

Mosaic celebrations



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What is *Mosaic*?



Scripture Union has been providing resources for people working with children in church settings for over sixty years.

As times have changed, so have the resources, of course. Where once ‘Sunday School’ was the highlight of the week for many children, today many other exciting activities compete with the events that churches provide. Where once school life was largely dull and mainly sedentary, today teachers have a vast range of ways of engaging children in the learning process.

It is hard now for churches to ‘compete’ with all the opportunities and activities that fill the 21st-century child’s life.

Yet Scripture Union still wants children to have the best resources to help them learn about God, decide to follow Jesus and grow in faith. This applies to children in churches both large and small, as well as those who have no contact with churches. We publish a range of resources to equip children’s workers whatever their situation. This includes the *Light* range which has resources for different age groups from 3 to 14.

You told us...

You only have a few children in your group and you have a wide age range. Maybe there is a 3-year-old, two 7-year-olds, a 10-year-old boy and a couple of girls who will soon be 14. Buying the whole range of *Light* products would be much too expensive and it would be time-consuming to go through each product looking for suitable activities for your session each week. You need a flexible printed product which enables you to choose suitable activities that will work across the age-group.

Settings where *Mosaic* works best...

- Many churches begin Sunday worship with all ages together. In other churches, everyone arrives together, but separate into adult and children’s groups and meet together again for a final time of worship. *Mosaic* can be used in either of these scenarios when the number of children attending is too small to make the provision of separate age-groups practical.
- *Mosaic* could be used where the premises in which children meet are limited so that it is impossible to provide more than one group.
- *Mosaic* would also be useful where there are few adults able to work with the children. (Of course, there should, for reasons of safety and child protection, always be at least two adults with CRB clearance with the children.) In this case, most of the activities can be done together, with separate, targeted activities for younger and older children later in the session.
- *Mosaic* would be ideal if you are starting a new children’s group and want a simple programme to work with.

How to run a *Mosaic* session

WHAT YOU GET

***Mosaic* is a flexible resource designed to give you a structured programme.**

There are also extra ideas which you can add to suit the time you have available and the

group you are leading. Some of the extra resources can be downloaded from the *LightLive* website at www.lightlive.org. But even if you cannot access the website, this book provides all you need for 12 exciting and meaningful sessions.

Introduction

Each series of two to five sessions begins with essential Bible background to the passages you will be using with the children. There is also an important paragraph giving insights into how the series can be tailored to the children in your group.

Core programme

Four activities are provided as the basic template for each session – a way of exploring the Bible, a worship response, and two options which help the group apply the Bible teaching to their own lives.

Extension ideas

Three extension ideas are suggested to provide more targeted activities for younger (perhaps under-8s) and more challenging things for older children to do (perhaps those aged 10 and over). Obviously, abilities differ and you will have to direct individual children to the activities best suited to them. Fresh ideas are suggested for each session for the series 'Learn and remember' verse.

BONUS All-age service

For an occasion when adults and children meet together for worship *Mosaic* provides a bonus all-age service in keeping with the theme of one of the three series in this book. More all-age services and service starters can be found in *The All-Age Service Annual*, available from Scripture Union.

Case studies

Advice designed to inspire and encourage you in your work – from a writer experienced in working with small churches.

Tips

Helpful advice for working with your mixed-age group can be found in the *Mosaic* clinic.

LightLive

Create a group on *LightLive* online (www.lightlive.org) and you will have access to a huge choice of resources for your group. The database is searchable by topic and Bible passage so that you will never

be short of an idea for your group-time or special event!

Helpful resources

Look on page 7 for targeted recommendations of other Scripture Union titles which will supplement your programmes, provide ideas to help your group grow in faith and help you increase your confidence.

Every week online

You can enhance your weekly sessions with downloads including:

- 'Bible story picture': a regular activity for 2–7s (These are also available as photocopyable pages at the end of each session.)
- 'Audio Bible story': a regular audio Bible story for 3–7s
- 'Learn and remember': a PowerPoint of a Bible verse to learn, for 5–11s
- 'Presentation': an activity with animation for 11–14s

SERIES

1

SERIES INTRODUCTION

CHRISTMAS

Be amazed at the extent of God's love in sending Jesus

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR YOU

The central message of Christmas can be summed up in John 3:16 with its message of God's love.

Our Christmas series, however wonderful, is nevertheless always difficult. The story is familiar and it is hard to see what fresh elements might emerge. It is surrounded in the popular mind, even in the church, with legendary additions and interpretations that can rob us of the wonder of the tightly told narratives that we find in the New Testament.

