

Ten exciting and easily-explained crafts for all ages. Some messy, some sticky, some done quickly, some done slowly – all with a connection to the Christmas story, from Advent to the wise men. Within each activity, you will also find suggestions for how it could be used within the context of an all-age service.

CRAFTS





MARBLED NATIVITY SCENE

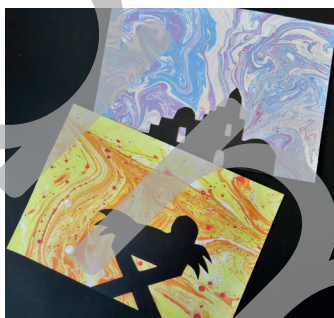
Description: using marbling ink and silhouettes to create a nativity scene

Difficulty level: **

Bible link: Luke 2:1-7

YOU WILL NEED:

- shallow tray, eg aluminium food container with water
- A5 white card or thick cartridge paper
- marbling ink
- cocktail stick or skewer
- thin black card
- templates from page 87
- scissors
- glue stick



INSTRUCTIONS

- Drop two or three coloured marbling inks onto the surface of the water.
- Swirl the inks carefully with a cocktail stick or skewer.
- Carefully lay the card on the surface of the water, ensuring there are no air bubbles.
- Allow the ink to absorb into the card for a few seconds, then carefully lift from the water to dry.
- Use the templates from page 87 to cut a Bethlehem scene or manger from black card.
- Glue the silhouette onto the marbled paper.

Variations:

Try out different nativity scenes with your own silhouettes.

Easier options:

Use pre-bought marbled or decorated paper.

ALL-AGE EXTRAS:

Demonstrate marbling. Ink, water and paper are very simple things, but in the hands of an artist they become something special. With marbling anyone can produce a beautiful image. This is much like the Christian life – how can our lives be something special, something beautiful? From the moment Jesus was born, he led a perfect Spirit-filled, godly life that made a way for us to be close to God and to be filled with the Spirit. We are made beautiful as our sins are washed away, in Jesus. In marbling, it is the importance of the oil that keeps the colour on the surface of the paper. In our lives, we need God's Spirit to help us so that our lives will be beautiful.

Three sparkling dramas that share the true story of Christmas. Suitable for use within a church service, at a community event or as stand-alone features.

DRAMAS





A STORY IN SIX ACTS

This is a quiet, fairly straightforward retelling of the Christmas story. It is in six parts, so can be spread throughout a traditional service of carols and readings. The cast can be as big or small as you like, as the groups can be large, or actors can double up parts.

CAST

Narrator
Mary
An angel, with a group of other angels
Joseph
Some relatives of Joseph
Some shepherds
Simeon
Anna
Some wise men
Wise men's servants
King Herod
Some advisers of the king
A toddler Jesus

SETTING

The setting changes quite often, but no scenery is necessary. People can imagine where the characters are. You'll need some props (for example, a bed, a chair and a manger). If possible, use lights to highlight the angels – either from the ground or spotlights from above.

These games are designed to fit into your Christmas activities. Choose one or more according to your aims, space, time and resources available. They are grouped into party, active, relay and sit-down games, but many of them can form part of a party or family fun day.

Make sure you risk assess each activity so that everyone is kept as safe as possible.

GAMES





ACTIVE GAMES

SNOWBALL FIGHT

What you need: newspaper, chalk or masking tape, timer

Before the session, scrunch up sheets of newspaper into balls to make snowballs, and mark a line down the middle of your space with chalk or masking tape. Split the group into two teams and position the teams on either side of the centre line. Scatter the snowballs equally on each side.

Challenge the teams to throw the snowballs onto their opponents' side of the room. Give the group a time limit and then shout 'Go!' This game will be frantic and furious, so have plenty of supervisors to make sure everyone stays safe and no one gets too competitive.

At the end of the time limit, count up how many snowballs are in each team's area – the one with the fewer is the winner!

PUDDING BALL

What you need: a brown ball (such as a basketball), two large pans, timer, whistle

Before the session, make your ball look like a Christmas pudding – you could paint some icing or custard on top of it and draw on black circles for raisins! Place a pan at each end of the playing space (make sure they are big enough for the ball to fit inside).

Split the group into two teams and send them each to a pan. Explain that they have to get the Christmas pudding (ball) into their opponents' pan, while stopping the opposition from doing the same. Lay out some rules – no contact allowed, no running with the pudding, no fighting over the pudding. Set a time limit on the game and make sure you referee the game fairly. The team that gets the pudding in their opponents' pan the most is the winner.

CHRISTMAS TREASURE HUNT

What you need: pictures of each of the Christmas story objects and people (see below), clues for your treasure hunt, prizes

Before the session, come up with some clues for a treasure hunt. Your clues should direct teams around your venue, to eight locations; at each location they will uncover an object or person to do with the Christmas story. Print out enough copies of each story object and person for each team to collect one as they go round.

- 1 Angel
- 2 Mary
- 3 Joseph
- 4 Roman Emperor
- 5 Baby Jesus
- 6 Sheep
- 7 Star
- 8 Gift

You can also place some wrapped sweets in each location for people to collect as they go round. Play this in teams or individually.

Once everyone has been to each of the locations and collected the pictures, challenge each group to retell the story of Christmas using the pictures they have collected. Give help to any individual or group that might need it. If you have a group of children participating in this game, invite them to retell the story to the rest of the group, if they wish.