

Theme: Christmas

Welcome:

This is a huge thing when it comes to the program - making sure that everyone who arrives is made to feel welcome. We don't know what day they're having or how they're feeling about being here, so make sure they feel welcomed in and comfortable.

Arrival Activity:

Option 1: Salt Dough Decorations. (<https://wholefully.com/make-salt-dough-ornaments/>)

This will need you to prepare the salt dough and the shape of the star before hand or alternatively you could buy pre made star decorations for them to decorate.

You will need:

- Glue.
- Paper.
- Paint.
- Glitter/ glitter glue.
- Pencils.
- Pens.
- Ribbon.
- Paint brushes.

Let the children and the adults decorate a star decoration for their tree. They can use any of the items that you have brought to do so. Remember the simpler the better as younger children will want to do it but will need some help. Use the ribbon to put through the hole at the top so as to create a loop in order to hang it on the tree. As they decorate ask them to think about what a star does? Again there are no right or wrong answers here!

Option 2: Pipe cleaner stars.

You will need:

- Colourful craft pipe cleaners.
- Ribbon.

This is a relatively easy craft to do. Everyone will need to choose two pipe cleaners to start off with and make two triangles with them. The ends can be twisted together to hold the shape in place. Then take the triangles and place them over each other to make a star shape. Use other pipe cleaners to wrap around the joins of the star to hold the star shape in place. To finish off use some ribbon or and pipe cleaner to attach to the top to make a loop for it to hang on the tree.



Gathering Activity:

Allow the adults and children to bring their creations with them to the next bit. Have some extra paper and crayons on hand.

Here you may choose to use a welcome that you usually use from the collect, or you may want to take a more informal approach.

Hymn/ Song:

There are two slots for sung worship, so you might want to choose a hymn for one and then something aimed more towards the children for the other. There are many hymns and songs about Christmas, and if the appropriate licenses are in place, then you could show something off youtube.

Prayer:

Holy Jesus,
by being born one of us,
and lying humbly in a manger,
you show how much God loves the world.
Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven,
and see you on your throne of glory.
Amen.



Bible Story: The Wise Men's Visit (The Lion Storyteller Bible; Bob Hartman and Krisztina Kállai Nagy.)
(This story is available in both Welsh and English to read out to the families there.)

Explanation:

The wise men, or the star gazers as they're called in this story, we're watching the night sky when suddenly they saw the biggest and brightest star that they had ever seen. It was so amazing and it showed them that a new King was being born. They decided to get up and follow the star so that they could meet this new baby King. They follow the star to King Herod's palace and explain to King Herod what it means. King Herod's advisors even knew that in the Old Testament of the Bible, it talks about God sending a special King one day, one that would be born in the city of David, Bethlehem. He's not very pleased with this news and tells the wise men to find the baby and then travel back to tell him where the baby is - but it wasn't because he wanted to visit the baby, but instead he wanted to kill the baby. The wise men carry on and find baby Jesus in a manger in a stable. They give him the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They knew that they had met a very special baby, God's son, Jesus, the King, the one that people had been waiting for. God tells them not to visit Herod on the way back and they find a different path to follow to go home. Today we've made stars to hang up on our trees. This Christmas, when we're busy celebrating and hopefully having lots of fun, let's remember to take some time to look at that star and remember what it meant. It meant that a new King had been born, Jesus, who people had been waiting for. He was born as a baby in a manger for all of us. He's the precious gift that was sent to us and that's why we celebrate this Christmas.

Hymn/Song:

Once again choose song or a hymn based on Christmas.

Concluding prayer/blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

