

Youth Service

Advent resources

Sample service outline

Introduction

Bible passages

Hot seating Bible exploration

Questions

Hot seating prayers

Visio Devina prayers

Art work

Carols

Other resources



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A service outline - this is just an example, a framework of what a youth service could look like. The aim is to make it inclusive and interactive.

Call to worship (could be a Bible verse, prayer or quote you like)

Song

Prayer (Prayers which say thank you, sorry and please to God)

Song

Activity/ visual illustration (this could be in the form of a video clip or using items to visually demonstrate an idea. Holy Trinity could be depicted using a torch—Torch is God, bulb is Jesus and the batteries are the Holy Spirit)

Bible readings

Talk/ reflection (to include some discussion questions for people to do in groups or pairs)

Feedback

Song

Prayers (for all to join in, may be that all have a tag and a prayer written on it and then brought up and hung on a cross)

Lords Prayer

Song

Blessing (some words which describe God blessing everyone for the week ahead)



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Introduction:

This resource is to support young people (or leaders) in preparing and delivering a Christmas Intergeneration Service (led by young people for the whole family of God). It leads the congregation through passages from the gospels that explore the Christmas story from different perspectives of the characters in the story (Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Astrologers and Herod). In their preparation young people will be encouraged to choose which characters they want to include in the service, read the relevant scriptures and do a little research. They would then prepare to be those characters in the service using a hot seating method. It is important that they practice this part, using role play and improvisation questions to help prepare. We have also offered examples and suggestions for all the other elements of the service including, activities, prayers, music, hymns and more.

Consider offering something to take away whether it's a physical item to remind them of the theme of the session or a question to further their thinking when they go home.



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Bible passages: This is where you can find the description of the birth of Jesus and subsequent visitors within the two of the gospels Matthew and Luke. Mark and John describe the foretelling of Jesus.

Matthew:

Chapter 1: 18 to 25

Chapter 2: 1 to 23

Mark:

Chapter 1: 1 to 8

Luke:

Chapter 1: 26 to 38

Chapter 2: 1 to 20

John:

Chapter 1: 1 to 18



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Hot Seating

A character is questioned by people in the congregation about their background, behaviour and motivation. The method can be used for exploring any character from the Christmas Story, (Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, the Astrologers, Herod, the Inn Keeper).

The young person sits on a chair in front of the congregation. You could have someone available to begin the questioning, with some prompt questions.

Before the service, give the young people a chance to research their character - you may be surprised at how much detail they can add from their own imaginations. Consider all aspects of the character, their feelings, where they are from, who is part of their family, etc.

Mary – feelings about being chosen, fears, faith.

Joseph – doubts, responsibility, trust in God.

Shepherds – shock of the angels, amazement at the baby.

Astrologers – long journey, meaning of gifts.

Angel Gabriel – delivering God's message.

Innkeeper – decision-making, perspective on the Holy Family.

Herod – fear, power, jealousy.

It would be good to have some questions ready to share with the person who has asked a question, here are some ideas:

Mary, how did you feel when the angel first appeared to you?

You could respond with "what is the best present you have ever had?"

Joseph, did you ever think about walking away? What kept you faithful?

You could respond with "what is the hardest decision have you had to make?"

Shepherd, why do you think God chose you for this announcement?

You could respond with "What is your favourite thing about Christmas?"

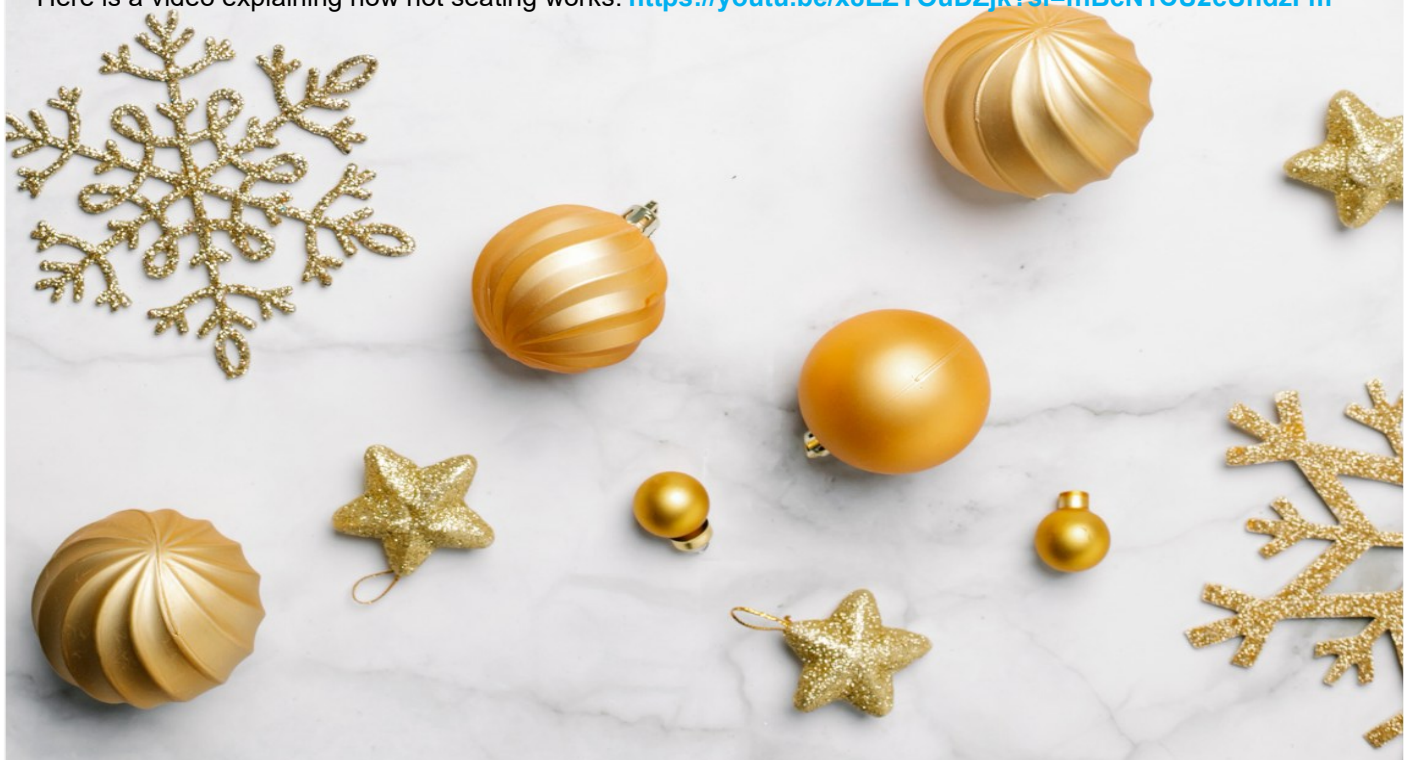
Astrologers, what made you leave everything to follow a star?

