or calm
- 3. civil order and safety; law and order.

#### Sau:

When Jesus was born, it was during a time in Roman history called the 'Pax Romana' or 'Roman Peace'. After lots of wars, conflict and fighting, Caesar Augustus reigned over a time of peace, a peace that lasted roughly 200 years.



#### Ask:

Knowing what you do about the Romans, how do you think Caesar Augustus made that peace happen?

#### Say:

To benefit from the Pax Romana (Roman peace), you had to do what Caesar Augustus said, follow his rules, give him your taxes and treat him with the respect he felt he deserved. If you didn't do that, then you were in big trouble. Anyone who didn't follow the rules of the emperor often met a gruesome end.

#### Ask:

Does the Roman idea of peace fit with the description you gave earlier? If so, why, or why not?

#### Say:

Let's read Luke 2:8-20 and find out more about the kind of peace Jesus brought to earth.

#### Read:

'That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

'Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

"Give glory to God in heaven,

and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God."

'Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

'So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.'

(Luke 2:8-20 ICB)

#### Ask:

- What description did the angels give the shepherds to help them find Jesus (v12)?
- The shepherds would have known what Isaiah said about a 'Prince of Peace'; do you think
   Jesus was what they imagined? Explain why you think that.



In verse 14 the angels praised God together singing: 'Give glory to God in Heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God.' Unlike the people of the Rome Empire, we don't have to try to please God in order that he won't get angry or use his power to hurt us. God loves us and sent Jesus to earth for us, to bring a different kind of peace. The peace of Caesar was full of fear. The peace of God is full of love.



Display the Peace sign.

#### Say:

Today we have been learning about peace and what it might look like in our everyday lives.

#### Ask:

- What areas of your life are peaceful?
- Sometimes it can be difficult to find peace. What kinds of things steal your peace?
- Now think about your local community, city or country. What kinds of things steal peace from the world we live in?

#### Say:

Jesus came as the 'Prince of Peace' to bring us a new way to find peace. As a grownup, when he knew that his death wasn't far away, he said these words:

'I leave you peace. My peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don't let your heart be troubled. Don't be afraid.'

(John 14:27 ICB)

#### Ask:

- How is the peace of Jesus different from the peace that the world tries to give us?
- In what ways could you bring the peace of Jesus to those around you this week?

Share ideas as a group, and then ask each child to choose one way they will try and bring the peace of Jesus to those they love this week. To remind the children of the Advent theme of peace, they are going to make an origami dove. The following clip can be used with the children to help them learn how to make the dove. They can write 'Jesus brings peace' on their dove. If you feel that the origami dove is too challenging for your group, then a dove drawing tutorial is also shown below.

#### Video

How to make a paper dove symbol of peace - easy tutorials by White Origamis (4:07)



#### Video

How to draw a dove step by step - dove drawing lesson by Cutest Drawings (1:51)



#### Say:

To bring the session to a close we are going to have a time of peace and quiet.

Ask the children to find a place to sit or lay down to close their eyes. Play the music and let everyone have a moment of peace. When the music finishes, then bring the session to a close in prayer.

#### Listen

'Prince of Peace' Hillsong London Worship by Hillsong Church UK (2:56)

Ask the children to bring to the next session an item that brings them joy.



Remember to send home the Explore It ideas for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



#### Advent: Session 3

# **Explore** it

#### A season of peace

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 2:8-20; John 14:27



To discover the message of peace found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit:

Children & Youth

Peace



#### Discover

Watch the Horrible Histories clip about the Rotten Romans (especially the first two sketches).

Rotten Romans compilation by Horrible Histories

Some of the Roman emperors didn't like those who followed Jesus and went to a lot of effort to silence the Christians. Why do you think the Roman leaders saw Jesus, the Prince of Peace, as such a big threat?



#### **Discuss**

Spend time chatting with someone from home. Ask them what kind of things steal their peace. Share with them all you have discovered about Jesus bringing peace to the world.



# Song for the week

'Go tell it' lyric video by Michael Sanders



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God.

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

Remember to bring to the next session an item that brings you joy.

Kids Alive! Online - salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic - is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



#### A season of peace



Bible verses: Luke 2:8-20; John 14:27



To discover the message of peace found in the birth of Jesus



Today's fruit: Peace



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



#### Start it

Today we will hear all about the message of peace the angels brought to the shepherds.



