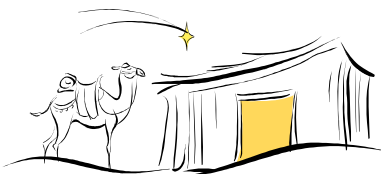




# Our Top Twenty Ideas for a Really Creative Christmas in RE!!



Kathryn Wright  
Ali Ranson  
Diocesan RE Advisers



## 1. Living Graphs

Consider the feelings of different characters in the accounts of Jesus' birth, particularly Mary and Joseph. Plot how happy or sad they were (on a scale on the x axis) against time (the events of the story on the y axis). Compare different characters on the graph.

## 2. The nativity as a film

Show a couple of clips from nativity films or animations. Talk about film stars and actors that the children know. Tell them that they are going to imagine that the nativity is being made into a film. They have to decide what to call the film (think concepts!), who will play the different characters, where they might locate it... they might even think about soundtracks. They could design a poster advertising the film.



## 3. Multi Sensory

Tell the story through smells only or tastes or touch; really gets the children thinking about what it would have been like!! If you can have some of the smells to hand- even better!!

## 4. Angels

Explore children's ideas of angels- colour, shape, size, gender etc! Explore images and pictures of angels. Also look at portrayal of angels in poetry, film and music as well as in the nativity accounts. What does the word angel mean? When did the angels appear in

the nativity accounts? Why did they appear at this time? Create a class collage of angels.

## 5. Exploring the accounts

Give the children in groups one of the biblical accounts of the birth of Jesus.

Ask them to write down anything they think is missing and to share this with the class.

Do we get a better picture if we read both accounts? Why are they different?

Give the children a selection of Christmas cards (of the religious variety!) and ask them to identify things that are not recorded in the biblical accounts. Why do they think these things have been added?

## 6. Dance a song

Look at the word of the Magnificat or Benedictus in Luke's gospel ( Luke 2 v46-55, 67-7) or use a well known carol.

Identify the concepts in the passage, such as humility, holiness, mercy, love, kingship, servanthood, promise...

Ask the children to develop tableaux, mime or dance to represent different concepts. Join the different expressions together to create a dance or performance piece.



## 7. Exploring poetry- who is Christmas for?

What do we like about Christmas? Which bits of the story do we remember?

Read the Steve Turner poem 'Christmas is really for the children', and talk about the message of the poem. What is the difference between Christmas and Easter? Do people celebrate Christmas and forget about Easter?

OR

Read the Spike Milligan Poem called 'Christmas 1970' and/or 'A Thinking Christmas' by Wes Magee. What is unfair in each poem? Compare and contrast the poems. Link to charity work at Christmas in particular the work of night shelters and Crisis. Children might create their own poems about the unfairness of Christmas for some people today.

## 8. Jesus- a refugee

Read the biblical account of the flight to Egypt, and talk about what it means to be a refugee. Reflect on the feelings of the different characters in the story, and compare to modern day refugees e.g. in Pakistan

Think about journeys they have made. If they had to leave home suddenly what would they take with them? What would they miss most?



## 9. Bringing a painting to life

Give groups a copy of a nativity painting. Re create it in a tableaux. Then ask the children to speak out in turn what they think their character in the scene may be thinking, feeling or saying.

## 10 Lino Printing- John Muafangejo

Look the Lino Print 'Way to Bethlehem', or others by John Muafangejo. Consider why Jesus is portrayed with Mary and Joseph, even though they are on the way to

Bethlehem! e.g. the idea of God's presence with them, the sense of Jesus being 'Immanuel'. Possibly go on to create lino prints or similar of their own.

## 10. Christingle

Christingle means 'Christ's Light' and it is a symbol of the Christian faith. Lots of churches hold Christingle services around Christmas time. The custom of giving out lighted candles in these services originates from the Moravian Church in Germany in 1747 but they weren't introduced to the Anglican Church in England until 1968.