You could respond with "How far would you travel to see someone special?"

Innkeeper, do you regret not having space for Mary and Joseph?

You could respond with "What do you do to prepare for guests at this time of year?"

Here is a video explaining how hot seating works. <https://youtu.be/x8EZYOuDJjk?si=fnBcN1CU2cUhdzFm>



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Hot seating prayers

Similar to a hot seating exercise but whilst praying. Gather the congregation so they are near a chair. Invite them to sit silently in prayer (you might want to read a short reflective scripture and open the prayer time). Explain that anyone can then come and sit on the prayer chair and speak out loud a sentence or two of prayer, followed by the next person and so on. Once you feel the time is appropriate, you sit on the chair and bring the time to a conclusion with a final prayer.



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Visio Devina

Visio Divina is translated as “divine seeing”. It is related to the prayer form Lectio Divina (divine reading), but instead of Scripture, we use visual elements to help us engage with God and prayer. Images could include works of art, stained glass windows, icons, images in nature. Any image that connects with the reading being used in worship. It’s usually a piece of art that depicts the Bible passage or the theme, allowing people to reflect and wonder about the passage through art and lead to prayer.

The image could be put on the screen or given to individuals to hold and look at (and take home with them). Sometimes two images can be used, perhaps a modern and an ancient depiction alongside each other. There are some art pieces included in this resource.

It is usually followed by some wondering questions such as:

- What do you notice in the image?
- Where are you in the image?
- What does it say to you about God/ God’s Kingdom?



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Art Suggestions

Matthew

The Nativity by Gari Melchers (1891)



Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh (1889)



Mark

Holy Family by Raphael (1518)

Jesus and John are shown in the painting; Mark's gospel begins with them when they are older.



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Painted staircase by Xomatok (2021)

Available at: [Advent, Day 8: Prepare Ye the Way – Art & Theology](#)



Luke

Adoration of the Shepherds by Giorgione (1505-1510)



Angel of the North by Anthony Gormley (1998)



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John

Christ of St John of the Cross by Salvador Dali (1951)



The Light of the World by William Holman Hunt (1904)



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Song Suggestions

Here are some song suggestions, for the different character groups explored together.

Mary

The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy – Songs of Praise (Femi Ajayi)

<https://youtu.be/kOiwABmhcU?si=tVLjdlqK65FKQxYN>

Mary Did You Know (Life in 3D)

<https://youtu.be/01tZP5mODhg?si=ZZsh-wrVoWCQgSPd>

Shepherds

O Sleeping Shepherds - Christian Youth Channel

https://youtu.be/mEiiuKrRUwY?si=Cos_KaQLAG9MW-M8

While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night – Christmas Carols from Kings 2021 (Julian)

<https://youtu.be/1GHRNhcqse8?si=HUgTRNQ5D0gtvZos>

Angels

It was on a Starry Night (Loaf)

<https://youtu.be/gbEHFB6WLx4?si=BGVi60INAuJchacr>

Ding Dong by Rend Collective (Extreme Puppets)

<https://youtu.be/ARlqzhy8FK0?si=ILpkCUJcIJE4KDW5>

Wise Men

We Three Kings (Reawaken Hymns)

<https://youtu.be/E0BJonwPCds?si=Osxds4rPZ3pVJnt8>

Wise Men Seeking Jesus (The Treasure Chest by David Matthews)

<https://youtu.be/IM-HzKUEvyY?si=-qcKzXBINgX6vKE4>



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Further resources:

Thrive youth ministries <https://www.thriveym.org.uk/simple-ways-integrate-young-people/>

Roots on the web: <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/about-roots/children-youth-resources>