In this series, with the inclusion of Old Testament verses, we have the opportunity to see how the birth of Jesus fits in with the long-term plans of God. We can stand back from the familiar story and see what God is doing to bring about the salvation of the world. Isaiah 9 looks forward to the coming of a child who will establish God's rule, and Isaiah 7 names the coming child 'Immanuel'. Immediately

the links with John 1 and Matthew 1 become clear. Micah 5 locates the birthplace of the coming ruler as Bethlehem; which recurs as Luke recounts the story of Jesus' birth. Matthew 2 tells of the coming of the foreigners foreshadowed in Isaiah 60, where the glory of God's light reaches beyond Israel to the nations.

Can we stand back and take the long view? Can we appreciate the true wonder of Christmas; a God who desires to save the world and has a plan to do so? Can we with our group of young people get beyond the stories we love, to the significance we need? Without the message of God's love, light and rule there is no point to Christmas. Without a response to that love and recognition of that rule in our lives, the season will pass and we will be unchanged. What better way to round off this series than with the reminder in John 3:16 of God's love for the world.

For your small group with a wide age range

Christmas is an exciting time for children! In this series we encourage them to extend their excitement to the whole Christmas story and discover that it all happened because God loves them so much. This is where having a wide age range can be a bonus! As older children deepen their response to the meaning of Christmas, younger children are helped to go beyond a focus on presents and treats. Use the extension activities for older group members to help them discover a deep significance to Jesus' birth while younger children channel their excitement into discovery about Jesus as their King.

Resources for ministry

Christmas Wrapped Up

Christmas is all wrapped up with this resource book, combining years of Scripture Union experience to create top-quality materials to help you get the most out of Christmas. Contains all-age services, party outlines, craft and games and much more, most of which is photocopiable.
ISBN: 978 184427 261 7



Highlights from *LightLive*

Go to the 'Search *LightLive*' tab at www.lightlive.org and enter this session's Bible reference to find:

- 'Bible story picture': a regular activity for 2-7s
- 'Audio Bible story': a regular mp3 download for 3-7s
- 'Learn and remember': a PowerPoint of a Bible verse to learn, for 5-11s (see also page 15)
- 'Presentation': an activity with animation for 11-14s

SERIES 1 CHRISTMAS SESSION 1

A child is born



Bible:

Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-18

Aim: To anticipate the extent of God's love in sending Jesus

CORE PROGRAMME

For 3-14s

Bible story with mime

15 - 20 minutes

Why: to anticipate the extent of God's love in sending Jesus

With: SU Bible Timeline (optional)

1 Promises

Encourage the children to tell you if they have been promised something for Christmas. Ask who made these promises and why (because they love/care for us). Explain that God made a promise in the Bible to a man called Isaiah. Read Isaiah 9:2 and ask them to count how many times they hear the word 'light'. Say that God is promising to do something so wonderful that it will be like a bright light shining in the dark: he is going to send a wonderful person. We know now that the person is Jesus.

2 Mime

Divide the children into pairs and assign one 'A' and the other 'B'. If there's an uneven number of children, let two children split the

role of 'B', swapping when you reach 'The Word was in the world...' Explain that you are going to read some words from the Bible written by a man called John. Begin with everyone crouching down and, as you slowly read John 1:1-5 and 10-14 (from the CEV as below), give the stage directions below and emphasise the words in bold as you go along. Go through the mime once to practise, then present it together:

'In the beginning was the one who is called the **Word** ('A' stands). The **Word** was with God and was truly God ('B' stands and they face each other, holding hands). From the very beginning the **Word** was with God. And with this **Word**, God created all things ('A' mimes making/smelling plants; 'B' mimes animals/birds). Nothing was made without the **Word**. Everything that was created received its life from him ('A' cups mouth with hands and blows), and his life gave light to everyone ('A' spins round in the middle of the group with arms outstretched). The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out.

'The **Word** was in the world ('A' walks slowly round room), but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his **Word**. He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him ('B' turns his back on 'A'). Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him ('B' kneels before 'A').

So he gave them the right to be the children of God. ('A' places hands on 'B's heads.') They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children ('A' and 'B' face each other and hold hands).

'The **Word** became a human being and lived here with us ('A' walks slowly round room). We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father ('B' looks at 'A' and shields his eyes). From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us (everyone holds hands in a big circle).