Christingles are made up of different parts, each one being there to remind us of something. The orange represents the world whilst the candle is to remind us of Jesus because Christians believe Jesus to be the light of the world. The red ribbon goes all round the 'world' and reminds Christians that Jesus died because it represents the blood of Jesus. The four cocktail sticks could have either of two meanings: the four seasons or the four corners of the world. The sweets (or sometimes dried fruit) is to remind us of God's gifts to the world

including kindness and love. The foil is merely there to catch the waxy drips from the candle and does not have a meaning. Make Christingles with the children and/or ask them to create their own models or artefacts to represent the symbolism of the Christingle. e.g. what might they use instead to represent the world, or Jesus' blood...

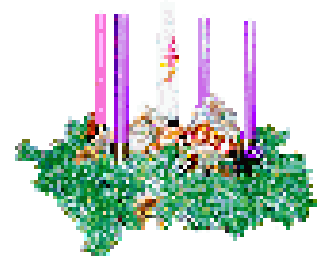
## 11. Jesus as light of the world

Use the Light of the World painting (Holman Hunt), and discuss the biblical passages about Jesus as light of the world in John's gospel. What does it mean to be a light? What are the qualities of light? Create music to represent Jesus as light of the world, poetry or art.

## 12. The Advent Wreath

Make an advent wreath with the children, and learn about its symbolism. There are many stories from the Bible associated with each Sunday in advent including prophecies from the Old Testament. To begin, put four candles on a wreath or at least in a circle. Traditionally

the candles are purple, because in antiquity, purple dye was very expensive and it was the colour of royalty. Christians use purple for Advent because it is the season of the coming of the King. If you can't get purple candles, you can substitute blue ones. You can also make one of the candles pink if you like—technically, it is rose coloured. If you have a fifth candle, it goes in the centre of the wreath and it should be white. Here are the five candles and their symbolism:



On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. This candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Each week on Sunday, an additional candle is lit. On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle typically represents love. Some traditions call this the "Bethlehem Candle," symbolizing Christ's manger.

On the third Sunday of Advent the pink, or rose-colored candle is lit. This pink candle is customarily called the "Shepherds Candle" and it represents joy.

The fourth and last purple candle, oftentimes called the "Angels Candle," represents peace and is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent.

On Christmas Eve, the white centre candle is traditionally lit. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The colour white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Saviour. Also, those who receive Christ as Saviour are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow.

### **13. Message for the world**

Talk about the message the angels brought to Mary and to Elizabeth. Also the message the angels brought to the shepherds. What did their message mean? What kind of message would you like to give to the world? How would you send your message? Write the message in a speech bubble or on a gift tag. If possible find a way of sharing them e.g. through a school newsletter. You might also hang them on a Christmas tree.

### **14. Drumming for Christmas**

Choose a poem or carol about Christmas and tap out the rhythm together on the table. Sounds great when a whole class is doing it, and brings on those musical skills too! Could be used in collective worship too!

### **15. Welcome Jesus**

Make a welcome Jesus banner, but use little pictures of the children in the class that they have drawn or photographed each other to fill up the words 'Welcome Jesus'.

### **16. Invite someone in!**

Invite in a local Christian priest to talk about the meaning of Christmas, what happens in the church and why. You might like to ask a number of different people to come in- of different ages or cultural backgrounds.

### **17. Decorate the local church**

Could you offer to decorate the local church for Christmas- why not take a theme such as 'hope' or 'peace' and decorate it with this theme...make sure you ask first though!!!

### **18. A noisy and moody Christmas!**

Create sound effects using old tins/pots/drums/shakers etc to communicate the mood of each aspect of the story as you retell it...make sure everyone in school is aware of what you are doing.. or even better get everyone to join in for a mega retelling of the story! Great for KS1.

### **19. Newspaper reports**

Create newspaper headlines for the accounts or newspaper reports or radio reports Interview a character in the biblical account. Maybe each classroom could become a biblical scene or setting to 'report on' ....the whole school could get involved in different ways...

