

## Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities, and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with family or friends via the internet.

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!**

### This week's Bible story is:

Come and See With the Shepherds

Luke 2 verses 8-20



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.

From



and



### Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

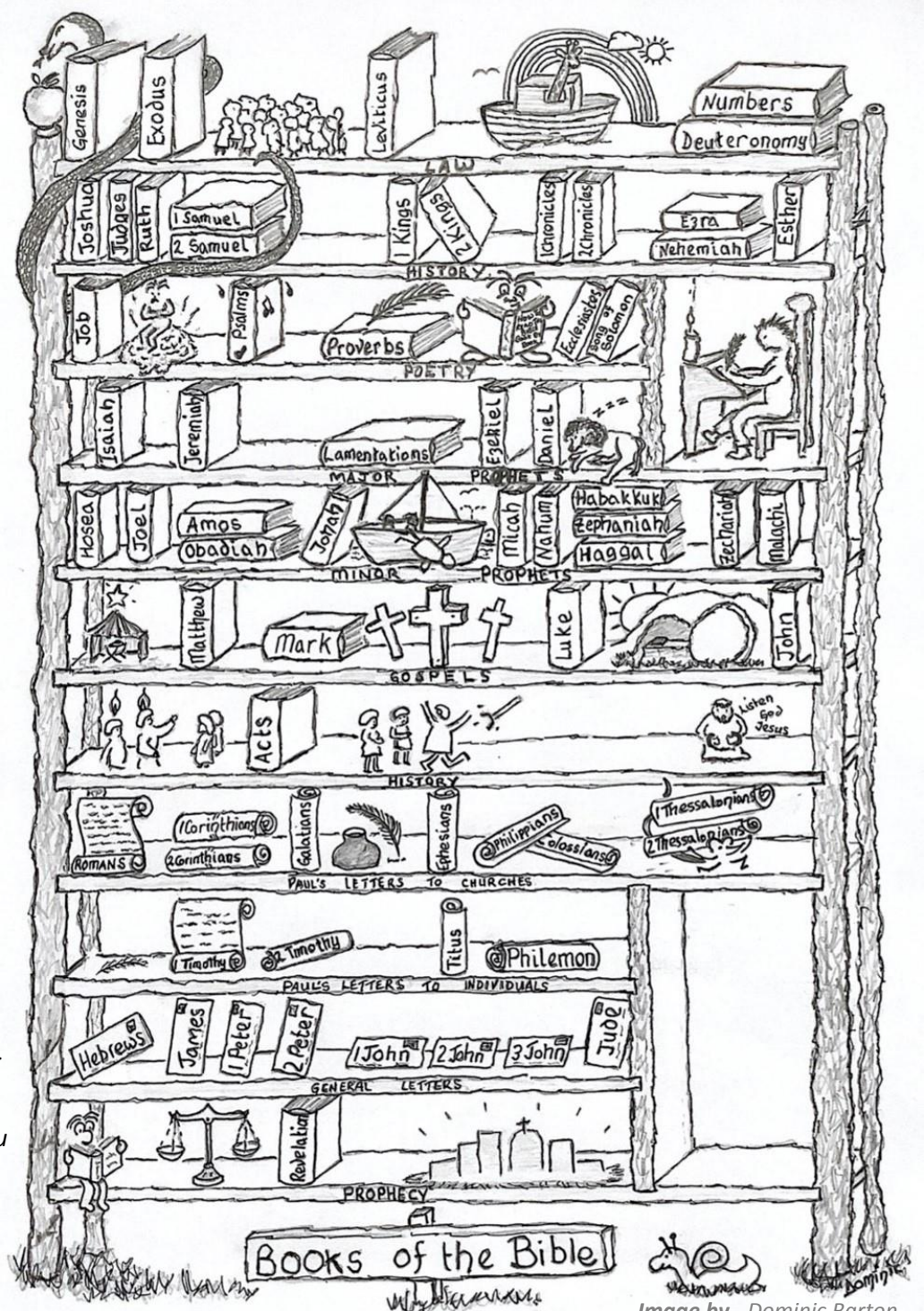
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.



