

REFLECTION IDEAS

Christmas Hope

Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 12:21

This presentation looks at the Christmas narrative found in the Bible and the Christian belief that Jesus was God's son and was born to bring hope to the world. The story is told from the perspective of the angels and focuses on what each of the characters in the Christmas story were hoping for.

The word 'angel' comes from the Greek *angelos*, meaning messenger and angels are very much part of the Christmas story in Matthew and Luke; telling Mary she will have a baby, reassuring Joseph that he should still marry Mary as her baby was from the Holy Spirit, and announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds outside Bethlehem.

Questions for reflection

- What are you hoping for this Christmas?
- Why do Christians see Jesus as hope?
- If God sent an angel or messenger to the world today, they would probably say "Don't be afraid!" but what else do you think their message might be? Would they bring a message of hope and encouragement or a warning about things that need changing in the world?

Links

A GenR8 Reflect video about angels is here: https://youtu.be/RC_br5-vXso

Cartoon versions of the bible story can be found here: <youtu.be/FrTFAZPQxpE> <youtu.be/OiEtuCaOEB4>

A sand art version is found here: <https://youtu.be/BLZG11txiZ0>

For a different take on the Christmas story for older children: www.paperlesschristmas.org.uk

Please check they are suitable for your group.

Inspire Prayer Space Activity – Christmas Hope

Equipment

Paper with mobile phone image, pens

Description

In the Christmas story the angel Gabriel brought Mary some good news - she was going to have a baby, God's son, Jesus. The shepherds were given good news by an angel too; Jesus, the hope of the world, had been born.

Think of a time when you were given some good news.

How did you feel?

How did you react?

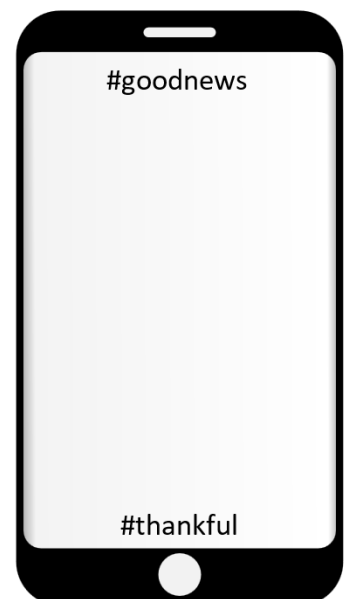
Write your good news on a phone shape.

Be thankful for your news!

Adapted from a Prayer Spaces in Schools resource



inspire
prayer spaces



See below for activity ideas

Angels

In the assembly we sang four verses of a song called 'The Angels Say', written below.

You can hear the full song on this link: <https://youtu.be/2IT1w-pEW7w>; the mp3 file for the song can be purchased online www.fischy.com or from iTunes or Amazon.

Mary, she was willing to raise God's little boy. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**
Through the years he brought her, sorrow and great joy. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**

Hallelujah, hallelujah, you're not alone the angels say. x2

Heavy hearted Joseph finds courage in a dream. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**
A different kind of family, love is still the same. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**

Hallelujah, hallelujah, you're not alone the angels say. x2

Shepherds on the hillside, choirs in the skies. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**
Ordinary people, frightened and surprised. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**

Hallelujah, hallelujah, you're not alone the angels say. x2

Sharing Christmas stories, both human and divine. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**
In the light and darkness, in our changing times. **Don't be afraid, the angels say.**

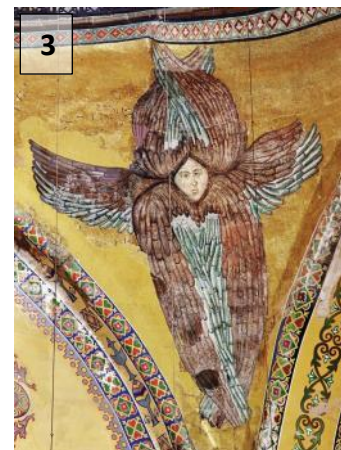
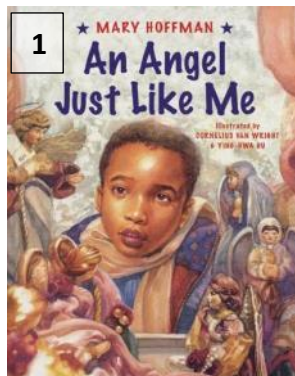
Hallelujah, hallelujah, you're not alone the angels say. x2

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Fischbacher, Suzanne Butler, and Margaret McLarty, © Fischy Music 2019

You could ask the children to make a picture of what they think an angel might look like.