3 Chat

Ask the children if they looked out for the 'light' mentioned by Isaiah. Challenge them to tell you what other name John gave to the light (Word) and the name we use for this light or word (Jesus). Read Isaiah 9:6,7 and ask what else God promised (baby/king/ruler). Encourage the children to tell you who that baby/king/ruler is (Jesus). Ask two children to find Isaiah, and Jesus being born, on the Bible Timeline. Explain that there were over 700 years between the two events – a long wait, but God kept his promise! Remind the group that people keep their promises because they love us. If God kept his promise by sending Jesus, how do they think God feels about them? (He loves them.)

CORE PROGRAMME CONTINUED

Reflective prayer

⑤ - ⑩ minutes

Why: to thank God for all that Jesus is

With: words from Isaiah 9:6 written out (see below), tea lights in insulated holders, matches, reflective music (all optional)

1 Print or write the names for Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 on separate sheets of paper – ‘Wonderful Counsellor’, ‘Mighty God’, ‘Eternal Father’, ‘Prince of Peace’. Spread them out on the floor and invite the children to sit next to them.

2 Talk to the children about each name and what part of Jesus’ character it represents.

3 Ask the children silently to thank God for sending Jesus and for the part of his character they are sitting by. Invite them to pray that they will get to know him better.

4 If you have tea lights, give one to each child and ask them to place it on the name that means the most to them. Light the tea lights and pray again.

Advent candle

⑮ minutes

Why: to look forward to the coming of Jesus

With: instructions from page 11 for Advent candle, large sheets of dark paper (blue, purple, black), yellow and orange tissue paper, smaller pieces of paper for the candle, red

or white paint, glue, the words ‘Jesus is coming’ photocopied from page 11, shiny stars or copies of the small star from page 12, cover-up and clean-up facilities

1 Tell the children that you are going to make a special Advent picture to help them count down the days to Christmas.

2 Give everyone one of the smaller sheets of paper and ask them to paint it to look like a candle. When it is dry fix it on to the large sheet. Add a candle flame by scrunching up yellow or orange tissue paper.

3 Write the words ‘Jesus is coming’. Copy enough for each child. Ask the children to colour these and fix them on to the paper.

4 Provide everyone with 25 star shapes. These can be bought from most stationers and craft shops or can be cut from silver paper.

5 Let the children take their candles home and add a star for each day of Advent, from the first day of December until Christmas Day.

Actions

⑤ - ⑩ minutes

Why: to anticipate the extent of God’s love

With: list of ways people show love (suggestions on this page)

1 Explain that you are going to call out different ways people show their love (such as hugging your dad or giving a present). Challenge the children to decide whether it’s a lot of love or a little love, and then do the appropriate action. If it’s a lot of love, they should stretch their arms out wide; if it’s a little, they should bring their hands together.

2 Call out several different ways. Let the children add more ideas.

3 Ask: ‘How does God show his love?’

WAYS PEOPLE SHOW THEIR LOVE

① Lend your pencils to a friend at school.

② Help your brother/sister tidy their bedroom.

③ Visit your Grandma in hospital instead of going to dancing/football.

④ Play with someone who is lonely.

⑤ Invite a friend to your house.

⑥ Let your brother/sister watch their choice of DVD.

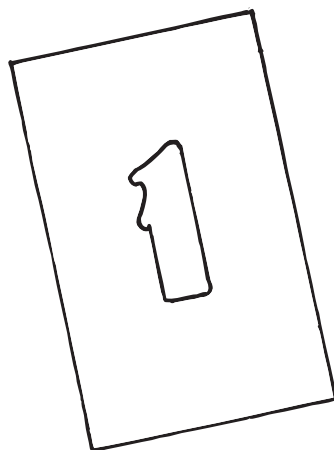
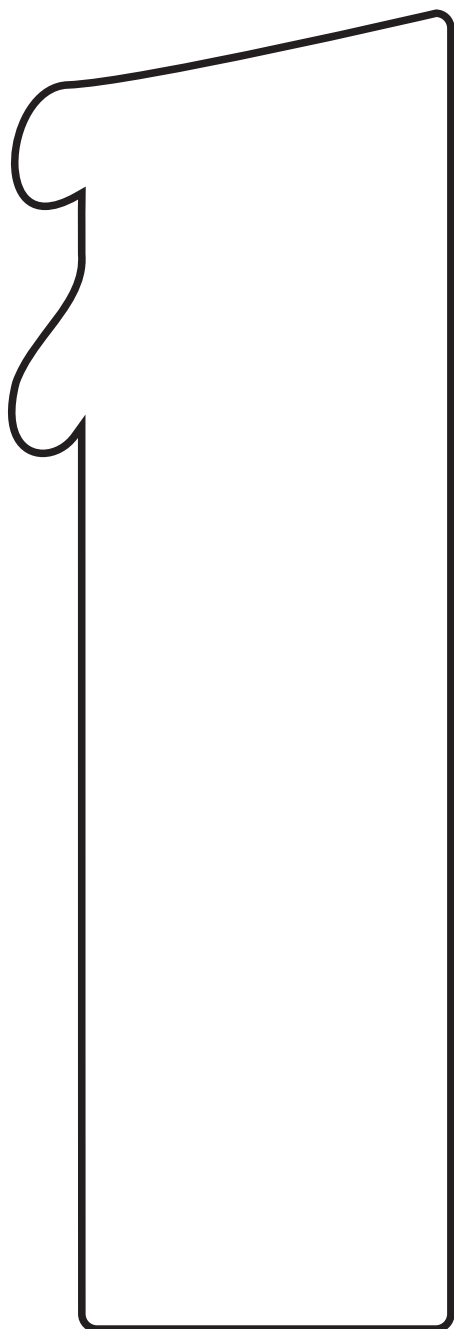
⑦ Save up to buy a present for your auntie’s new baby.

