

## ‘Christmas Experience’ Plan

Eight interactive prayer stations centred around different characters in the Nativity story

*In a one-hour session, students will spend around five minutes at each station, rotating round on a carousel to experience all eight. They are each given a ‘story bag’ at the start which just contains a tract of the Christmas story. At each station they will get to take something small away to add to their story bag, to help them remember the characters and reflections.*

Station	Theme	Details
Mary	Learning from the bravery of Mary	A chance to ‘meet Mary’ in a virtual Q&A. Students will hear from Mary’s perspective what happened on the night that the angel visited her. The students will be able to virtually ask questions (by clicking on different options) to hear about how this made Mary feel, what she was thinking and how God helped her. The area will be decorated like a traditional middle eastern living room with a low table, cushions and clay ware. Students will be encouraged to learn from Mary’s bravery and courage and will take away a ‘BRAVE’ sticker.
Joseph	My big questions for God	After Joseph was visited by an angel in a dream, he had some big questions for God. He didn’t know how this would all work out and he had a lot of different thoughts. We all have big questions about life – God loves it when we come to him with these questions. The station will be decorated with a bed and images that link to Joseph’s dream. Students will get to write their ‘big questions’ on piece of paper and peg it to the question wall. Students will take away ‘colour your own’ bookmark related to the station.
Angels	Praise and Thanksgiving	The Angels come bearing good news of great joy and sing praises to God for his gift. Students will think about what they are thankful for and what brings them joy. They will write this on a strip of glitter card and staple it into a loop (like a halo) to add to a collaborative paper chain. Students will get to take away a glow stick ‘halo’ (bracelet) to remember the angel’s joy. The station will be decorated with lights, white fabric, tinsel and angel wings if possible.
Innkeepers	Looking after others	Mary and Joseph had nowhere to stay and were facing the prospect of giving birth in the streets had it not been for a kind innkeeper who showed them hospitality and cared for them. Students will reflect on those around the world who are homeless or refugees and think about how we can ‘make room’ and ‘open the door’ of hospitality for them. Students will write a letter of

		encouragement or a prayer for those who are homeless/refugees and post this through the letter box. Students will take away a novelty Christmas eraser to remind them of the writing activity. The station will be set up with a false door with a letter box to post through and a sign saying 'no room at the inn'.
Shepherds	Hopes and ambitions	The shepherds were poor nobodies, but God had a huge plan for their story. Being there at the birth of the promised Messiah was beyond their wildest dreams, but God has amazing opportunities for all of us – we just need to dream big! Students will be invited to hold a cotton wool ball in their hands and think about a big dream or ambition they have. They will be guided through some questions and prayers about this. Then they can add their ball to a giant collective picture of a sheep, adding their dreams to our collective prayers. Students will take away a candy cane 'shepherd staff'. The station will be decorated with fake grass, a fence, some toy sheep, a shepherds crook and a large picture of a sheep on the wall to add to.
Wise Men	Recognising my gifts	The Wise Men who visited Jesus each brought gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. They offered what they had to honour Jesus. Students will be invited to think about their gifts and talents, and how they can use them to help others and honour God. Students will write their gifts on presents wrapped in brown paper. Students will take away a gold chocolate coin to remind them of the Wise men's gifts. The area will be decorated with a throne, fabrics, middle eastern 'king' clothing, crowns, perfume/incense jars and lots of brown paper wrapped boxes of different sizes.
Star	Light in the darkness	The star shone to guide the way for the Wise Men and brought light into darkness. The bible also talks about Jesus coming into the world to bring light into the darkness. Students will be encouraged that they too can be light bringers in dark places. Students will get to decorate and take home a star-shaped Christmas tree decoration. The station will be decorated with a big cut-out of a star, star-shaped fairy lights and other star decorations.
Jesus	Emmanuel: God is with us	Jesus' birth meant that God had chosen to live amongst us – Emmanuel, God with us. Students will reflect on the promise that God is with them, through good times and bad. They will make a pocket-sized pipe-cleaner person which they can keep with them to remind them that God is always with them, or give to a friend who might be going through a hard time. The station will be decorated like the stable, with a manger, hay and baby doll and a large sign saying 'Emmanuel: God with us' above.