



**Share** *the*  
**wonder**  
*of* **Christmas**

*Action for  
Children*

**A joyful all-age Christmas service  
in support of Action for Children**



# About **Action** for **Children**

**Our vision is that every child and young person has a safe and happy childhood, and the foundations they need to thrive.**

We take action to change the childhoods of those who need help to thrive. Giving vulnerable children and young people the protection and practical help they urgently need and tirelessly campaigning for lasting change. Incredible people like you help our thousands of on-the-ground workers to support vulnerable children every day. We're a vital lifeline, working in more than 300 services across the UK and reaching over half a million children, young people and families last year.

## **Dear friends,**

In the Christmas story, the angels appear to the shepherds, and the shepherds are both astonished and full of joy at being told the good news and then finding that it's true. We'd love for more children to experience a reflection of that joy and wonder at Christmas, with food, gifts, and family celebrations. But 31% of children in the UK live in poverty and for many, these things are out of reach. That's why Action for Children is needed just as much now as we were when we were founded over 150 years ago.

### **Sharing the wonder**

Gathering for worship is a great way to bring people together and support others.

This year our theme is 'Share the wonder of Christmas', as we reflect on the amazing Christmas story while thinking about the children and families in our communities who find the season difficult.

We've created this flexible worship outline to help you plan your service. It's ready to go as it is with little planning needed, or you can tailor your service for your congregation. You can pick and choose ideas, and swap in some of your own. Want to download more copies and our Christmas carol booklet? Please visit: [actionforchildren.uk/faithFR](https://actionforchildren.uk/faithFR)

### **Lots of thank yous!**

Thanks to Sarah Giles for creating this worship resource with us.

As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts on our worship resources, so please get in touch if you have ideas.

On behalf of everyone at Action for Children, I'd also like to thank our church supporters for your amazing generosity this year. You're driven by love to help us take action for so many children, young people and families.

Thank you again for supporting Action for Children. I hope your service brings joy to you and everyone who takes part. I wish you a wonder-filled Christmas with your loved ones, and a happy new year.

Blessings,



**Karis Kolawole**

Faith Partnerships Lead

[karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk)

# Planning your Christmas service

We hope this booklet will help you to plan a special Christmas service in support of Action for Children. You can also use it at any other services or events you're organising. Please feel free to choose different carols, prayers and activities – whatever works for you.

Your Relationship Fundraising Executive can help you plan and also send you lots of useful fundraising materials, including:

- **Gift Aid envelopes.**
- **Posters.**
- **Leaflets.**

If you receive this as a mailing, you'll find their details on the enclosed contact sheet. If not, at: [actionforchildren.uk/faithFR](http://actionforchildren.uk/faithFR) (This link is also where you can download extra copies of this booklet, bauble templates and PowerPoint slides).

A great way to bring our work to life is to get one of our friendly speakers to talk at your church. Get in touch with your Relationship Fundraising Executive to find out more. Our YouTube channel – [youtube.com/user/ActionForChildrenUK](https://www.youtube.com/user/ActionForChildrenUK) – also has a selection of fantastic videos about what we do. You can show them at your service or any other event.

## **Banking funds raised**

You can now pay the funds you raise into your local Post Office.

To do this, you first need to apply for a deposit card by contacting our Supporter Care Team: [ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk) or calling **0300 123 2112**.

There are other ways to pay: BACS (online banking), our website, or by telephone. These are our preferred methods as they help keep operational costs to an absolute minimum. This means we can focus funds on supporting children.

Please help us to track your funds by adding a reference to your payment. It might be the name of your church or postcode, or even your Constituent ID, if you have it. Feel free to ask your regional fundraiser or contact Supporter Services if you're not sure of your ID. Please let them know you'll be making a payment in this way, so we can look out for it.

Send cheques to our Watford Office:

**3 The Boulevard,  
Ascot Rd,  
Watford,  
WD18 8AG**

Our colleagues there will receive and acknowledge them, with thanks.

# Share the wonder of ★Christmas



Thank you for joining us for our all-age Christmas service. Today we'll be reflecting on the wonder of the Christmas story and the responses of Mary and the shepherds in particular.

As we consider how Jesus was born into poverty rather than a palace, we think about children in our own community who are in need, and about the work of Action for Children who help to make a difference for thousands of families. We'll be praying for them, and there'll be an opportunity for you to take action and donate, showing more vulnerable children the love and wonder they should all have the opportunity to feel – at Christmas and all year round.

## Gather

Have you ever had a big surprise?  
Or had something really amazing  
happen to you?

