

CHRISTMAS ASSEMBLY/COLLECTIVE WORSHIP 2021



You will need:

- nativity costumes (ask the school if you can borrow theirs or take some from church)
- 5 x A3 sheets of paper (plus a couple of spares)
- 5 thick felt tip markers (plus a couple of spares)
- timer: powerpoint slide or watch/phone (optional)
- lively Christmas music and a sound system (the school probably have one)
- globe
- gift box – inside is a baby doll and 4 words on pieces of card: hope, joy, love, peace
- quiet music for reflection and a sound system
- powerpoint slide with reflection questions (optional)

INTRO

Good morning/afternoon everyone! It's great to be here with you today! *If the children don't know you very well, explain who you are.* My name isand I'm from the local church. I'm here to lead an assembly to help us reflect together about Christmas.

Christmas is a really exciting time of year. I wonder what you find exciting about Christmas. Or if you don't celebrate Christmas, when you celebrate other festivals/events in the year – I wonder what you get excited about.

ONE MINUTE CHALLENGE

I would love 5 volunteers to help me. If you would like to help me, put your hand up.

Give the volunteers a piece of A3 paper each and a big felt tip pen.

What are the top 3 things that you get excited about at Christmas time? Or another festival if you don't celebrate Christmas.

Write down the top 3 things – nice and big so that everyone will be able to read what you have written. Everyone else – talk to the person next to you about what you find exciting about Christmas or another festival. *You could use a one-minute count down timer – on a PowerPoint slide or a physical timer.*

Well done everyone! Let's be really quiet and have a look at what our volunteers have written down. *Get the volunteers to read out the things they have written down.* Wow – there's so many things to get excited about at Christmas time! And when we're celebrating other festivals. *Tailor this to your own school context.*

For me as a Christian, I love all these things. I get really excited about the food, the presents, the decorations, seeing family and friends. But the main thing I get excited about is celebrating the birth of Jesus. *Show a picture of the nativity scene.* A very special baby that was born about 2021 years ago!

A STORY FILLED WITH EXCITEMENT

The excitement about this baby, Jesus, fills the whole of the Christmas Story which is written in the Bible. I need 10 volunteers to help me tell this story. Choose 10 volunteers – as you dress them up, one by one, as different characters in the nativity scene, (you could ask a member of staff to help), explain the excitement they experience about Jesus in the Christmas Story as follows:

Mary: she is young, she is poor, and she doesn't feel that important, and yet God chooses her to be the mum of Jesus – and he gets an Angel to come and tell her this good news! The baby is going to be a special miracle baby who is the Son of God! She is nervous, amazed and super excited.

Joseph: then there is Joseph. He is told by an Angel in a dream that what Mary has told him is true! She is going to give birth to God's special baby! And Joseph has been chosen to be Jesus' dad. He is nervous, amazed and excited!

Angels x 2: they get the special job of telling people the good news that Jesus is going to be born or has been born – they tell Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds! They are very excited! They sing and dance!

Shepherds x 2: they were thought of as a bit dirty and smelly by most people at that time because they lived rough. They were very poor and ignored and they had a hard life. They are on the hillside near Bethlehem one night looking after their sheep, when the Angels come and tell them that Jesus has been born and that it is good news for all people – not just the rich and important people, but for ALL people - including them! God chooses them to be part of this story! WOW – and so they are super excited and run into Bethlehem to find the Baby!

Wise Men x 3: they are clever men who study the stars and see a new bright star that God has put in the sky as a sign to them. God wants them to share in the good news of baby Jesus! They look at their charts and realise that the star means that a very special person is going to be born. This person is going to be a King. They are very excited and want to meet this special baby. So they go on an epic journey that takes weeks and weeks, following the star to find Jesus. They are excited to be part of the story and they take some precious presents to the baby to celebrate!

All these people in the story are excited about the baby Jesus! But it's not just the people who were IN the story who were excited. Give the final volunteer a large card that says: **PEOPLE – throughout history and today.** For over 2000 years, people have been excited about this story, excited about Jesus being born.

OPTIONAL DANCE OFF

I wonder who out of all these people was or is the most excited? We are going to have a very quick 'Dance Off' to see who was or is the most excited! I'm going to play some music and for 30 seconds, I want to see your best dance moves to show us how excited your character was or is about Christmas! Get ready! *Play 30 seconds of lively Christmas music and get the volunteers to do their best dance moves.*

Wow – you are all pretty excited! It's too hard to choose a winner! Each of these characters were excited in their own way about Jesus being born.

But why are they so excited about a baby? Why am I so excited today about celebrating a baby, born 2000 years ago?

WHY SO MUCH EXCITEMENT?

For Christians, this baby is the most important baby EVER to be born on earth. Long ago when we started to mess up this wonderful world (hold a globe) and all sorts of problems started to happen – Christians believe that God promised he would send someone to help us, and people were waiting for many years for this person to come – for Jesus to be born. And he eventually came around 2021 years ago! And his name, Jesus, means Saviour. The Bible says that he was sent by God to come and help us. Christians believe he did just that – he grew up to become a man who did many incredible things, helping us to see how we should live and saving us.

I've got a present here – who would like to open it? *Choose two volunteers.* For Christians, Jesus is like a gift to the world from God, a gift to each of the characters in the story and a gift to each of us. What's

inside – a baby and 4 words on pieces of card: hope, joy, love, peace. That's what Christians believe that Jesus brings us. Jesus gives us hope, joy, love, peace! Not just for Christmas day, but for our whole lives. WOW!

REFLECTION

Play some quiet music or an appropriate reflective video and ask the children to reflect on two things:

1. Choose one of the words – HOPE, JOY, LOVE, PEACE
Think of someone who needs this most this Christmas time.
If you want to – say a prayer to God for that person.
2. Choose one of these words that you would like most in your life.
If you want to – ask God to help you experience this.

OPTIONAL PRAYER – *check with the school that they are happy for you to end with a prayer.*

If you want to, you can join me in a closing prayer by saying 'Amen' at the end. Or just listen to the words:

Dear God, thank You for the excitement of Christmas and the other times when we celebrate. Thank You for sending Jesus to help us know Your hope, joy, love and peace. Please help us all to experience these things in the coming days and weeks. Amen.