



## Notes:

- *This is a simple service aimed at the full spread of ages including babes in arms.*
- *Invite children to come in nativity costume, or indeed any costume! You could brief some families beforehand to ensure you have the full spread of key nativity characters.*
- *Use the International Children's Bible for the readings*
- *Readings can be done by the full range of ages from the youngest to the oldest*
- *An animal shed back-drop would be excellent. Some bales of straw with a manger in the centre.*
- *You could have a pair of people lead this service. Having a variety of voices can help children to engage.*
- *It is helpful to have pictures on a big screen during the readings to illustrate the Bible narrative for children. [www.freebibleimages.org](http://www.freebibleimages.org) is a good place to start for these.*

## Welcome and opening prayer

*Big smile. Big welcome. Explain where things are (e.g. the loos, where a parent can go if they need to take their child somewhere quiet for a moment etc.)*

*Comment on great costumes: Excited to see more of them. This is going to be great. We're expecting noise and chaos.*

**Opening prayer** (wait for mostly quiet first).

**Opening Carol: O Come all ye Faithful** (Start with a crowd pleaser, leaving 'Hark the Herald' until last)

**Introduce the theme:** What would save your Christmas this year? (Pause) What is the one thing you would want to make sure is in your Christmas, so that no matter what went wrong, your Christmas would be saved? Turn to the person next to you, or the people you came with and get an answer from them. How many different answers can we get? Think big. Think novel. Come up with your own answer. What is the one thing that would save your Christmas? *Give them a moment to talk, and then take answers. Ask them to shout them out. Take each one. Comment on each answer- affirm it, make a joke of it, personal comment. Fast paced. Get at least 6 answers. Get a spread of ages.*

.... Today we're are finding out what can save our Christmas. You have come in great costumes - we're going to find out if the people you're dressed as saved Christmas.



**Video:** [Faith in Kids 'Saving Christmas' video](#). *Make the link:* This video shows us that we all feel a little like we want Christmas to save us.

## Mary and Joseph

Let's start by meeting Mary and Joseph.

Do we have any one dressed as Mary or Joseph- please join me?

Ah, the Happy couple! Everyone together – let's look at Mary and say "Ah!" Let's look at Joseph and say "Nice one mate!"

*You could get the congregation to repeat those two responses during the reading every time they hear either Mary or Joseph's names. The reader would need to expect that and be able to cope.*

**Reading: Luke 1: 26-33, 38**

Beautiful Mary – Can you give everyone a dazzling smile... But did you hear that Mary started off looking scared and worried but by the end she was saying she was happy to be having God's special baby grow inside her tummy!

Was it Mary that saved Christmas? No! She was great. So brave! So trusting! But she didn't save Christmas.

Do you think it was Joseph? Give us a big thumbs up Joseph!

He was in King David's family. Perhaps he's going to be the secret hero of the story. And he agreed to go through with the wedding to Mary, even though she was already pregnant. Do you think he saved Christmas? No! He listened to God and do exactly what he was told. But he didn't save Christmas.

*Send children back to families with congratulations as we sing...*

**Children's Carol: Away in a manger**

## Angels

Let's meet the angels - God's messengers. There's a lot of them at Christmas. I love the way that every time they appear everyone is terrified but they always help them to calm down.



Angels, come and join me. Tell everyone to “Calm down. Calm down” and waft your wings to give everyone a little cool breeze ... let’s listen out for that, as they meet the shepherds

*You could get the congregation to repeat that responses during the reading every time they hear the word, “angel”. The reader would need to expect that and be able to cope.*

## Reading: Luke 2: 8-14

Aren’t the angels totally ace? Without them, the shepherds wouldn’t have a clue what was going on! They made sure someone turned up at the birth and marked it with a light show and the best choir our world has ever seen. They would have totally smashed Britains’ Got Talent. But did they save Christmas? No! They looked great. They terrified everyone. They lit up the sky. Did the briefings. But they didn’t save Christmas

*Send children back to families with congratulations as we sing about the angels...*

**Carol: Angels from the realms of glory**

## Shepherds

Ready for the shepherds? I love them- they’re my favourites. They start the story on the night shift, half asleep but listen out for how excited they are by the end.