Here are some ideas of how other people have imagined angels to be.

1. 'An Angel Just Like Me', a book by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu.
2. 'The Angel of the North', a sculpture by Anthony Gormley which stands in Gateshead. It weighs 200 tons and is the size of a Jumbo Jet, which makes it the largest piece of public art in Britain.
3. Mosaic of an angel from the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul – thought to be over 700 years old.
4. 'The Annunciation', painted by Jan Van Eyck in 1434-1436. The picture shows the angel Gabriel speaking to Mary about the birth of Jesus.
5. 'Angel', a screenprint by Keith Haring made in 1990.

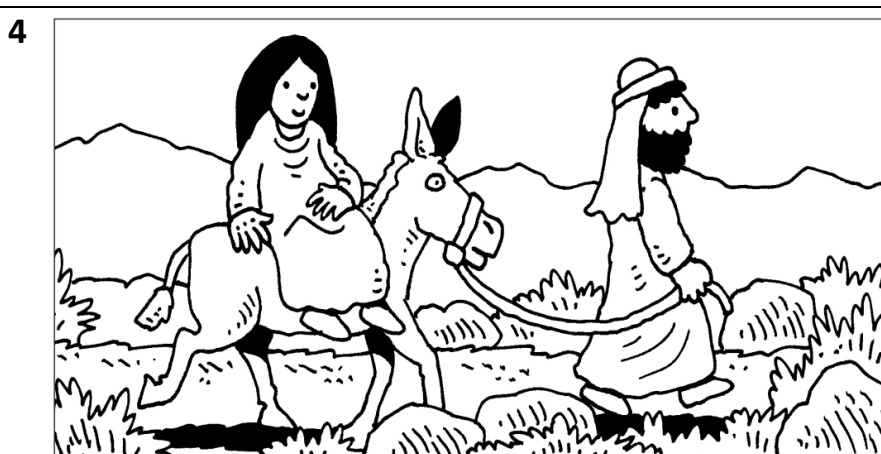
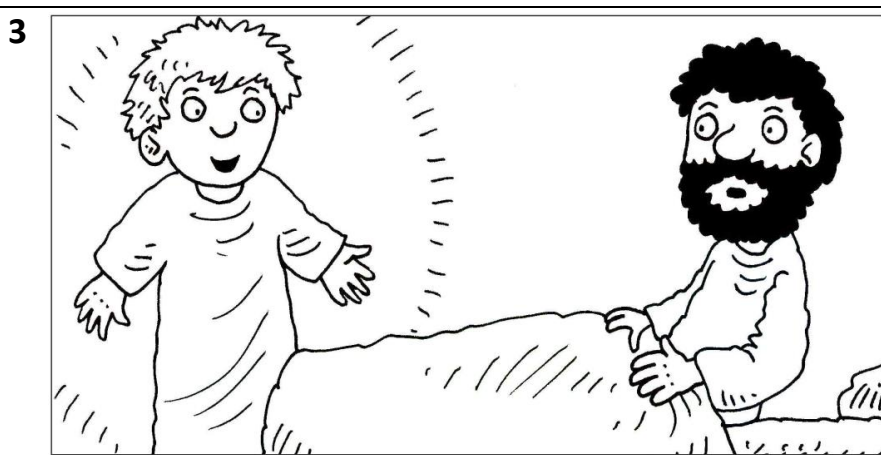
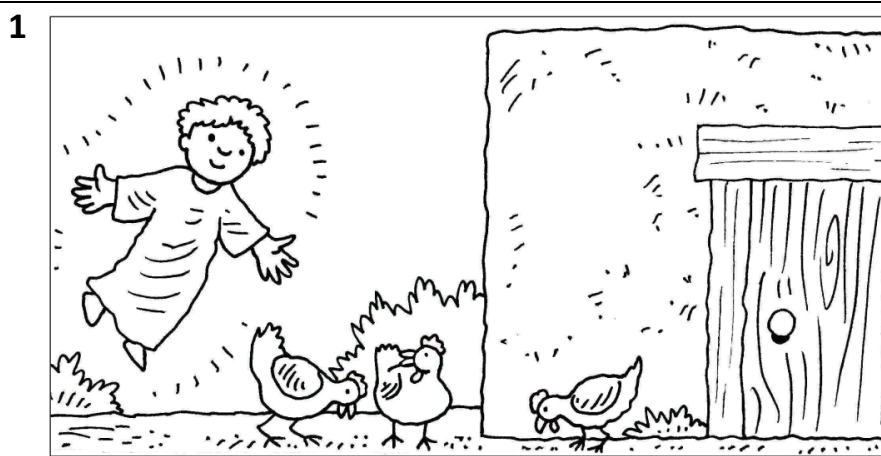