Maybe you had an unexpected  
day out, or someone made you  
a birthday cake that you weren't  
expecting, or perhaps you bumped  
into a celebrity in the supermarket!

What's the most incredible thing  
that you've experienced?

*(Allow a few people to share their  
experiences)*

What do you think is the biggest  
surprise that anyone has ever  
experienced? I've got an idea what  
it might be, and there are some  
clues hidden around the room.  
Can you find them?

*(Have about 10 of the angel crafts  
from page 12 hidden in various  
places around the room for people to  
find and bring forward.)*

We've got a little crowd of angels  
here, but in the story we're going  
to hear, a huge crowd of angels  
appeared to some shepherds who  
were in a field at night. Wow! That  
must have been amazing.

## Prayer

Father God, we thank you that you came to us as a vulnerable baby, in need of care and compassion. Help us as we think about what that means, and as we think about other children in need of our help today.  
**Amen.**

## Bible reading

### Luke 2:8–20, International Children's Bible

*You might choose to have several people sharing this reading, or to ask the congregation to join in the words in bold.*

<sup>8</sup>That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. <sup>10</sup>The angel said to them, **'Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box.'**

<sup>13</sup>Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

**<sup>14</sup>'Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God.'**

<sup>15</sup>Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about.'

<sup>16</sup>So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. <sup>17</sup>And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. **<sup>18</sup>Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them.**

<sup>19</sup>Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. <sup>20</sup>Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

### Or show this video:

*The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Shepherds), Saddleback Kids*  
[youtu.be/TJIC57EvYFo](https://youtu.be/TJIC57EvYFo)

## Sermon idea one:

### Shepherds

The Bible passage we've just heard talks about how the shepherds were watching their sheep, when first one angel, and then a great crowd of angels appeared to them, telling them that Jesus had been born. The Jewish people had been waiting for their king to come, and here he was... but in a stable, not a palace! This was not what they expected! Jesus didn't arrive with a throne and a crown and lots of money. Mary and Joseph were poor, and God gave them the job of looking after Jesus as he grew up.

The angels surprised and amazed the shepherds when they appeared in the sky at night, telling them that Jesus had been born. They went to Bethlehem and found it was true, and they were so excited that they told everyone, and everyone they told was amazed too.

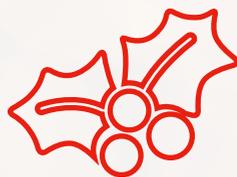
Today, 4.3 million UK children are living in poverty. Families are making impossible choices between heating and eating. There are children sleeping in cold homes, not expecting any presents, not expecting a special Christmas meal together. For too many children and families, making Christmas feel special with different food and presents is just not something they can afford. But you could help change that.

One way we can bring wonder and hope to children and families is through supporting Action for Children, who come alongside families when they are most needed and help to heat homes and put food on the table. You could help give the gift of a warm, happy, magic-filled Christmas.

Through their work, Action for Children supported over half a million children and their families last year. And their Secret Santa Christmas campaign aims to help vulnerable children feel the magic of Christmas. You can get involved by sharing this message, finding out more online, and donating if you can.

Let's hear from Amanda, a Support Worker for Action for Children, as she tells us about the reality too many children are living. And how she makes a difference, with our support.

[youtu.be/Hh9M1ypYIAs](https://youtu.be/Hh9M1ypYIAs)



## Sermon idea two:

### Mary

Luke 2:19 says that Mary 'hid these things in her heart' and that she continued to think about them. Through dreams, visits from angels and the reports of the shepherds and wise men, God kept on confirming to her and Joseph that Jesus really was the son of God and the promised king. All this must have felt both amazing and overwhelming for Mary, who was only a young woman, with an enormous responsibility. The encouragement that it must have been to have a visit from the shepherds, telling her what had happened with the angels, was something she thought about for a long time afterwards.

When we're feeling overwhelmed, visits from others can really help us. Maybe someone brings a meal round, or just comes to listen and give us a hug. Having support from someone else makes us feel so much better. And we can all find some way to support and encourage someone else.

Today, 4.3 million UK children are living in poverty. Families are making impossible choices between heating and eating. There are children sleeping in cold homes, not expecting any presents, not expecting a special Christmas meal together.

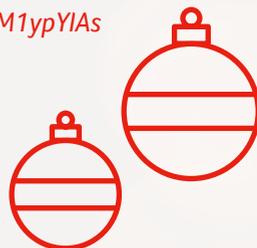
For too many children and families, making Christmas feel special with different food and presents is just not something they can afford. But you could help to change that.

