



Church of Ireland Children's Ministry

ADVENT NEWSLETTER

Advent Prayer Bags from Flame Creative Ministries

For each bag you will need:
A prayer sheet (click here to print <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pyhOfOQF1V-14CABhJWB2KQFgm5DJP4T/view>), a felt or paper star, a felt or paper heart, a pipe cleaner, a baby Jesus stone, a tea light candle, an organza drawstring bag (I used purple bags to reflect the liturgical season.)

First paint your baby Jesus stones. I used white and brown paint and a black paint marker (but a sharpie would probably work too). I also covered the finished painting with glossy mod podge. Varnish would work too, but this part isn't strictly necessary!

Next, fill your bags with one of each item and give them out! Keep in touch with your families if you can and see how the bags are working out :-)



The contents of the prayer sheet are above right:

Advent Prayer Bags

Prepare for Christmas with some special Advent prayers.

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.

For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.
Isaiah 9:2

Hope

What do you hope for?

Light the candle and ask God to bring His light and hope to people who are finding life hard.



Love

Who do you love?

Hold the heart and say thank you to God for all the people you love and who love you.



Joy

What brings you joy?

Bend the pipe cleaner into a symbol for something that makes you happy. Ask God to help those who are sad to feel His joy.



Peace

The wise men followed the star to search for Jesus. Hold the star and pray for all those who are searching for peace in a troubled world.



Christmas Day

Make a special bed for your baby Jesus stone to lie in and light your candle again. Thank God for sending Jesus to be a light in the darkness and trouble of the world. Pray that you will be a light in the darkness too.



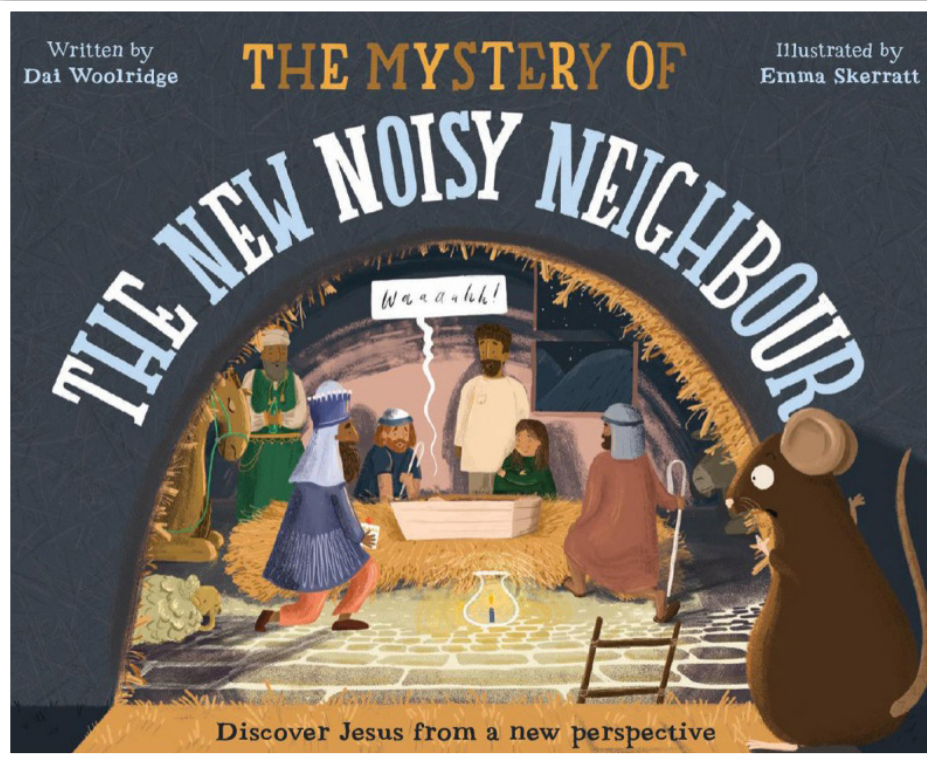
The Advent Bags are not the only resources from Flame Creative Ministries that we would recommend. Our Children's Ministry Network Representative from Derry and Raphoe, Kirsty Lynch, really recommends the Jesse Tree activities and prayers, one for every day of Advent:

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-jesse-tree-printable-pictures.html>





The Mystery of the New Noisy Neighbour



Last year we were blessed with the Bible Society's Pop up Nativity complete with script, powerpoint and interactive sections to the Nativity play. This year our Down and Dromore Children's Ministry Network Representative, Julie Currie has pointed us in the direction of more amazing Bible Society Resources.