⑧ Help at home by laying the table.

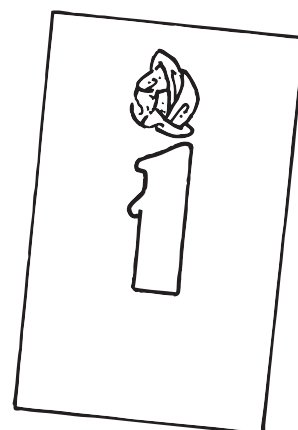
⑨ Lend your baby cousin your favourite toy.

⑩ Share your sweets with your brother/sister.

Advent candle



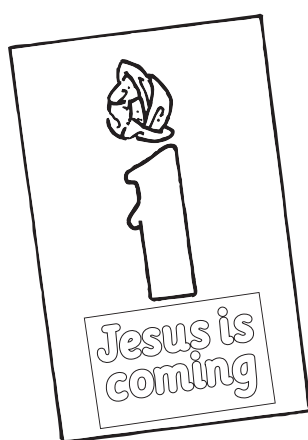
- 1 Paint the candle shape. When it is dry, fix to the centre of the background paper.



- 2 Add a candle flame by scrunching up yellow or orange tissue paper.

Jesus is
coming

- 3 Cut out and colour the words 'Jesus is coming'.

