



THINGS TO PONDER

SPECIAL DAYS

PREPARATION

- Ask members to bring photos of a special Christmas that they remember fondly - or an object if they do not have a photo
- Purchase lots and lots of candy canes and have a stopwatch (optional)
- Source strong cotton thread, needles, popcorn kernels, vegetable oil, granulated sugar, and red and green food colouring gel - see bbcgoodfood.com - you may wish to make the popcorn in advance
- Have a bowl filled with popcorn
- Print out cards with a picture of Mary and Baby Jesus on them or print and cut out the *Things to ponder* cards and provide pens
- Prepare some Christmas treats to share

Additional resource

- ❖ *Things to ponder* cards

Please be aware of allergies.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In this session we will reflect together how Mary took time to ponder on all that had happened to her and the precious gift she and the world received in her son Jesus and consider the treasures that God has given us that we can ponder on.

ACTIVITIES

SHARE

Have some festive food together and encourage members to share a particular memory with a photo of a Christmas that was special which they always remember. If members do not have a photo, perhaps they could bring an object to represent that particular Christmas.

Thought

Spend a moment thinking on the ways that God has worked in our lives and the treasures we can hold on to, ponder and remember.



GAMES

Candy cane chaos

Give each member a candy cane. The idea is that they put it in their mouth as a 'hook' and try to lift away as many canes as they can from a pile on a table.

Pass the candy cane

Organise the group into teams or play as one group with a time challenge element. Give each member a candy cane. The challenge is to pass a candy cane round the group, passing it on by only using their own candy cane. Challenge the groups to complete it three times or to beat their previous time.

MAKE

Popcorn bunting

Follow the recipe on bbcgoodfood.com how to make popcorn bunting. You may wish to prepare the popcorn in advance, so members can focus on sewing the popcorn bunting.

STORY

'Two thousand years ago a very special event happened ...' Pass the bowl of popcorn around the group and encourage members to each tell a part of the Christmas story. After each sentence, no matter how short or how long, the storyteller can take a piece of popcorn and pass the bowl on to the next member/storyteller. Let members be as creative as they wish - what did Joseph said to the innkeeper! - and gently support any who are not familiar with the story.

REFLECT

Ask members to consider something God has done for them or how he brought them through something quite difficult. Encourage members to write their thoughts on a card with a picture of Mary and Baby Jesus - you may wish to use the *Things to ponder* cards. Members can write on the front, and the back if needed.

Thought

Let us remember the times where we have seen God's love and grace towards us.



BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

📖 'So [the shepherds] hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.'

(Luke 2:16-19)

Luke 2:19 gives us a lovely example of how we should prepare for and treat the Christmas season. Picture Mary smiling as she watched her new-born sleep, remembering all that the angel Gabriel and her cousin Elizabeth had told her. As she studied his face and counted his little fingers and toes, perhaps her eyes widened in wonder as she listened to the shepherds describe how the angels lit up the night sky with their announcement about the Christ Child.

With all the excitement around her, Mary took the time to be present with her baby. Amid the visitors, the messages and the wonder, she paused to take it all in. She did not want to forget these amazing events; but she did more than simply remember them; she held them close in her heart.

Matthew later tells us of another God-inspired encounter. Imagine then the wonderment of the Magi showing up at their house years later to worship Jesus and bring him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They had journeyed far, trusting that the celestial sign they had read in the sky was correct. Surely another event to remember and contemplate on.

And then finding their son, when he was twelve, sitting among the teachers in his Father's House after frantically searching for three days at the end of the Passover festival in Jerusalem. It is here that Luke records for the second time: '*His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*' (Luke 2:51).

All these signs she kept safe in her heart. How often did Mary reflect on these things? Did they give her comfort? Did they fill her with joy? When she saw her adult son Jesus start his ministry, begin his challenging three-year journey, did these moments give her strength and courage as she watched him go. That she had seen with her own eyes how special and loved Jesus was; that God was with them.

We often do not recognise these special moments in our own lives until later - moments that were meaningful, when God's presence was near. It is often only later that we look back that we begin to treasure them. This Christmas, let us take time to notice those moments, to recognise where God is near, and to store them and ponder on them in our own hearts.





SONGS

- ♪ SASB 121 'Once in royal David's city'
[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by Kelston Stanford (3:34)
[Lyric video](#) by Reawaken Hymns (2:39)
[Congregational lyric video](#) by Chet Valley Hymns and Songs (4:16)
- ♪ 'Mary's boy child'
[Official lyric video](#) by Boney M. (4:16)
[Brass instrumental video](#) (no lyrics) by Music and More (1:59)
[Piano instrumental lyric video](#) by Raszmies (3:19)
- ♪ SASB 124 'Silent night! Holy night!
[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by Pendleton Corps (2:47)
[Official lyric video](#) feat Kristyn Getty by Christomlinmusic (4:01)
[Official lyric video](#) by Reawaken Hymns (3:47)
- ♪ SASB 147 'Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us'
[Brass instrumental lyric video](#) by Kelston Stanford (2:15)
[Lyric video](#) by Squirrel 24 (2:15)
[Lyric video](#) by St Laurence's Church Chorley (2:38)

WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Emails: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone



Family
Ministries
Having faith in the family



THINGS TO PONDER CARDS