Share a child-friendly version of Luke 2:8-20 or watch the following clip.

The story of Christmas (Jesus and the shepherds) by Saddleback Kids (2:25)

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- On the night Jesus was born, what were the shepherds doing?
- Who came to visit them and what did he say?

- How did the shepherds react when they heard the news from the angels?
- What did the angels sing?
- What did the shepherds do after they visited Jesus?



#### Sing It

'Hark! The herald angels sing' Christmas dance-along for kids by CJ & Friends (1:13)

**'Jesus Song'** by Saddleback Kids (2:45) This song tells us about the amazing thing Jesus did.



Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Create a Christmas card showing the shepherds listening to the angels sing.
- Without saying a word or making a sound, act out the story of the angels visiting the shepherds.
- Think of one thing you would love to tell the world about Jesus.
- Make up your own Christmas song to a tune you already know.



# § Explore it

#### A season of joy



#### Bible verses:

Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 2:1-2,9-11 Wise men come to visit Jesus



#### Aim:

To discover how the wise men experienced the joy of Jesus' birth



#### Today's fruit:

Joy



Today's session is all about the joy that the birth of Jesus brought into the world.

The Bible describes how the shepherds were just living their 'normal' lives when the angels appeared. The Magi, the wise men, were guided by a star but were unsure what they would find. God brings his joy, through Jesus, into the ordinary, everyday parts of our life.

The gift of Jesus brings joy into our lives not just at Christmas, but every day.

#### Each child will need:

- An item that brings them joy (brought from home)
- Joy quote handout
- Pens/pencils
- Explore It ideas handout

#### You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: Joy



Last week the children were asked to bring with them an item that brings them joy. Take time for each child to share their item and explain why it makes them feel joyful. Share your own example with the children.

Display the *Joy* sign and discuss how God grows joy in our hearts as we continue to follow him.





Our song for today is full of joy. If you find it a bit tricky, dance along instead.

#### Song

'Joy to the world' sing-along video by Pentatonix (2:32)



#### Say:

Last week we looked at the story of the shepherds. Let's watch the clip for a quick recap.

#### Video

The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the shepherds) by Saddleback Kids (2:25)

#### Read:

'Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

(Luke 2:15 *ICB*)

#### Ask:

How do you think the shepherds felt as they went to find Jesus?

#### Read:

'The shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.' [They were filled with joy.]

(Luke 2:16-20 ICB)

#### Ask:

- What did the shepherds do as soon as they had visited Jesus?
- How did the people react to the news?
- Are you like the shepherds, when you tell people about the joy of Jesus, or do you find it tricky to share your faith in him? If so, why?



There was another group that came to visit Jesus. Watch the clip to discover more about the wise men. Look out for King Herod. In our last session we discovered more about Caesar Augustus. Herod was one of his biggest supporters and the Jewish people never accepted him as king because of it. As you watch, have a think about why Herod might be so grumpy about the birth of Jesus.

#### Video

The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men) by Saddleback Kids (3:30)

#### Say:

The wise men were excited about meeting Jesus, but Herod intended to spoil it for them. Herod was a joy-stealer.

#### Ask:

- Herod didn't feel joyful about the arrival of Jesus. Why do you think that was?
- In what ways can people be joy-stealers in our life?
- Jesus came to bring joy and wants us to spread joy into the lives of others. How can we spread joy this Christmas time?



#### Ask:

- What is the difference between joy and happiness?
- How would you describe joy?

Give each child a *Joy quote* handout, adapted from a quote by Kay Warren. Read the quote together.

'Joy is the feeling of peace I have when I know that God has everything under control.

It's knowing that, because of him, everything is going to be OK and it's choosing to keep praising him when it isn't.'

#### **Discuss**

- Does this definition of joy make sense to you? If so, how?
- What is the tricky part of the definition for you?
- Earlier we talked about ways that people and situations can steal our joy and, if we're honest, how we sometimes steal joy from other people. In this definition, who do we need to focus on as our place to find joy?

Give the children time to colour and decorate their handout. Encourage them to stick up the quote at home as a reminder of what joy looks like when we follow Jesus.



Rather than just focusing on being happy, let's focus on the joy that Jesus brings into our lives – not just at Christmas, but every day.



#### Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the promise God made to his people. Isaiah shared the news that the Son of God would come to earth to be with us. Let's share it together.

#### Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

#### Say:

Jesus brought joy into the world when he was born. We can experience his joy every day of our lives.

To bring the session to a close, watch the clip that shares the message of the joy of Christmas.

#### Video

'Sounding Joy' official lyric video by Ellie Holcomb (3:50)



Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



#### Advent: Session 4

# **Explore** it

#### A season of joy

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 2:1-2,9-11



Aim:

To discover how the wise men experienced the joy of Jesus' birth



Today's fruit:

Joy



#### 66 Explore

Have another look at this definition of joy.

'Joy is the feeling of peace I have when I know that God has everything under control.

It's knowing that, because of him, everything is going to be OK and it's choosing to keep praising him when it isn't.'

How does it change how you feel about what it means to be full of joy for Jesus?



#### Cook

This is definitely an activity to try with an adult, so please don't do it on your own. Why not make some Christmas jam to spread the joy of Jesus with others. You could put a label on the jar and decorate it with a joyful verse from the Christmas story.

How to make strawberry jam Mary Berry cooks by BBC



'Joy to the world' sing-along video by Pentatonix



#### Memory verse

Children & Youth

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor. Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

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#### A season of joy



Bible verses:

Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 2:1-2.9-11



Aim:

To discover how the wise men experienced the joy of Jesus' birth



Today's fruit:
Joy



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God.

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



#### Start it

Today we are going to hear about the wise men who travelled a long way to discover the joy found in Jesus. God brings his joy, through Jesus, into the ordinary, everyday parts of our lives.



1

#### Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Matthew 2:1-2,9-11 or watch the following clip.

'The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men)' by Saddleback Kids

Watch 0.00-2:35 'But God told them to go home a different way.'

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

 Who did the wise men visit first when they arrived in Jerusalem?

- How did Herod feel about there being another king in Judea?
- How did King Herod try to trick the wise men?
- How did the wise men know how to find Jesus?
- What did the wise men give to Jesus?
- What did God warn the wise men about in a dream?



#### Sing It

'Joy to the world' Christmas carol for kids by Allstars Kids Club (2:08)

'Shine! (from the inside out)' by Nick Jackson uploaded by Tangy Crayfish (2:20)

#### =➪ Action it

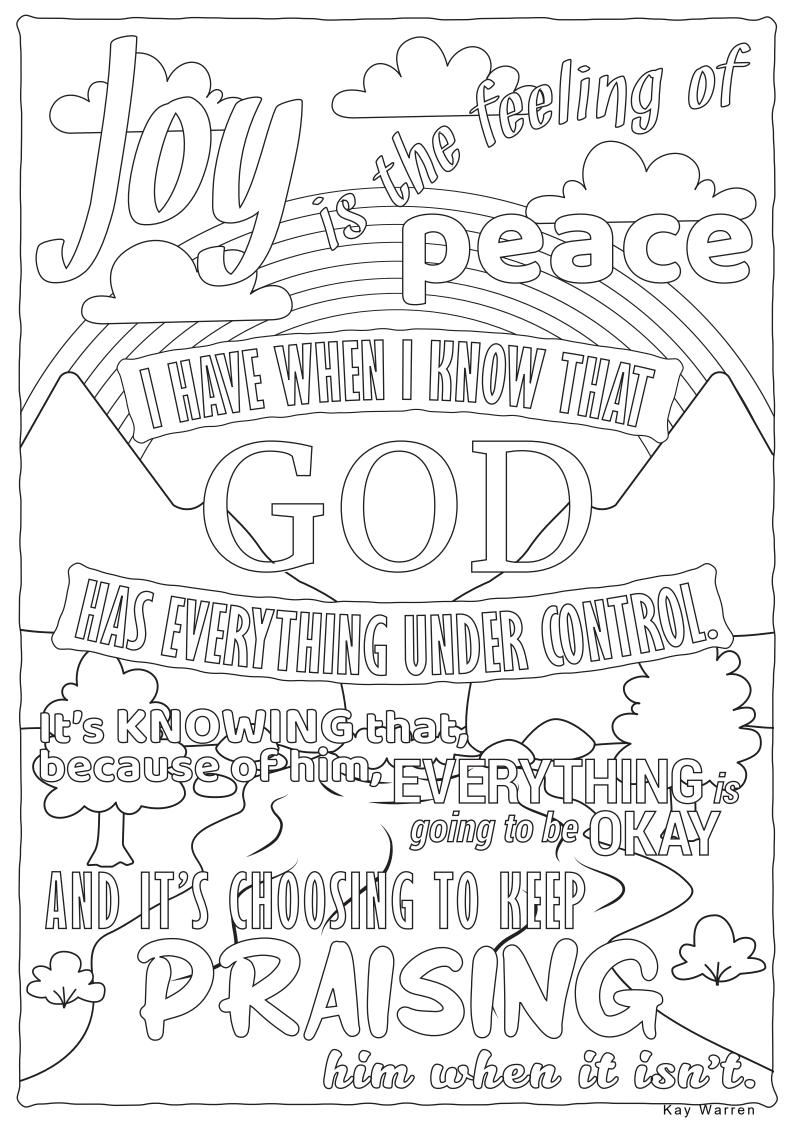
Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Make a crown to remind you of the story of the wise men.
- Draw one of the gifts the wise men gave to Jesus.
- What gift would you give to Jesus? Act it out and see if your friends can guess what it is.
- Pretend to be King Herod when he found out about Jesus and show us your best angry face.



