



On your marks

The presentation focuses on the role of angels in the Bible and in the Christmas story in particular. It also includes several open-ended questions that you can use to invite the congregation to respond in dialogue with the leader or in groups with each other.

Get set

Suggested music: 'Angels' by Robbie Williams.

You will need to arrange for a group of people – adults and children – to call out one word each in the opening section; you also need others to read out the angel descriptions of the strange activities they see on earth. If possible, try to arrange to show the three clips (see below) from [paperlesschristmas 2009](#) as part of this presentation.

Go!

1 Invite the group you have asked (see above), on cue, each to call out one word from the 30 words listed below. They all have some connection with angels. Ask everyone else to listen carefully and see if they can guess what links all the words they are about to hear.

wings, halos, shiny, bright, cute, frightening, host, heaven, choirs, cherubim, Michael, light, army, Uriel, mysterious, disguised, messenger, arch, wheels, fire, invisible, eyes, Gabriel, fear not, vision, robes, seraphim, flames, women, men

2 All these words link in some way to the mysterious yet ever popular subject of angels. The Bible is full of angel stories. They appear at times of crisis; they bring messages; they fight battles; they offer protection; they watch over Christian communities; they even go in for wrestling! Churches are named after them and there's also a special celebration day in the church's year for them. Yet no one knows who they are and what they look like! If possible, show the clip [Angels](#) from [paperlesschristmas 2009](#) (4 December).

I wonder if angels may even look like human beings, turning up just at the right time to help us?

I wonder if we could be an angel sometimes, whenever we do a good turn for another person?

3 Let's hear a story about angels. Read how Jacob fell asleep and had a dream of angels going up and down a ladder – see Genesis 28:10-17 in the Bible or read from a retelling of the story.

Can you imagine how Jacob felt?

I wonder what the angels were doing, going up and down the ladder?



Angels seem to be creatures that connect heaven and earth and are part of God's way of reminding people that there's more to life than what we can touch, see, hear, smell and taste.

4 Many people believe they have guardian angels. In fact, Jesus says that children have angels watching over them (see Matthew 18:10). The Bible also suggests elsewhere that angels are really interested in looking into what's going on on earth because they don't really know what will happen at the end of history; they don't have God's power to see the future.

I wonder what angels might make of some the things that they would come across on earth today?

Here are some descriptions from the angels' point of view of things that they see. Ask the group you have prepared (see above) to read out the following 'angel views' of the world and ask the others to guess what it is the angels are talking about.

- People spending hours cramped together in metal boxes on long strips of concrete going nowhere.
(Answer: people in cars in a traffic jam)
- People putting small white sticks into their mouths and then setting light to them.
(Answer: people smoking cigarettes)
- People stretched out on yellow ground near water and slowly turning brown.
(Answer: people sunbathing)
- People running up and down a piece of green chasing a pig's bladder filled with air.
(Answer: people play football)
- People rushing about, going in and out through small holes in big buildings, staggering with more and more containers, which are getting filled up.
(Answer: people shopping)
- People laughing at other people just because they look or behave differently.
(Answer: people bullying people)
- 1 People marking the birth of Jesus by giving presents to each other!
(Answer: people celebrating Christmas)

I wonder what other things there are which we do each day but which must look very odd to an angel looking on?

I wonder what things an angel might really enjoy seeing us do? In fact, we do have an idea for this one - read what it says in Luke 15:7.

5 Angels also turn up all over the place in the Christmas story. So when they appear on earth to announce the birth of Jesus with singing that fills the skies, it wasn't their first visit. If possible, show the clip [Space Travellers](#) from [paperlesschristmas 2009](#) (7 December).

6 Read the story of the angels visit to the shepherds. It can be found in Luke 2:8-20.

It's all about glory and peace! How much glory and peace will there be in our Christmases this year? I wonder what the angels think about the way we celebrate Christmas today? I wonder what they



would like to see us doing to celebrate Christmas? If possible, end by showing the clip **[A Great Light](#)** from **[paperlesschristmas 2009](#)** (23 December). Jesus is the great light that the angels at Christmas are singing about!