Any shepherds to join me? Come and give us a big, country farmer “Oooh arrgh.” Let’s all join in...

*You could get the congregation to repeat that response, “Oooh Argh” during the reading every time they hear the word, “Shepherd”. The reader would need to expect that and be able to cope.*

## Reading: Luke 2: 15-20

Mary and Joseph were in the last shed available in town. No one in Bethlehem would have heard about what was kicking off, if the shepherds hadn’t spread the word; banging on doors, shouting through open windows, singing, dancing. They were the first ones, who really got hold of what was happening. They had the first Christmas party. So surely they saved Christmas? Sorry. No. They were salt of the earth, honest hard workers, who had a night to remember, but they didn’t save Christmas.

*Send children back to families with congratulations as we sing about that quiet night that got very loud...*

**Carol: Silent night**



## Wise men

Let's meet the exotic scientists. Have we got any wise men with us?

Can you put your finger to your mouth, tip your head to one side and look thoughtful, like clever people do? And we all need to say, "Ah ha! I see."

Now you all know what presents they brought don't you? But do you know what they did when they first met Jesus, even before they gave him their presents? Listen out for that.

*You could get the congregation to repeat that response, "Ah ha! I see" during the reading every time they hear the phrase, "Wise men". The reader would need to expect that and be able to cope.*

**Reading: Matthew 2: 1-5a, 9-11**

The wise men were wise! They had travelled for weeks. They found the right country. They knew they were looking for a King. They got the wrong palace- easy mistake to make- looking for a King, head to the palace! But the King they were looking for wasn't even an adult. No throne. No crown. But they *still* found him. How amazing are they? Alright, alright, they had the help of God's excellent sat nav. Do we have any stars with us? But they found the King! They invented Christmas presents. And they *worshipped* when they met Jesus! They saved Christmas! Didn't they? No! Even with the great presents and the ace sense of direction they didn't save Christmas!

We're going to thank God for Christmas now, and pray for us and also those who have less this Christmas.

**Prayers** (Ask a family to do this) ([Here's our guide to leading family prayer](#))

You may not know this song, but it has become my favourite Christmas song. I hope it will be yours too...

**Children's Carol: Happy, Happy Day** (By Colin Buchanan from "King of Christmas")

## Jesus

Loved that! We're ready to meet a baby.

Are there any babies that want to bring a parent to the front with them?



Babies are a wonderful gift from God – they make us all want to say “HOORAY!” But God’s baby gives us an extra special reason to shout “HOORAY!”

Listen carefully for his name, and why he was called that.

*You could get the congregation to repeat that response, “HOORAY” during the reading every time they hear the name, “Jesus”. The reader would need to expect that and be able to cope.*

**Reading: Matthew 1:18-21, 24-25**

Did you hear, what his name would be? “You will name the son Jesus.” And did you the reason, “Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.” Ready for the greatest ever Christmas fact? The name “Jesus” means, “God saves”. He was given that name because he was born to save you and me.

How can a special baby born years ago, and miles away possibly save you and me?

This baby is a Saviour baby! No cape. No spandex costume. Not even a whistle.

This baby has come to save us from a big problem that affects our families. All the ways we hurt and harm each other, all the times we put ourselves first, all the ways we spoil the day and spoil our world, all the ways we shut out and ignore the God who made us. God calls these things sin. This is what God is saving us from. This is what is pulling us apart. This is why we need a SAVIOUR BABY! Just like a superhero beats the baddies, Jesus beat sin and took away its power. If we ask Jesus to save us, he will forgive us for everything we’ve messed up. If we ask Jesus to save us, he will change us to love God instead of ignoring him. Whatever you’re hoping for this Christmas .... *(refer back to some of the best answers from the opening question)* ... the one thing that would *really* save your Christmas is asking Jesus to save *you*.

Jesus is the baby who came to save Christmas. He is the one we need to save our Christmas this year.

**Closing prayer:** Dear Father, thank you that you saved Christmas. Thank you for Jesus, who truly can save us this Christmas. Amen

Let’s bring up all the children who want to be in our nativity, while we finish by singing...

**Closing Carol:** *Hark the Herald angels sing.*

*Give the children a huge round of applause. Pause for photographs.*

**Notices:** *Invitation to church after Christmas. What’s the next event for families to put into their diaries?*