Advent 2024 session 4





# § Explore it

#### A season of love



#### Bible verses:

Isaiah 9:6

A child will be born to us



#### Aim:

To explore how God shows his love for us



#### Today's fruit:

Love



In today's session we reflect on the themes of Advent we have shared throughout the past month.

We'll look at the Christmas story as a whole and consider the theme of God's love. As we step into the new year, we'll think about all the ways God shows his love to us.

The Christmas story is full of examples of God's love. He wants to grow the same love in our hearts.

#### Each child will need:

- Snacks for the mini-movie (optional)
- Resources to make a calendar see Action it
- Pens/pencils
- Heart-shaped paper to write on
- Explore It ideas handout

#### You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: Love



Start by giving the children the opportunity to share what they have been up to over the Christmas holidays.





In today's session we're going to finish learning about the Christmas story and start thinking about how we can take its message into the new year and beyond. Before we do that, let's learn how people across the world celebrate the new year. Watch the clip and see if you can answer the questions.

#### Video

How does the UK celebrate New Year? By Twinkl Educational Publishing (2:24)

#### Ask:

- What date is New Year's Eve? 31 December
- What date is New Year's Day? 1 January
- How do people often spend New Year's Eve? **Spending time with family and friends they** might even have a party
- What often fills the sky on New Year's Eve? Fireworks
- What traditional song is often shared on New Year's Eve? 'Auld Land Syne'
- What other traditions do some people carry out to bring in the New Year? Banging pots and pans; opening the back door and someone coming through the front door with salt, coal and bread; saying 'Happy new year!' when they see each other for the first time that year
- What is a new year's resolution? A promise to yourself to do something better in the coming year
- How are you celebrating the new year?

#### Say:

In our session today we are going to look back at the Christmas story and the Advent themes we have explored over the past month. We are also going to look forward into the new year and see how we can continue to experience God's love in (*insert year*).



#### Say

Our song for today reminds us to look for God's love in the everyday moments of life.

#### Song

'Don't forget to remember' official lyric video by Ellie Holcomb (3:38)





#### Ask:

What are the Advent themes we have talked about over the past month?

#### **Discuss**

Discuss with the children each Advent theme and which characters it made them think of.

**Session One: Hope** – We started to learn the memory verse and learned about the hope brought through God's message to the prophet Isaiah.

**Session Two: Faith** - We looked at Mary's story and the way she placed her faith and trust in God's plan for her life.

**Session Three: Peace** – We found the shepherds on the hillside as they listened to the promise from the angels that Jesus would bring peace to the world.

**Session Four: Joy** – We saw the joy of the wise men as they went to visit Jesus, the person in whom we find all our joy.

#### Say:

Today we are going to focus on the Advent theme of love. As you watch the clip, look for all the different ways God shared his love through the Christmas story. Get ready to share after the clip has finished.

This clip is longer than the ones we usually share and tells the whole Christmas story. You may want to give the children a snack or drink as if they are having a mini trip to the cinema. Once the clip has finished, then discuss with the children all the examples of God's love that they spotted.

#### Video

The Christmas story - the fully animated reading by J John (9:34)

#### Ask:

- How is God's love shown in the story of Christmas?
- What is your favourite part of the Christmas story? Explain why you love it so much.

