



Aim

A short and simple gospel talk for all ages with action and visuals to keep even the rowdiest crowd engaged and help us focus in on Jesus at Christmas.

You will need:

- *Helpers to act as your family (2 grown-ups and 2 kids)*
- *3 large obstacles, perhaps chairs, with signs to stick on them (NATIVITY PLAY, CHRISTMAS PARTY, DINNER WITH RELATIVES)*
- *“Christmassy” props*
- *Babygro / doll as Jesus.*

Before you begin – Get things off to a good start!

- *Welcome people with a smile – have friendly people with Christmas jumpers on at the door*
- *Make it Christmassy inside – stick up some fairy lights, put up a tree*
- *Why not have some hot fruit punch / mulled wine on the go as people arrive – stick it in a slow cooker to warm up and make the place smell cosy, hand out a Christmas chocolate / Cadbury Heroes from a tub as they arrive.*
- *Make families feel welcome – make space for buggies, maybe have some mats on the floor / benches for kids to sit on so they can see*
- *Consider giving people something to do as they come in / before you begin, especially if people drift in. Maybe ask them to write their name on a bauble and hang it on your tree.*

Suggested Running Order

Begin – *Get your microphone on, shoot up an arrow prayer and go for it!*

Welcome *Big smile. Big welcome. What do they need to know? Reassure them that you're expecting moderate chaos. Put them at ease.*

Song 1 - *Start with a classic that people know to get in the Christmas mood E.g. **Hark the Herald Angels** sing*

For people not familiar with singing in church, explain that the words are going to appear on the screen (it's like Holy Karaoke!) and we're going to sing along together.



Link - Christmas is a great time to be together as families. We're going to watch a short film about a family at Christmas.

Video - [Faith in Kids Saving Christmas film](#).

Song 2 - e.g. *See Him lying on a bed of straw*

Hand out some jingle bells and triangles for an extra helping of joy and chaos

Reading - **Matthew 1:18-23**. Have a family ready who have practiced to read this for you. Perhaps children around 8-10yrs could read the verses and have a different adult voice read the words of the angel and the prophecy.

Talk - Have your 'helper family' primed ready to leap up and your props and chairs ready!

Here's one ordinary family, in need of the perfect Christmas.

Mum & Dad have been stressed out with their to do lists. They've been rushing around. He's always on his phone, she's got work to do. There's meetings to go to, phone calls to make, cards to write, gifts to buy, all of this whilst also trying to remember to feed everyone and remember where they've left everything!

Pile objects into the parents' arms so they are full - laptop bag, shopping bags, Christmas cards, a gift, a pan, a phone, some keys.

The kids have had lines to learn for their school plays, songs to sing, concerts to play in, parties and school fairs, raffle tickets, Christmas cards to write for their class, being good, being stuck indoors, itchy Christmas jumper days and old people to visit. All of this AND trying to fit in washing, eating and sleeping too!

Pile objects into the children's arms so they are full - dressing up outfit, music, Santa hat, book bag, stocking, Christmas jumper, gift bag, wash bag, towel, pillow

And now they must complete the Christmas obstacle course!

The family struggle to climb over each 'obstacle' as you describe it, whilst still carrying their piles of stuff.

Make sure you hold all his together *indicate the stuff in their arms* and make it to Obstacle 1 - the School Christmas nativity play *family weave through imaginary objects* Parents, dodge the meeting, ignore the call! Kids, don't be sick, avoid the germs!



Phew! We've made it! *parents sit on the chair – kids stand and sing LA LA LA*

Quick, take a photo! Look happy! then it's off again to...

Obstacle 2- The Christmas party *everyone walks around the chair a few times* Come on! Round we go, being nice! Eat a mince pie and some cheese on sticks, have a chat, pretend we like them, avoid any trouble, look good, wear the right outfit. GREAT! Now on we go to the final obstacle.

Obstacle 3 - Relatives are coming for dinner. This one is a hurdle we have to get over *family step up on the chair and down the other side* She's hard work, he's got allergies, she's losing her marbles, it's boring and a bit tense – but it has to be done. After all, it's Christmas! Come on, rise above it, mind your manners, eat your dinner.

WELL DONE – you've made it to Christmas! Phew! I hope it's worth it. I hope there's something to celebrate. I hope there's good news! I hope there's some space in all of the busy-ness to find joy. I hope there's something that can bring this family together so they can know they matter and that they are loved.

You know what, guys? Put everything else down – all your bags and all your stress and all your stuff. God has given us exactly what we need at Christmas. *Produce babygro/doll*

Read Matthew 1:21 & 23. 'She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins ... She will have a son and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us.'

WOW! How many babies is Mary having? Sounds like twins! Jesus and Immanuel – we're going to need a double manger! No! Listen carefully! The angel tells Joseph to call the baby JESUS, which means God saves, because he will save his people. But people will call him IMMANUEL, which means God with us, because he **is** God with us. 2 names to help us understand why this baby is doubly brilliant news!

Call him Jesus – because he's the saviour we need. *Write JESUS on the babygro/stick a label on*

Call him Immanuel – because he's God with us. *Write IMMANUEL on the babygro/stick label on*

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

The clue is in his names.

This baby is a saviour baby! *Perhaps you could add a cape / mask. Hand the Babygro/doll to the Mum*



This baby has come to save us from a big problem that affects your family, my family, everyone's family. 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!

But there's more! This baby is God with us.

Jesus is **God** – a baby who was perfect from the start: wonderful, loving and completely in control. God loves us so much that he didn't turn his back on us and leave us to deal with the mess we make on our own. He came into the world himself, to love us and forgive us and change us to be more like him. *take Dad back to the 'Dinner with relatives' chair.* Knowing how much Jesus loves us helps us to love others.

Jesus is God **with us** *take a child back to the 'Party' chair.* He is for us and loves us and helps us. He knows what life is like, with all its mess and confusion *point at the armfuls of stuff on the floor.* He understands us and knows what we need in every situation. Knowing that Jesus is always **with us** to help us is a great reason to party!

Jesus is God with **us** *take a child back to the 'Nativity' chair.* He came for **us!** This story is for this family, for your family, for my family. It makes us want to celebrate. That's why we sing and shout and give gifts and dress up at Christmas. We are part of this story. It's for **us.** *Bring the family back together.* Jesus came to fill our hearts and homes and hands with reasons to be thankful.

This Christmas, do you just have stress and hassle and stuff and obstacles? Or do you have Jesus? The Saviour Baby. God with us. A real reason to celebrate.

Sing – O Come all Ye Faithful. Let's sing about this good news as we close. News that gets better and better every time we hear it, so we sing each line of the chorus a little bit louder!

Close - Thank you for being with us. You are welcome today, and every Sunday when we meet together as people who know we need Jesus, to learn more about Him. We also have a Christianity Explained course running in January for those who have questions about the Christian faith. Be brave, take a leaflet, give up an evening to find out more. Jesus gave up more to be with you!



Goodbye – Consider giving out a little gift bag as people leave, perhaps with an invite to your other Christmas services, information about your church/toddler groups/children's clubs etc. What book of the Bible will you be looking at in January? Is there a Christianity Explored course they are welcome to attend? What if someone wants to read the Bible? Could you include a little gift? A tag with Matt 1:23 on? A Christmas booklet or leaflet? How about a colouring sheet or decoration for their tree at home?