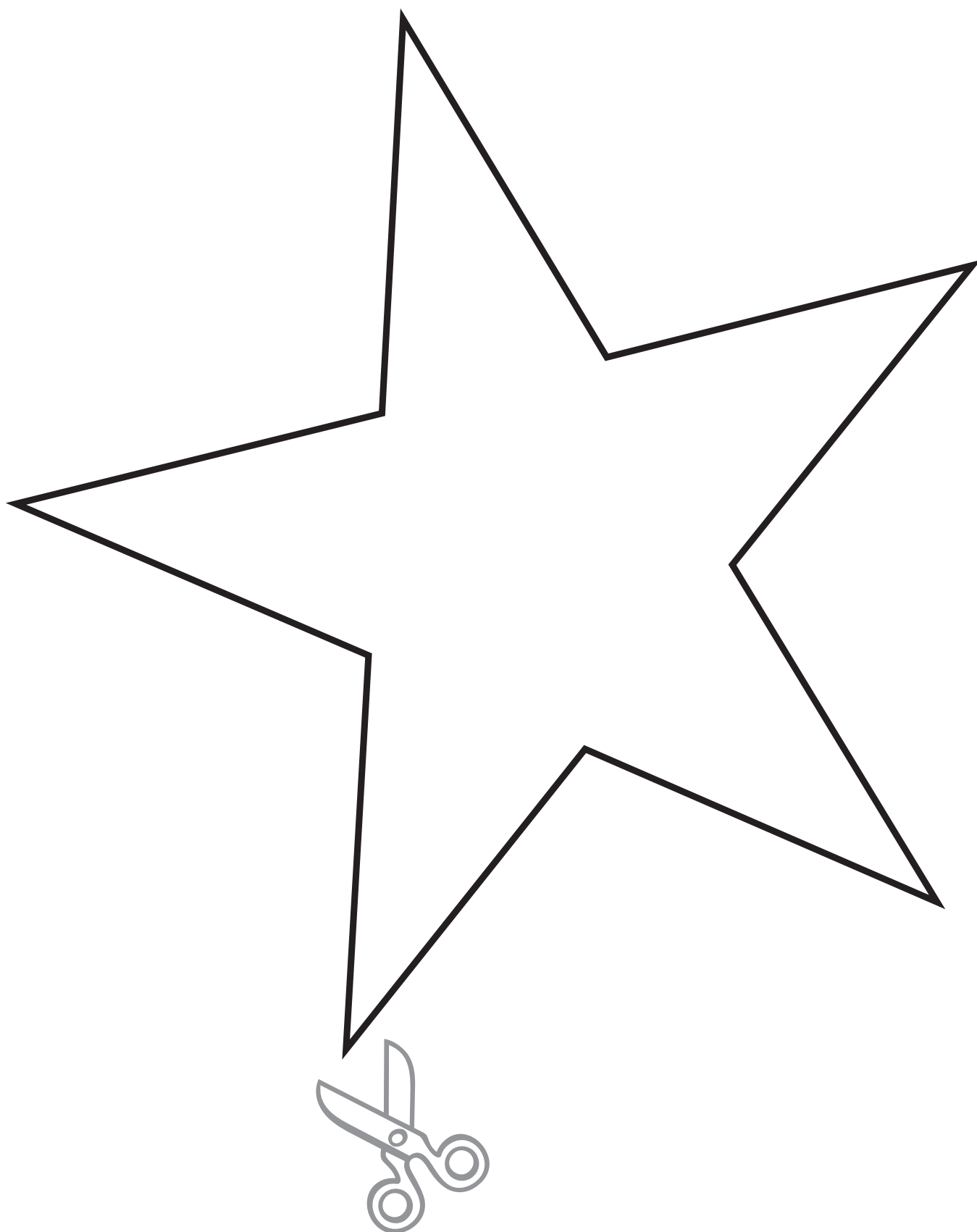


- 4 Add the words.



- 5 Put 25 (or 28, if starting on 28 November) stars in an envelope. There is a star template on page 12.

Star for Advent candle



EXTENSION IDEAS

Activities for younger children

Throwing game

⑤ minutes

Why: to appreciate the extent of God's love

With: a foam ball or bean bag

1 Invite the children to sit in a circle facing inwards. Begin by throwing or rolling the ball to another person while calling out their name, saying: 'God loves... [name].'

2 Invite this person to throw the ball to someone else while calling out their own name and the name of the new catcher: 'God loves... [own name] and... [new name].'
Continue throwing and catching, adding a further name each time until everyone has been included. (If you have children aged under 6, they might find it easier just to say their own name and the name of their catcher.)

3 Challenge the children to tell you who else God loves, and bring out the point that God loves the whole world.

Bible story picture

⑤ - ⑩ minutes

Why: to hear about the coming of a baby, Jesus

With: a copy of the picture on page 14 for each child or enlarged copies for group use, art and craft materials

1 You can use the picture as an introduction to the Bible story or to help you review the story together.

2 There are five Bible story pictures to go with this series about Christmas. The first one shows Jesus as a baby. He is in a box where the animals would usually have their food because there was no cot or bed for him. Encourage the children to be quiet and gentle as they complete their pictures. Make sure you speak clearly but quietly: pretend that you don't want to make a noise and disturb the baby!

For older children

Discussion and prayer

⑤ - ⑩ minutes

Why: to think about how we can spread God's love

With: the words 'I can be God's love light by...' written on a large piece of paper, paper circles, love heart sweets or home-made heart-shaped sweets (all optional)

1 If appropriate, give out the love heart sweets, and talk about how these might show someone how we love them. (Be aware that some of them might be silly!)

2 Remind the children that when God sent Jesus to be the light of the world it was the ultimate act of love.

3 Ask the children to draw a picture in a paper circle to complete the sentence 'I can be God's love light by...' Glue the circles on to the large poster.

4 Pray together: thank God for sending his love light, Jesus, and ask him to help us to be his love lights in the ways the children have drawn.



THE LEARN AND REMEMBER VERSE

'For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.'

John 3:16

Write the verse out, leaving blanks for the vowels. Ask the children to guess what vowels belong where, then say the verse together.

Alternatively, use the song 'So much' on the *Bitesize Bible Songs 2*

CD, available for download at www.scriptureunion.org.uk/music.

Find a poster for this Learn and remember verse on page 15.



A child is born

Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-18

‘For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.’