#### Say:

This month we have spent time learning the words God gave to the prophet Isaiah. Let's share them together.





#### Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,
Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

#### Ask:

- How did the words of Isaiah's prophecy come true?





Display the Love sign.

#### Say:

God loves us so much that he sent his son to be born here on earth. He wants to grow that same love within each of us so that we can share it with others. Our song for today tells us not to forget just how much God loves us. We're going to create a calendar to help us remember that we are loved by God.

For this activity the children are going to create a calendar that reminds them of God's love. Refer to the song from the Sing it section for ideas about the different ways God shows his love to us. The children can choose their own idea, or one from the song, to create a picture of how they see God's love every day.

#### Examples from the song include:

- The sun rising each day
- Birds humming their tune
- Catching snowflakes
- Flowers growing in the garden
- Stars shining in the sky

A few options are listed below for how the calendar could be created.

#### Suggested calendar resources

- Use a pre-printed calendar

Purchase from Baker Ross or Amazon

- Attach mini calendar pads to a sheet of A4 card

Purchase from **Baker Ross** or **Amazon** 





Today we have talked about the many different ways that God shows his love to us. God wants to grow that same love in our hearts just like fruit grows on a tree. We can't grow this kind of love all by ourselves. We need the help of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss with the children the times they find it difficult to show God's love to others. What help do they need from the Holy Spirit to show God's love?

Explain that instead of new year's resolutions, they are going to write new year prayers asking God to help them love others. Give the children a heart-shaped piece of paper to write their prayer on and share them together. They can take this prayer away with them to use as part of the Explore It at Home activities.

If needed, a song is provided to use as part of the prayer time.

#### Listen

'Your love for me' official lyric video by LifeKids (3:09)



Remember to send home the Explore It ideas for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



Advent: Session 5

# **Explore** it

#### A season of love

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Isaiah 9:6



Aim:
To explore how God
shows his love for us



Today's fruit: Love

> Children & Youth



In this week's session you wrote a new year's prayer on a heart-shaped piece of paper. Put the heart up in your room and take a moment each day to ask God to help you love others.



#### Create

Ask someone at home to help you to create a 'New Year celebrations from around the world' quiz. You could even test it out on your family on New Years' Eve.



'Don't forget to remember' official lyric video by Ellie Holcomb





#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

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#### A season of love



Bible verses: Isaiah 9:6



Aim:
To explore how God
shows his love for us



Today's fruit: Love



#### Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God.

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



#### Start it

Throughout this month we have thought about the themes of Advent. We've thought about hope, faith, peace and joy, and today we'll be thinking about God's love for us.



1

Watch the following clip together that tells the Christmas story.

The Christmas story for kids Bible Stories with Sarah & Simon, by Bible Kids (3:30)

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

 Name as many characters as you can from the Christmas story.

- What is your favourite part of the Christmas story? Explain why.
- How does the Christmas story show us that God loves us?
- How can we show the love of God to people that we meet?



#### Sing It

'Don't forget to remember' official lyric video by Ellie Holcomb

'Friend of God' by Israel Houghton uploaded by Spring Harvest - Topic

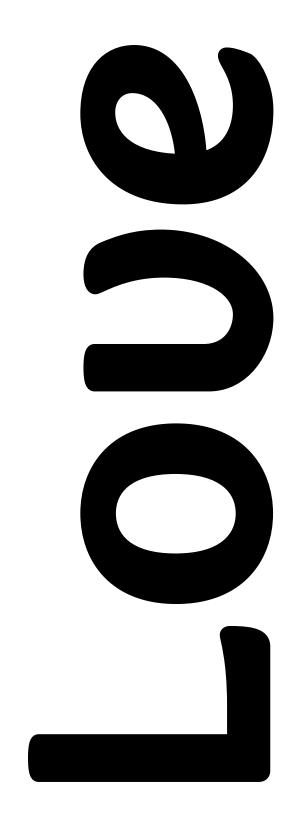


Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Cut out some colourful hearts to remind you of God's love. You could give one to the people at home.
- Draw a picture of your favourite part of the Christmas story.
- Think of three ways God shows us he loves us. There are lots of examples in the song 'Don't forget to remember'.
- Ask God to help you grow love, the fruit of the Spirit, in your heart so that you can love other people just like God loves you.







Explore it