### **Bible context – Luke**

The book of Luke was written by Luke the disciple around 60 AD. Luke was a Gentile and a doctor and he writes his book for all people. He wants to show that Jesus was God's son, who came to the world for everyone, Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, an extraordinary Saviour for the ordinary everyday people. This is why his book tells the stories of everyday people and their part in the Christmas story, such as the shepherds on the hillside in today's story, who are going to be the first to hear the good news about the birth of Jesus.

### **Online versions of the story**

#### **Watch and Listen**

The Light of the whole world From the Jesus Storybook Bible read by David Suchet

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fqMhLApCmA&list=PLvEb8AA7B8J\\_c3BTNbukBzaA71YyfiJTZ&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fqMhLApCmA&list=PLvEb8AA7B8J_c3BTNbukBzaA71YyfiJTZ&index=2)

The shepherds in the field's animation by 4HKReigns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvuGpwUi4mc>

Jesus and the shepherd's cartoon by Saddleback kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJIC57EvYFo>

Animation form Toddlers Beginners Bible

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0n8HBU70hfQ>

Brilliant Shepherd Sketch with boomwhackers

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

#### **Dance and Sing**

All the Angels Sing by Doug Horley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1FLUZ3ansI>

Born is the King by Hillsong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnMBUjCPaZ0>

Lets' go, Lets go by Groovy Maynard Tunes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoO3UHqjb4>

The Shepherds Song by Hearts of Saints <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8wIM8ZSovw>

The baa song (the good shepherd) by Sibling Harmony

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGPOX3vQtU8>



***The Story – Luke 2 v 8-20 (The International Children’s Bible)***

*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.*

*Scriptures quoted from the International Children’s Bible®,  
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## Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

### ***A New Story to Share Together – ‘Taking a peep at Christmas’***

*The shepherds had been startled and frightened when the angels of heaven had appeared to them on the Bethlehem hillside. But they had not hesitated; they had left their sheep and had run down into the town to find the one that had been promised.*

*Now, they were stood outside an old stable. It was dark and cold and the shepherds were having second thoughts. “The angels said it was a new king, God’s own son, who had been born and we are just poor shepherds who live on the hillside with our sheep. Who are we to come into the place where the new king has been born? We smell and we are not used to royalty. We don’t even have a gift to offer.” The shepherds decided perhaps they should just take a peep instead. After all, the angels did just say, “Go and See!”*

*The tallest shepherd was standing on tiptoes and was peeping through the gap at the top of the wall, where it meets the straw roof. “I can see a pile of straw bales,” he said, “and I can see a donkey asleep - it looks very tired! What can you see, John?”*

*John was a short, plump shepherd who was lying down on his tummy, peeping under the door of the stable. “I can see feet!” he answered. “I can see a man’s dusty feet standing next to what looks to be smaller female feet. I think she is lying down. There’s a lot of mess on the floor, and I can count about three different types of animal feet too. It sure is busy in there! What can you see Luke?”*

*Luke was the youngest shepherd and had climbed up onto the straw roof of the stable. “Well, if I just pull away a little straw I can make a small hole and I can peep down” he whispered. “Ah yes, I can see a man standing over someone who is lying on the floor. I can’t see who it is or what he is looking at, but he seems to be a little stunned”. What about you David, Shad, what can you both see?*

*David and Shad were brothers and Shad was now sitting on David’s shoulders. They were both peering through the gaps in the wooden walls of the stable, twisting their heads from side to side to get a better look at what was inside. “I can just see the woman on the floor” mumbled David into wood, his face pressed hard against it. “And I can see she is holding something” added Shad, wriggling on his brother’s shoulders to get a better look. “It looks like, yes it is, I think it’s a baby!” he shouted and threw his arms in the air in joy. This made David lose his footing and the pair of them came tumbling down on top of each other with a crash. All the shepherds stood wide eyed and absolutely still. “I think we’d better leave before someone catches us” urged David, who was rubbing his grazed elbows.*



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*As the shepherds silently made their way back round the stable to the path that would lead them up into the hills again, they were startled by the stable door opening. Light flooded out into the street and a shadow stood at the door. "Who is it?" a voice said. "Who is out there?" John stepped forward. "Just some shepherds. We are on our way back to our sheep."*

*"Why have you left them in the first place?" asked the man at the door.*

*"Erm.... erm.... because, erm..." The shepherds searched for a good excuse. Shad stepped forward: "Because an angel appeared to us and told us to come down here and see for ourselves, the new king who has been born. And, well, we came .... but we didn't want to come in so we just peeped. We have seen now, though, so we will be getting back to our sheep."*