They are simply lovely and they explore the well known story from the perspective of a cheese eating, mystery solving mouse. There's a great film and a nativity script that takes you on a journey to discover who Jesus really is: The mystery of the new noisy neighbour [Click Here](#)

The Reverse Advent Calendar

Kirsty also emphasised the popular practise of the reverse Advent Calendar where parishes or families put something into a box every day of Advent and then donate it to a worthy cause such as a Food Bank or a Refuge. It brings a shift in thinking that delights in giving as well as receiving.



Story & Craft Ideas



Nativity Story Stones



Concertina Angels



Fuzzy Felt Nativity

Lynn Storey has shared some of her prep for Advent and Christmas this year. Take a look!



The Wise Men

Rev Elaine Murray, who is the Children's Ministry Network Representative for Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocese shared a lovely tradition of putting the Wise Men at the back of the Church and slowly moving them closer to the crib where they arrive in time to worship Jesus. You can use the wise men from the Nativity scene, invite the children to paint Wise Men Peg dolls during Sunday Club and use a different three each week or you can opt to use knitted Wise Men, especially if it involves recruiting avid knitters from the congregation to help! You can add all sorts of adventures that they have on their journey. They can get trapped in a pew or have to scale down from a window or fall into the font! But nothing will stop them from following the star to bow down and worship their King.



This year's Church of England Christmas Resource also encourages this and adds an idea for families to hide a star in different parts of the house, encourage young children to find it and then place the Wise Men near it to show they are following the star. Then on Epiphany Sunday place the star over the Stable to show that the Wise Men's Journey has come to an end. For more ideas in the Follow the Star pack see: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/Star%20activities%20tidied_Christmas%20to%20Epiphany_LAYOUT.pdf



Godventure

And to finish off this year's recommendations, we can't help but point you in the direction of Victoria Beech from God Venture who was our keynote speaker at Building Blocks this year. Find GodVenture on Facebook and glean from the multiple ideas posted there. We love her '30 ways to Celebrate Jesus this Christmas' campaign. She is currently on post #17. Every



idea is simple, creative and full of possibilities. Choose two or three to

do with the children in your care this Advent.

Advent Blessing

Christ be in our eyes and in our looking,
Christ be in our ears and in our listening,
Christ be in our hands and in our making,
Christ be in our minds and in our understanding,
Christ be in our hearts and in our loving,
Christ be in this season and in our joyful waiting.

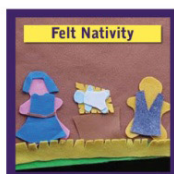
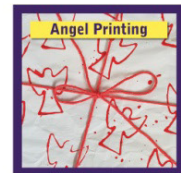
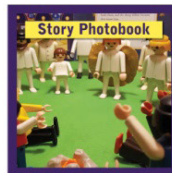
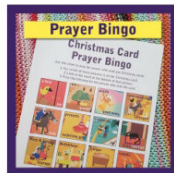


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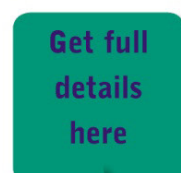
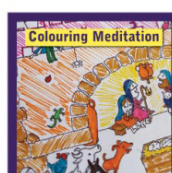
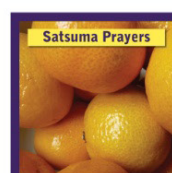
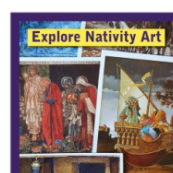
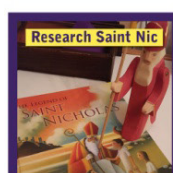
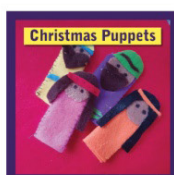
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sss@ireland.anglican.org

We'll leave you with a sample from a Scripture Union book that provides the first few pages of their 'More Christmas Unwrapped' Resource. In this alone, you have some excellent All Age Christmas talks: <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/More%20Christmas%20Wrapped%20up%209781844272617.pdf>



30 ways to celebrate JESUS at Christmas



www.GodVenture.co.uk

