

# Advent activities

## prayer station for advent

### AIMS

To set up a series of prayer stations to be used during Advent

### INTRODUCTION

The following are a group of ideas, which can be used together; stand alone or as part of a bigger event during advent that will help you set up a series of prayer stations.

Please use your own skills as well as those shown here, change, adapt and modify these ideas to suit you and your context.

### Theme and Focus

The theme is the Christmas story, broken into five prayer stations.

1. Shocking News - Luke 1: 26-38 and Matthew 1: 18-24
2. Visiting Elizabeth – Luke 1: 39-56
3. The Birth – Luke 2: 1-7
4. Visitors – Luke 2:8-20 and Matthew 2: 1-12
5. At the Temple – Luke 2: 21 – 40

The focus is to use the Bible to prayerfully consider these well-known verses, whilst doing simple activities.

You may want to put all five prayer stations up at one time, in different places in a large room for example, and leave them for the whole of Advent, or you may want to put up one station at a time and have it up for just a week, depending on your context.

### Outline of Activities

At each station there will be a bible reading and a simple activity. The idea is to occupy our need for business with the activity whilst freeing the mind to think about the Bible passage and see how what inspiration this offers. Therefore for each station there is an optional activity for participants to do as follows:

1. Planting a crocus – to take home in a small pot, a reminder that you have been adopted as God's child (see Ephesians 1:5).
2. Write a corporate psalm – Attach a large piece of paper to the wall (a piece of flip chart or even the back of wall paper will do). Write the first line of the psalm – for example: *Praise the Lord oh my soul*. Each person that comes to the station will add a new line. At the end of the session you will have a beautiful, corporate reminder of your time in prayer.
3. Painting a picture – On a canvas (a cheap art shop like **The Works** usually has these), board or thick paper, draw an outline of a nativity scene in pencil (or ask someone who has this skill to help). The prayers can then meditate on the Bible as they colour in part of the design. If you draw pictures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus in white wax crayon, and then paint over it, the paint will not hold where the wax is. When finished there will be lots of colour on the canvas apart from the three figures in relief.

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4. Touch and sniff! – Gather together some items that give people an idea of the visitors or gifts that were brought to Jesus. Try to get hold of a sheepskin rug or man made version, some frankincense and myrrh, some straw for example. You may think of others. This is a sensory experience, to help give the story a new dimension.
5. Washing a pebble – to take home as a reminder of a new life in Christ. Provide some pebbles and a shallow dish of water in which to wash them.

### Equipment List

For each station you will need:

#### Station 1

Bible and printout of bible reading  
Instructions  
Soil  
Crocus or other small bulb  
Small Plant pots  
Hand wipes  
Small trowel

#### Station 2

Bible and printout of bible reading  
Instructions  
Large piece of paper i.e. flip chart  
or wallpaper with first line of psalm  
written i.e:  
*Praise the Lord oh my Soul ...*  
Pens

#### Station 3

Bible and printout of bible reading  
Instructions  
Large canvas, board or card  
Wax crayon/candle – white  
Water based paints  
Brushes  
Water  
Paper towels

#### Station 4

Bible and printout of bible reading  
Instructions  
Fleece  
Frankincense  
Myrrh  
Straw

#### Station 5

Bible and printout of bible reading  
Instructions  
Mucky pebbles  
Bowl of water  
Towel

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Please note:

- It is good to offer both the bible and printed reading at each station – some people like to find and read the verses before and after the stated passage, these like to have a bible to read from. Others can feel less confident in finding a specific passage or like the larger print that a printed sheet can offer. These can be downloaded from [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and can be modified in size or bible version. Some people prefer to remember their own version of the story. You may want to include some Bible story or picture books to encourage younger children to join in.
- Make a booklet for the people to take with them around the prayer stations, made up of the information sheets of all the stations. Often people can feel uncomfortable re-reading notes on a wall but a quick glance down in a booklet can offer guidance during prayer.
- Remember to check the supplies of items at the prayer stations that might get used up and need replenishing from time to time.

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Station 1: Shocking News

- Ask the Holy Spirit to use this time helping you focus on the reading and anything that God wishes to relate to your own circumstances.
- Read Luke 1 : 26-38 and Matthew 1 : 18-24
- Consider Mary and Joseph's response to their part in God's plan
- Plant a crocus in a small pot. Take it home and nurture it. Use it as a reminder that you have been adopted as God's child (see Ephesians 1:5).

#### Station 2: Visiting Elizabeth

- Ask the Holy Spirit to use this time helping you focus on the reading and anything that God wishes to relate to your own circumstances.
- Read– Luke 1 : 39-56
- Consider Mary and Elizabeth and their relationship with their Lord.
- Re-read Mary's song. On the wall is the beginning of a shared psalm. Read through what has been written so far. Can you add just one line to it? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you think of those close times you can have with your Saviour. Try to put it into a sentence.
- Consider that others may be writing after you, try to be sympathetic to the things they might like to add.
- At the end of this activity you will have your own church psalm

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### Station 3: The Birth

- Ask the Holy Spirit to use this time helping you focus on the reading and anything that God wishes to relate to your own circumstances.
- Read Luke 2 : 1-7
- Pick up a brush and add colour to the nativity picture. The characters have been covered in white wax crayon so they cannot be painted over and will show in relief when the painting is finished.
- As you paint meditate on this well known story. Consider the characters and their situation as well as their feelings. What do you share with them in your own life?

### Station 4: Visitors

- Ask the Holy Spirit to use this time helping you focus on the reading and anything that God wishes to relate to your own circumstances.
- Read Luke 2:8-20 and Matthew 2 : 1-12
- Before you are some items to help you think about these first visitors to such a special and yet very ordinary family.
- Touch and smell the items and allow your-self to be transported to a different situation.
- What effect would such a visit have on such a humble family? What effect does it have on you?

### Station 5: At the Temple

- Ask the Holy Spirit to use this time helping you focus on the reading and anything that God wishes to relate to your own circumstances.
- Read Luke 2 : 21 – 40
- Consider Simeon and Anna and how they were waiting for the Saviour.
- Think of people you know who are searching or waiting for something in their lives that will add meaning. Pray for them.
- Think of Christians throughout the world who are persecuted because of their faith, Pray for them.
- Wash a pebble and take it home as a reminder of your new life in Christ.

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### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more Advent items please revisit the website. If you want to have a prayer station at another time of the year see the item in the toolkit for general prayer stations or look out for other seasonal prayer stations.

### Acknowledgements

This material has been submitted by Wanda Gemmell