*Joseph opened the door wider; "Please, come in," he said. "You deserve more than just a peep. Come in and see".*

*And that's just what they did. The poor, smelly simple shepherds entered the stable and saw the whole scene, just as the angels had promised.*

*Will you just take a peep this Christmas, or will you come and see?*

### **Game: Seeing a Part**

*Play a game together where you take photos of Christmassy things around the house but only show a part of the item. It could be a close up for example. Then other members of the family can try to guess what it is. This could be a good game for the Christmas day meal table.*

### **Table Top Storytelling**

*Have a little fun whilst waiting at the table this Christmas. Someone reads out the Christmas story and each of you have a part assigned, e.g. angels, Mary, Joseph, Shepherds etc. When your character name is read aloud, you start a Mexican wave which goes round the table once whilst the reading continues. Lots of fast paced and giggly fun with a familiar story.*

### **Table Top Discussions**

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going.

- *The shepherds were the first people to hear about and see the baby Jesus. I wonder why God chose shepherds?*
- *After they had seen the baby, the shepherds went from the stable and told everyone they met. They couldn't keep the good news to themselves. Who was the last person you told about Jesus?*
- *I wonder what has been your favourite part of the Christmas story over the past few weeks? And why?*
- *Is there any part of the story that we could remove and still have the whole story?*
- *What do you think Christmas means to people today? Is Jesus still relevant to people today?*



**What's in the box?**

What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.



Something with  
rainbow colours for  
God's promise



Happy face



Sheep toys



Toy to represent baby  
Jesus or the baby Jesus  
from a nativity set



## Pray Together



### **Table Prayers and Blessings**

*Stick some birthday candles into something firm such as an orange. Light a candle for each person in your family. Say their names and ask God to bless them.*

*Blow out the candles!*

*As you sit to eat, place a candle in the centre of the table and sing this prayer together*

*Light a candle, Light a candle  
Let it shine, let it shine  
Welcome baby Jesus, welcome baby Jesus  
It's Christmas time  
(Sing to the tune of Frere Jacques)*

### **Nativity Figure Prayers**

*Using a nativity set or card figures, pray with each of the characters. As you pray you can pick up and hold each figure.*

**Mary**

*Thank you for parents and the people who look after us*

**Joseph**

*Please help people who have to make difficult decisions*

**Baby Jesus**

*Thank you for sending Jesus to be with us and help us*

**Shepherds**

*Help us to tell us others the good news of Jesus' birth*

**Wise men**

*Thank you that you guide us and show us the right way*

**Angels**

*Singing with the angels 'Glory to God and peace on earth'*



## Pray Together



### Stacking Prayers

You will need some different sized stones or you could use stacking cups or building bricks.

Draw an image on each stone or draw a picture to stick on building bricks

- candle
- heart
- star
- smiley face
- Baby Jesus

Take each stone and pray as you add each one.

*Candle* - ask God to bring His light and hope to people who are finding life hard.

*Heart* - say thank you to God for all the people you love and who love you.

*Star* - pray for all those who are searching for peace in a troubled world.

*Face* - ask God to help those who are sad to feel His joy.

*Baby* - thank God for sending Jesus to be a light in the world. Pray that you will be a light in the world too.





*I wonder what the shepherds expected to find when they got to the stable?*

*I wonder whether their experience changed the shepherds?*

*I wonder who shared with you the Good News about Jesus?*



*I wonder what it felt like to gaze at the baby who was God's own child?*

*I wonder what difference the Christmas story makes to you?*





## To Do Together...



### Nativity Stacking Cups

**You will need:** Disposable cups or clean empty tins  
Coloured paper  
A doily  
Some stars  
Foil sweet wrappers

#### What you do:

Cover each cup with coloured papers and build each scene as suggested below:

**Shepherds** -green and blue paper. Draw around your finger on light brown paper to create the figures. Draw some small cloud shapes for sheep on white paper and glue them all in place. Stick a star in the sky.

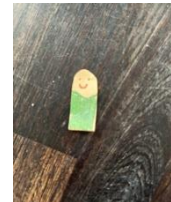
**Wise ones** – Turn the cup upside down and cover with yellow paper. Draw around your finger on light brown paper to create the figures, adding crowns for the wise ones from pieces of shiny paper. Stick a star in the sky.

