

Café Church

Advent resources

Introduction

Café Church is a form of church that is on the increase, with it's emphasis on people coming together a little more informally, often around tables with hospitality at its centre. By it's nature, it offers a real opportunity to be intergenerational, enabling people in family groups or mixed ages to meet together and explore together around a table. It is still lead 'from the front' but the emphasis is on keeping the exploration based in the small groups on the tables and resist the urge to have tables show and tell to the rest of the room.

Some things to consider:

Be aware of the space around the tables. Do they allow for ease of movement as well as everyone being able to hear?

Be aware of offering an array of foods that cater for all dietary needs. As you won't know in advance you may need to consider offering a selection and labelling foods. Responsibility remains with the individuals, not the church, on this occasion. When do you want the food? It could be as people arrive, almost like a breakfast, or perhaps ongoing throughout the service. Whichever works best with your church and layout.

Arrivals: People may be excited or anxious about meeting around tables with a new format, consider how you can enable and reassure people. Have gentle music playing as people arrive. Provide something on tables to get people engaged and started on the theme as they eat.

This Café Church will be looking at four Bible verses, each table needs to have one of the verses on their table. If you have a small group of people attending then you could give each group one Bible verse. If you have many people attending you may need to give several tables the same Bible verse.



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Gathering Prayer

Call to worship

Songs

All the Angels Sing

No ordinary baby

Activity

Sort Christmas in historical order

Bible exploration

Interactive Bible reading

Micah 5: 2

Isaiah 7: 14

Isaiah 9: 1

Isaiah 9: 6

Wondering question:

I wonder what your prophecies for 2026 might be?

Creative response:

Paper baubles

Prayer response

Hang baubles on tree and a spoken prayer

Song

Joy to the world

Blessing



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Gathering Prayer

Thank you God for bringing us together today. Open our ears, our minds and our hearts to your love. Help us to get excited about your Jesus story.

Amen

Invite people to help themselves to a tea/ coffee/ squash while pondering the main question for the session: **I wonder what your prophecies for 2026 might be?**

When ready draw everyone together for a responsive call to worship before we sing.

Responsive call to worship

We come before you Lord with our hearts open mind

Loving Father,

We come before you now.

We come before you Lord with ears ready to listen

Loving Father,

We come before you now.

We come before you Lord with our mouths ready to respond

Loving Father,

We come before you now.

We come before you now Lord with our minds ready to learn

Loving Father,

We come before you now.

Lord we come before you now

Loving Father,

We come before you now.



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Songs:

All the Angels Sing by Duggie Dug Dug

<https://youtu.be/1j9VXnHC-u0?si=PMCYkr5Ogbd4AZHo>

No ordinary baby: by Doug Horley

<https://youtu.be/2zPU582wUHU?si=ocsRWuv6l9xOs8vQ>

Both videos contains Makaton actions for those gathered to join in with.



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Activity:

Include a Christmas quiz for tables to complete as teams. This will work as an introduction into the theme and Bible verses and will allow those sitting together to get to know one another better. Allow a few minutes to explain how they will complete the quiz as a team and time to give answers at the end of each round. The quiz focuses on ordering the date of Christmas traditions and media, exploring the idea that the readings are from different periods of the bible. If time does not allow for you to do all five rounds then chose something from each round and ask the tables to order them in date order, earliest to latest.

- For each category, provide each team with the four answer cards. (Write the titles or items only – the dates are provided for the person leading the quiz, allowing them to easily give correct answers.) They must work as a team to place the answers in the correct chronological order; oldest, to most recent. *You could write the answers on plain paper or card. Alternatively, print out copies of the festive answer cards and write the answers on them.*
- When each team has ordered their cards, ask them to sit back or take hands off the tables whilst giving the answers.
- For each new round, collect in used cards and give the team four new cards relating to the new round's category.
- Teams score a point for getting the correct order. The team with the most points after the rounds have been completed, wins.

You could decide to create your own rounds, based on categories your context are particularly interested in, or decide to use the ones provided.



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Activity:

Round 1 – Films

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
Home Alone (1990)
Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)
Polar Express (2004)

Round 2 – Decorations

Nativity scene (1223)
Decorated Christmas tree (1510)
Tinsel (1610)
Christmas Crackers (1847)

Round 3 – Christmas Carols

While Shepherds Watched (1703)
Hark the Herald (1739)
Silent Night (1818)
O Holy Night (1843)

Round 4 – Foods

Mince Pies (Middle Ages)
Christmas Cake (16th Century)
Candy Canes (1670)
Christmas Pudding (1845)

Round 5 – Christmas Songs

Jingle Bells (1857)
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (1964)
Last Christmas (1984)
All I Want For Christmas (1994)



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Bible exploration

Interactive Bible reading

Ensure each table has one of the Bible verses, you may need to double up. Number them one to four. Each table is to read out the verses in numerical order. This should highlight the prophecy of Jesus' birth through the Old Testament. Follow the readings with the wondering questions. After an agreed time gather everyone back and ask for feedback, focusing mainly on the last question in bold.

1) *Micha 5:2* - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, are one of the smallest towns in Judah. But from you will come one who will rule Israel for me. He comes from very old times"

2) *Isaiah 7: 14* -You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty.

3) *Isaiah 9: 1* - The land of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was once disgraced, but the future will bring honour to this region, from the Mediterranean eastwards to the land on the other side of the Jordan, and even to Galilee itself, where the foreigners live.

4) *Isaiah 9: 6* - A child is born to us!

A son is given to us!

And he will be our ruler.

He will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor",

"Mighty God", "Eternal Father",

"Prince of Peace".

Wondering questions

- I wonder why God chose to reveal Jesus through prophecy instead of revealing everything at once?
- I wonder how the prophets felt when they spoke words about someone they had never met?
- If we were told we had to wait 200 years for something would we be inclined to wait? Or bother?
- I wonder when the prophecy of the 2nd coming will be revealed?
- What promises are you waiting on God for?
- **I wonder what your prophecies for 2026 might be? – bring out this as a main question for all to respond to after chat at the table.**



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Creative response:

Christmas Paper Baubles.

You will need:

- Christmas paper, newspaper, plain paper
- A staple or split pins
- 20cm piece of String
- A ruler
- Scissors



What you do:

You need to make two of these ornaments, one to take home and one to hang on the church's Christmas tree.

Each ornament will use seven strips. Cut an A4 sheet into seven strips from the short end.

Then lay them out in pairs. Keep two at the original length, then cut two cm of the next pair, four cm off the following pair and six cm's off the last strip.

Lay them out in this order and write on them a hope for the future for the church or a favourite verse or a one line prayer.



Then gather them up in that order and staple or use a split pin to join them together.



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Prayer response

Hang the bauble that was made earlier onto either a church Christmas tree or one to be used for this service. Play some quiet music as people bring their baubles up. Once this has been done use the following words:

Father of love, thank you for Jesus.

Thank you for this time of celebration.

Help us to look towards the future with hope and promise.

Now using your own words pray for the world, the community, the families and people present. You could have a responsive reply between each prayer, such as:

Father God

Bring your light

Finish with **Amen**.



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Song: Joy to the world by Christmas songs and carols
<https://youtu.be/30OaM6b48k8?si=xXbiuu3AK77u-vhi>

Blessing using Makaton

https://youtu.be/vRXwEtx_d2Y?si=2Khw2ZLueWPriyB4

The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and give you peace
Amen



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Other resources

Open table faith - www.opentablefaith.com

Intergenerate UK! - www.intergenerate.org

TheResourceHub - <https://www.theresourcehub.co.uk/cafe-church>