One way we can bring wonder and hope to children and families is through supporting Action for Children, who come alongside families when they are most needed and help to heat homes and put food on the table. You could help give the gift of a warm, happy, magic-filled Christmas.

Through their work, Action for Children supported half a million children, young people and families last year. And their Secret Santa Christmas campaign aims to help vulnerable children feel the magic of Christmas. As a church family, we are joining the Christmas campaign, and, if you are able, there is an opportunity to donate at the end of the service.

Let's hear from Amanda, a Support Worker for Action for Children, as she tells us about the reality too many children are living. And how she makes a difference, with our support.

[youtu.be/Hh9M1ypYIAs](https://youtu.be/Hh9M1ypYIAs)





## Explore and respond

### Anagrams quiz

Some of these anagrams are Christmas carols, and others are ways in which Action for Children help children, young people, and families when they need it. You can choose whether to do this quiz as a whole congregation, or split into two groups and make it competitive.

#### Carols

★ Hens tilting

*Answer:* Silent Night

★ Sweet gherkin

*Answer:* We Three Kings

★ I acknowledge songs

*Answer:* Good King Wenceslas

★ Entitled yolk

*Answer:* Little Donkey

★ My daft Welsh otter has vices

*Answer:* The Twelve Days of Christmas

#### The help Action for Children provide

★ Counteractively discharges

*Answer:* Electricity and gas vouchers

★ Camels throw

*Answer:* Warm clothes

★ Ramps stretchiness

*Answer:* Christmas presents

★ Twinned bridge

*Answer:* Winter bedding

★ Harsher indictments

*Answer:* The Christmas dinner



### Discussion

Questions on Luke 2:8–20 for discussion in small groups:

★ If you were Mary, what in particular would you hide in your heart and continue to think about?

★ Why do you think God chose to announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds, rather than another group of people?

★ If Jesus had been born in the UK this year, what type of support would Mary and Joseph need? (Consider that Luke 2:24 says that when they took Jesus to the temple as the Jewish law required, they sacrificed pigeons or doves, which was the cheapest option. This tells us that they only had a very small amount of money).

★ What does this story teach us about sharing good news?

## Collective craft

Using a large pin board decorated to look like the fields outside Bethlehem at night, pin the angels from the beginning of the service in the night sky. Distribute copies of the angel and shepherd templates (see pages 12), paper doilies (if you're using them), pens and glue sticks so everyone can make an angel or shepherd (or both).

Before they glue the angels and shepherds together, ask everyone to write a short prayer on the inside of each one for the work of Action for Children. For example, they might pray for the support workers who visit families, or the children who will receive gifts and warm clothes.

Ask the children to collect the angels and shepherds. Pin them to the board.

You could invite people to share their prayers if you/they would like.



## Prayer

*(This could be read by the service leader or by children.)*

Father God,

We thank you for our time together.

We thank you for the work of Action for Children.

We pray for all the people who will receive help from Action for Children this Christmas. Please give them joy, wonder, and peace. Keep them warm and well fed, and put presents into the hands of children who would otherwise go without.

We pray for the staff of Action for Children, whether they're working in an office or visiting people's homes. Please bring them satisfaction and encouragement in their work as they make a real difference to thousands of families. We pray that their own Christmases would be a time of rest and joy.

Thank you for using ordinary people like the shepherds, like Mary and Joseph, and like us to do your work.

