

FaithTalk at Christmas

Getting Started:

- ❖ Think about where you are
(what else is going on locally at Christmas? How can you not clash, or better still tie in? what isn't already going on? what groups might be particularly grateful for something for them?)
- ❖ and who you've got
(what are the skills and gifts in your congregation? What time do you have available? are there semi-attached people who might want to be involved?)
- ❖ and who you can partner with
(other local churches / schools / groups that use your buildings?)
- ❖ Plan your event: remember safeguarding and risk assessments and insurance...
- ❖ Register your event at <https://www.shineyourlight.org.uk/registration/>
- ❖ Invite! (word of mouth invitations are always best)
- ❖ Have a great time, make it free, include generous refreshments; remember that alcohol can be welcoming but it can also exclude; let your joy spill over!
- ❖ BE PREPARED - if you're doing a "special service" make sure your "normal services" are relevant for new people: if you do attract enquirers they shouldn't have too much of a shock!
- ❖ Be ready to invite people further, when they ask 'what next?' What can they join in with in January? (see below)
- ❖ Take photos and share with us, to encourage 2026!

Plan Your Event: Suggestions and Resources

- Christingle service
- Christmas jumper service
- Open the Church building often through the Advent and Christmas season (have people and things there that are interesting and accessible)
- Link into the local Churches Together Group
- Pop-up characters at Christmas; indoors or outdoors
- Christmas Tree Festival
- Take courage from the disciples starting the church all those years ago to be in tune with modern day
- Beer Carols in the local pub with invites to church Christmas activities.
- Link into the town light switch-on event - open the Church building and organise children's activities
- Hold coffee and mince pies before carols, and then invite visitors to stay and sing carols

Window advent calendar trail (a picture in the front window of houses on / on the way to any high street. Families can pick up a sheet from local church(es)

and tick them off as they find them. Connect those playing with other events going on). *Contact Lindsey for more info / guides*

- Sheep trail around the local neighbourhood
- Angel trail around the local neighbourhood
- Nativity scene outside with life size characters
- Christmas Eve morning service has worked well, particularly for families going elsewhere for Christmas Day
- Outside carols late afternoon/early evening; free mince pies and warm fruit juice
- QR code trails - places such as scripture union have some ready made:
- Nativity scenes around the church
- Encouraging interaction with visitors as part of the Nativity Story. Ordinary people in extra-ordinary times - people's thoughts, feelings, experiences
- Outdoor Carols at the local shops.
- Carol flash mob in a local supermarket – great surprise to local shoppers as they realise what's going on! (let the supermarket know, but don't advertise widely: it will spoil the surprise!)
- Utilising any outdoor windows of the church with Christmas scenes/ nativities/ could build up like an Advent Calendar
- FAITH is the business of Church. Let's let local congregations spend time encouraging each other to feel comfortable talking about their faith and inviting people into Church - this was a point well made in our group and resonated with all of us.
- Christmas craft afternoon/evening (eg wreath making). Worth deciding if aimed at adults, children or both. This year we plan to include a gospel message, having held a number of gospel & testimony evenings over the summer.
- a joint community event on the first Sunday in advent held on our grass area and using our church hall where craft activities and food was served . We were able to publicise our Christmas services . It was an opportunity to get people into our building
- Nativity 'Face in the Hole' (made by a men's shed group)
 - could be a great link for churches who have a nursery on site (as well as everyone else!)
- Bible Society produce each year a Pop-Up Nativity script for one leader and we've invited children to come dressed as any nativity character and they are included in the story as the narrator tells it. The Bible Society provide a PowerPoint and we insert carols:
https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/content/get_involved/christmas/2016/pop_up_nativity/Well_good_nativity_script.pdf
- Christmas meal for the elderly or isolated with carols at the end.

- knitted angels with a prayer on paper are hung on church fences for community to take - often discussed on local social media
- good old carol singing around the streets of our neighbourhoods
- carols in the car park - well received and attracted quite a bit of interest from local residents.
- Comedy and Carols (cf Braintree Essex)
- We used to give out a Russian nativity doll to a different family each week during advent. They photograph the doll in different locations and stick it on the church social media. The idea is it gives people the opportunity to think about the Christmas story (it could work with other sets / figures / characters from the story)
- Toy Services or shoebox appeals to engage the local community in being generous and making a difference.
- A Daily Devotional for Advent: <https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/small-wonder-a-christmas-devotional-journey/>
- Give away bags with knitted angel a little message of hope and a chocolate - free to take / give out to neighbours / shoppers (could include QR code to services /
- Take out a stall at the Christmas Market and set up a dressing-up rail and some hay bales and let people dress up and take pictures of themselves; have conversations about the characters and what the story might have meant to them (and to us now):
https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/372945/Get_in_the.aspx
- Invite a donkey to a service 😊
- local Churches Together services and activities; could be made for different age groups)
- Remember those who find Christmas difficult and importance of connecting appropriately with them:

What next?

- The Bible Course <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-bible-course>
- Christianity Explored <https://www.christianityexplored.org/courses/christianity-explored/>
- The Start Course <https://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/store/p/the-local-course-bpabw>
- Book Clubs: run a 'normal' style book club, but with a gospel; have a WhatsApp group for the club; see https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/432102/The_Great_Gospel.aspx for attractive giveaway gospels and ideas

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