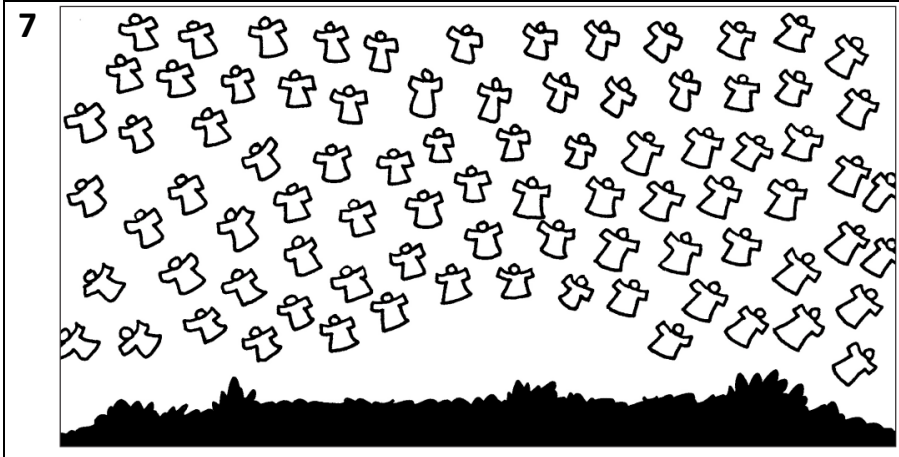
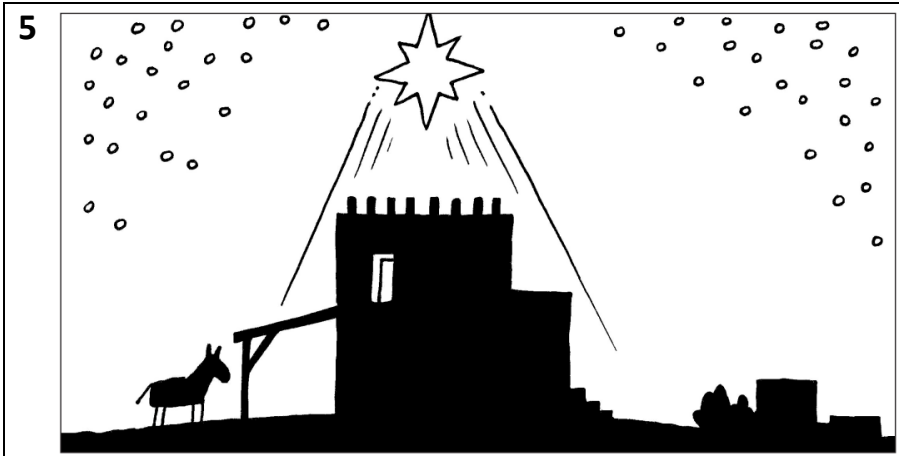
Did you know?

The name Gabriel means 'God's Hero' and he is seen as God's special messenger angel; on several occasions in the Bible he is given the job of coming to earth to give important announcements and tell of special events.

Christmas Hope – a colour in nativity story

Colour in the pictures of the Christmas story. Write some words next to each picture to re-tell the story, thinking about what each person might be hoping for.





‘His name shall be the hope of all the world.’

Useful links to more activities

Make an advent wreath with candles of hope: https://youtu.be/W_nvZhvMNum

Lots more fun resources can be found here: <https://www.whychristmas.com/story/>

Word Search Bible Verse

The Bible talks about hope. One verse that encourages us to put our hope in God for the future is: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope** and a future."

Find the words from the verse in the grid. Fill the letters you have not used from the grid into the spaces below to read where in the Bible you can find this verse.

DECLARES
FUTURE
GIVE
HARM
HAVE
HOPE
KNOW
LORD
PLANS
PROSPER
SAYS