### **20. Illuminations for Christmas**

Thought shower all the feelings or ideas in the gospel accounts and create illuminated words or letters. Alternatively create stained glass windows to reflect the feelings or ideas in the stories.

### **And some extra one liners if you are really stuck...**

- Retell the story using only pictures
- Ask children to choose props to retell the story
- Hot Seat the characters in the story
- Create puppets to retell the story
- Do a nativity play... in rhyme!!



**HOT NEWS...**

## ***Christmas Wonders***

### ***A musical celebration of Christmas***

***A unique collection of ten original songs, plus all that is required to perform them as part of a play, concert, service or in any other way this Christmas***

***Includes Bible readings (see below)***

**Hear the songs by clicking on**

**<http://www.onemoretime.biz/aboutchristmaswonders.php>**

***As a Christmas concert***

- Performing the collection of songs in the book order tells the Christmas story in music

- Can be enhanced by adding the recorder and/or percussion parts

### ***As a Christmas Service***

- A ready-made service including eight Bible readings, ten songs and a prayer
- Not all songs need to be performed in order to tell the story, so it is possible to “pick and choose”
- It would be appropriate to add traditional Christmas Carols to supplement the service
- Three of the songs have optional recorder parts, and there are also some suggestions for use of percussion
- Christmas Service can be combined with mimed play (below)

### ***As a mimed play***

- Suggestions for performing the story in mime
- Can be adapted for different numbers of performers
- As above, can “pick and choose” songs and/or add traditional carols

### ***For collective worship/assemblies***

- The Christmas story can be celebrated in a series of acts of worship, with each successive reading and song adding to a fuller experience of the wonder of the birth of Christ

### **The pack costs £22 + p&p, and contains:**

Performance and backing tracks for the ten songs

Version 1: Bible readings + songs

Version 2: A mimed play + songs

Piano accompaniments

Optional recorder parts for three songs

Photocopiable songbook



Order from [www.onemoretime.biz/orderform.php](http://www.onemoretime.biz/orderform.php)

## AND FINALLY...

Don't forget all the ideas in the training session from Concept Cracking Carols...  
to the Jesse Tree and Posada...

**SEND US SOME PHOTOS OF WHAT YOU DO AND WE CAN SHARE THEM!!!**

### Happy Christmas around the world

Albanian: Gezur Krislinjden  
Arabic: Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah  
Bengali: Shuvo Naba Barsha  
Bohemian: Vesele Vanoce  
Brazilian: Boas Festas e Feliz Ano Novo  
Chinese (Mandarin): Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan  
Dutch (The Netherlands): Prettig Kerstfeest  
Eskimo (Inupik): Jutdlime pivdluarit ukiortame pivdluaritlo!  
Esperanto: Gajan Kristnaskon  
Finnish: Hyvaa joulua  
French: Joyeux Noel  
Gaelic (Irish): Nolag mhaith Dhuit Agus Bliain Nua Fe Mhaise  
Gaelic (Scots): Nollaig chridheil agus Bliadhna mhath ùr!  
German: Fröhliche Weihnachten  
Greek: Kala Christouyenna!  
Hausa: Barka da Kirsimatikuma Barka da Sabuwar Shekara!  
Hindi: Shub Naya Baras  
Indonesian: Selamat Hari Natal  
Iraqi: Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah  
Italian: Buone Feste Natalizie  
Japanese: Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto  
Korean: Sung Tan Chuk Ha  
Maori: Meri Kirihimete  
Norwegian: God Jul, or Gledelig Jul  
Philippines: Maligayan Pasko!  
Portuguese: Feliz Natal  
Singhalese: Subha nath thalak Vewa. Subha Aluth Awrudhak Vewa  
Spanish: Feliz Navidad  
Swedish: God Jul and (Och) Ett Gott Nytt År  
Tagalog: Maligayamg Pasko. Masaganang Bagong Taon  
Ukrainian: Srozhdestvom Kristovym  
Urdu: Naya Saal Mubarak Ho  
Welsh: Nadolig Llawen  
Yoruba: E ku odun, e ku iye'dun!