**Stable**- this cup should be the right way round, and covered in brown paper. Draw around your finger on light brown paper to create the figures. Cut out a manger shape in light brown paper for the stable scene and place the baby in the manger. Add a star in the sky.

**Angel** – Turn this cup upside down and cover with white paper. Cut out a large white circle and draw the angel's face on it. Cut a semi-circle of white paper or a doily and cut this in half to create wings. You can add some glitter if you want.

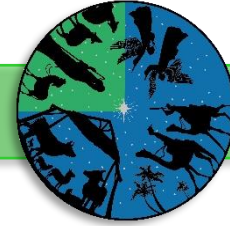
**Star** - This cup should be the right side up and covered with white and silver paper, and add a large star to the cup.

Now stack your cups on top of one another to create the story of Christmas. Can you stack them in the right order to help tell the story? Maybe retell the story to your family.





## To Do Together...



### Sneak a Peek Decoration

**You will need:** Red card  
A small amount of white paper  
A sticky star  
Some thread

#### What you do:

On white paper, cut around your finger to create three shapes and cut a little bit off the ends to make them different sizes.

Draw in faces and clothing for Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus.

Fold a piece of red card in half, draw a heart shape on it and cut it out. Making sure the fold is at the bottom of the heart.

Glue Joseph and Mary in place and then add the baby in Mary's arms. Stick a star above them.

Using a pencil, create a small hole through the folded heart shape and thread some string through it to hang your decoration up.

Open out the heart and on the other side of the heart, draw a smaller heart and cut it out to create a window, which you can peek through.

Once it is hanging, you can peek at the nativity scene through the window or you can fold it open and see the whole scene.

In our story, the shepherds sneaked and peeked at the scene in the stable. I wonder what part of the scene you can glimpse.





## To Do Together...

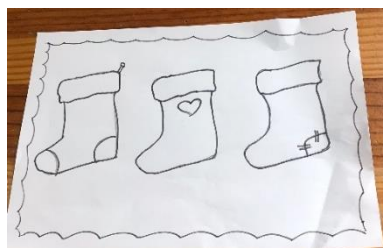
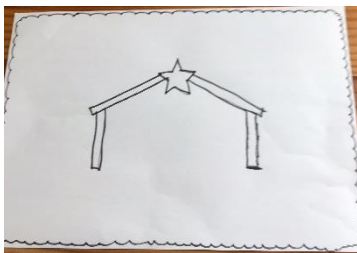


### Christmas Eve Placemats

As we get ready for our Christmas day celebration and our lunch together, why not make some placemats to brighten your table and impress those special visitors.

Decide how you want to make your placemats. You could use paints, paper, wrapping paper off-cuts, collage materials, or draw around Christmas decorations to help with the shapes you might want. Don't forget, it's not good to use chalk or pastels as the colour might brush off on Christmas outfits. And you will be putting plates on top of your mats, so they need to be as flat as possible - you don't want the brussels sprouts rolling off your plate.

Here are some ideas but I am sure you could think of lots more -



Draw a simple stable then, using paint, add the nativity characters using your fingertips and draw in the details.

Christmas stockings for Mary, Joseph and Jesus - you can write or draw your presents into the stockings, then decorate the mat.

Christmas Baubles - you can draw simple images or cut from wrapping paper or magazines.



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@ home

# Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way Challenge  
this time is...**

*At Home:*

*It's nearly Christmas – I hope you're getting excited! When you unwrap your presents, remember to say thank you to God for the person who gave them to you, and to remember to thank that person too! Even the auntie who knitted you those terrible socks!*

*Outside:*

*The shepherds would live outside with their sheep every day and every night, making sure they were safe. It was a very hard life. They were on the edges of society. Lots of people live on the edges of society and spend their days and nights living outdoors. Whenever you see someone living rough, remember to say a prayer that God will protect them. Try to remember that they are as precious to God as you are.*



*For Others:*

*Just praying is not enough, remember that God calls us to be part of the answer to our prayers. Can you donate some money or some warm clothing or food or blankets to a night shelter for those people who are homeless?*



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### **Adventurers Go!**

*You've shared together, now share with us!*

*Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.*

*Email your photos to: [lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk)  
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.*

*Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>*

*Remember you can find more resources on our website:  
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>*

*And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.*

*Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.*



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