



Introduction

This is part of a series of ideas for four sessions that you can use with Foundation in preparation for Christmas.

Preparation

You will need a copy of [My First Bible](#) to read to the children.

Setting up a focus table

- A coloured cloth: this could be purple or you could have a colour associated with Christmas, for example green.
- A clear bowl, water and four floating candles for the reflection; if this table is left out, use an unbreakable bowl.
- A nativity set. It is better if this is unbreakable so that the children can be free to touch the figures. For this part of the story, you will need the figures of an angel and Mary.
- Pictures with different styles of artwork that depict different stages of the Christmas story. Old Christmas cards can be very helpful.

Development

1. The Story

Getting ready

Prepare a storybag (a simple drawstring bag). In it, put examples of animals that might have been in the stable, some strips of cloth and some straw. Also, place in the bag the nativity set figures of Jesus and the manger. Begin by bringing out the bag.

I wonder what our story will be today. Is there something in here that will give us some clues?

Bring out the animal figures, the strips of cloth and the straw one at a time, talking about each one. As you bring out the items and talk about them, build up a playful sense of mystery.

So - some animals, some pieces of cloth and some straw. I wonder how these are part of our story.

Telling the story

Begin by telling the children that this story comes from the Bible. See [My First Bible](#), pages 142-143: 'Jesus is born'.

Talking together about the story

I wonder...

... what you like about the story.



... how it would feel to be in that place.

When you have told the story, place the story items on the table, now including Jesus and the manger in the nativity scene.

2. Songs and rhymes

'Lullaby' to the tune 'Frere Jacques'.

3. A time for reflection

Many churches light a series of candles during Advent. This is an adaptation of that tradition that you could use in your group.

Set up the bowl with the water and the four floating candles. Encourage the children to be still and quiet, as you get ready. When everyone is ready, light three of the candles.

A possible prayer: *Dear God, thank you for giving us such a special baby, Jesus. Amen*

Leave a moment of quiet before blowing out the candles and moving on to the next part of the session.

(Safety note: Be particularly careful using lighted candles when young children are present. Never leave children unattended near candles that are lit or have recently been lit.)

4. A craft activity

Make a Christmas wreath

For each child, you will need:

- A paper plate with a disc cut out of the centre, and a hole punched at the top for a hanging thread
- Pre-cut holly leaves from green paper
- A message label: Jesus' love goes on and on
- Wool or ribbon for a hanging thread
- You will also need glue sticks and red finger paint.

Instructions

1. Stick leaves around the wreath shape.
2. Use red finger paint for berries.
3. Stick the message label at the bottom of the wreath.
4. Thread the wool or ribbon through the hole for the hanging thread.