John 3:16

SERIES 1 CHRISTMAS

SESSION 2

Of royal descent

Bible:

Isaiah 7:14;
Matthew 1:18–25

Aim: To be amazed that
God came to live with us



CORE PROGRAMME

For 3–14s

Bible story with drama

⓫ – ⓪ minutes

Why: to be amazed that God came
to live with us

With: Bible-times dressing-up
materials, *SU Bible Timeline* (all
optional)

1 Bible Timeline

Ask the children to find Isaiah's name on the *Bible Timeline*, and then find the picture of Jesus' birth. Say that these are the two parts of God's big story that they are going to think about today. Explain that, although they are quite close on the *Timeline*, they were over 700 years apart. Tell the children that both happened a long time ago, and they are going to imagine today that they lived in the time of Jesus. If you have dressing-up clothes, invite the children to put them on now.

2 Learn the rap

Teach the following rap,
encouraging the children to join in.

**In my great-great-great-great-
great-great-great-great-great-
great grandad's day,**

**They heard a weird-weird-
weird-weird-weird-weird-
weird-weird-weird-weird
prophet say:**

**'There'll be a great-great-
great-great-great-great-great-
great Saviour coming your
way.'**

**Won't that be a great-great-
great-great-great-great-great-
great-great-great-great-great
day?**

means 'God is with us'. Ask the children to think about what Isaiah said: God was going to come to his people. How amazing! Say the rap together again. Ask the children to imagine they are Joseph and mime accordingly (especially his facial expressions) as you read Matthew 1:18–24. Now Joseph knew the amazing truth – that God was coming to live on earth! Say the rap again, changing the last line to 'Isn't it a great...'

4 Think and pray

Ask the children to look 'forward' again 2,000 years. Get them to take off the dressing-up clothes now. Then encourage them to take 20 big strides counting in hundreds. Say: 'Now we are back in today, but we can still be amazed by the news that God came to live with us.' Ask the children to think quietly about one big thing God has done. (You may want to give some examples, such as parting the Red Sea, feeding people in the wilderness, healing someone with leprosy.) Say that the God who did those amazing things they are thinking of came to live among us on earth. Allow a few moments for the children to say whatever they want to God.

3 Looking back

Remind the children that they are imagining they are living at the time of Jesus. Ask them to look as if into the distance and then take 20 large strides, counting 'One hundred years, two hundred years...' and so on, to another part of the room. (If the room is very small, walk in a circle.) Then say they are looking back to what Isaiah said about him 700 years before that (explain that this is called a 'prophecy'). Invite them to take seven more large strides. Tell the children you are going to read Isaiah's actual words. Choose a child to be Isaiah, miming speaking out loudly. The other children should mime listening attentively. Read aloud Isaiah 7:14. Explain that the name Immanuel

Creative praise

⑤ minutes

Why: to praise God

1 Invite the children to sit in a circle, and ask them to think of words that describe God.

2 Write the words on separate slips of paper and give one to each child.

3 Complete a 'Mexican wave' clockwise around the circle. Invite a volunteer to stand up, raise their arms in the air, shout 'God you are...' (adding whatever their word is), lower their arms and sit down. Immediately, the person on their left should do the same, and so the action is passed around the circle.

4 Challenge the children to listen for names and their meanings in today's story.

4 This could be played as an elimination game, or with different children calling. However, if you have children under 6, it is better to let them play on, even if they should have been eliminated.

Decoration

⑩ minutes

Why: to remember that God came to earth as a baby

With: glitter, ribbon, bauble template on this page

1 Give each child a copy of the bauble template, or invite them to draw their own.

2 Encourage the children to choose one of the following words or phrases: 'Jesus', 'Saviour', 'Immanuel', 'God with us' and write it on their bauble with pens or glitter. Invite them to decorate the rest of the shape (making sure the words are visible) and attach a ribbon loop.

3 Challenge the children to hang the bauble on their Christmas tree to remind them that God came to earth as a baby.

Active game

⑤ - ⑩ minutes

Why: to remember that God is with us wherever we are and whatever we are doing

1 Ask the children if they can remember the meaning of the name 'Immanuel' that was given to baby Jesus (God is with us).

2 Challenge the children to think up places and times when God is with us, and make up an appropriate action for each. (For example: 'Home' – run to one end of the room; 'Lonely' – shake head and look sad.)

3 Play a game where each time you say a word you preface it with, 'God is with us when we are...' For example, if you say, 'God is with us when we are at home', the children should run to the appropriate end of the room.