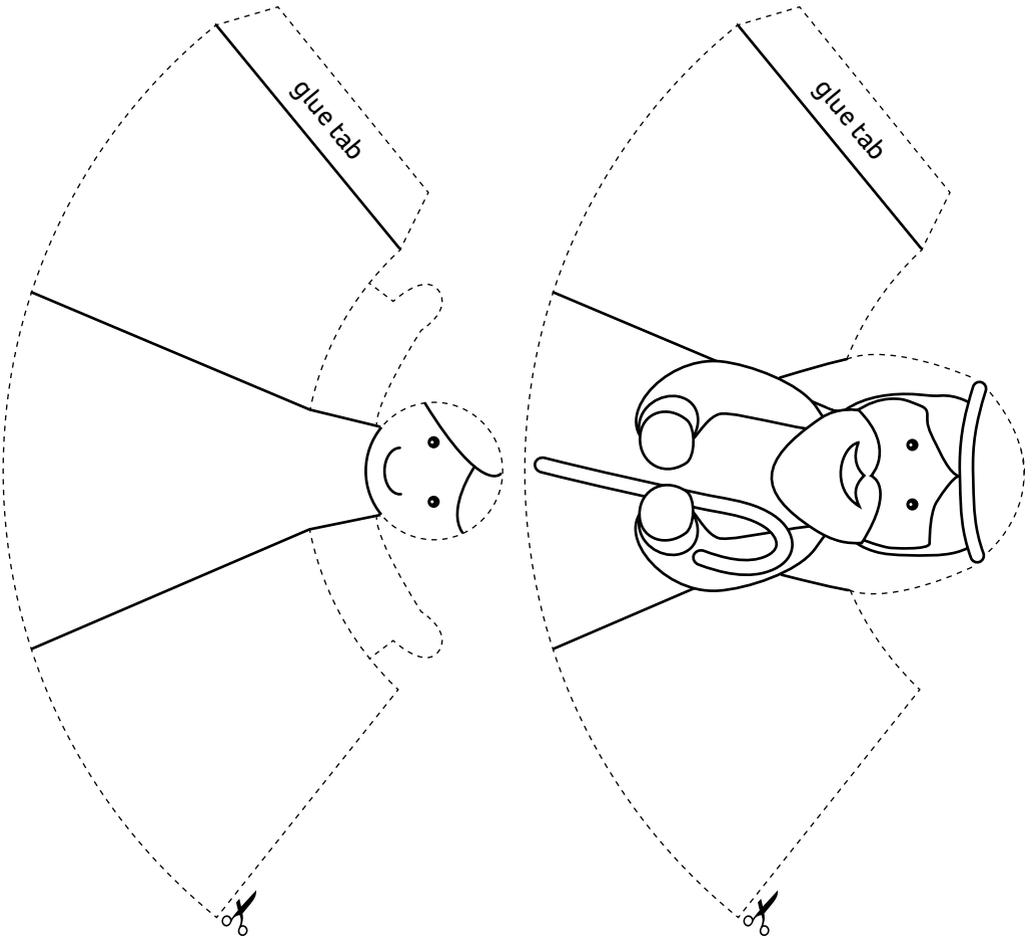
Help us to listen, to hear your voice and to play our part in your plan.

**Amen.**

# Templates for crafts

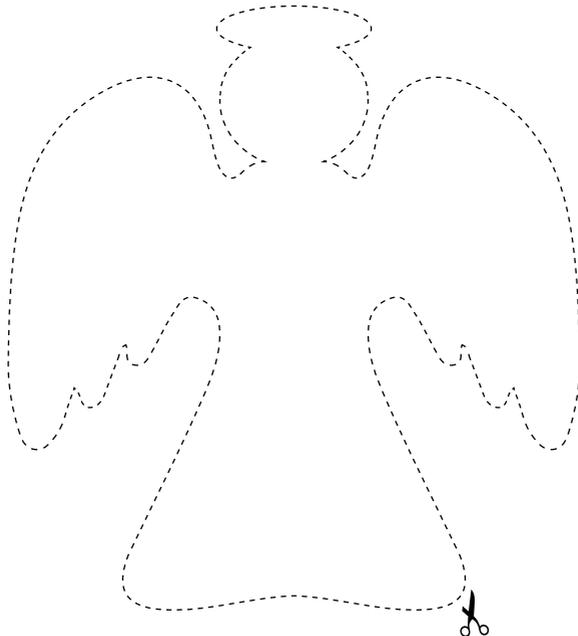
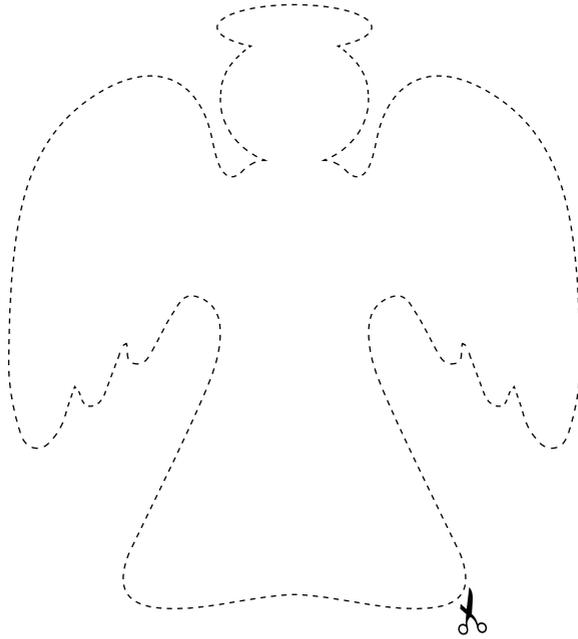
## Activity one and two

Cut out these angels and shepherds, and cut along the dotted lines to separate the arms from the bodies. Then glue the tabs and make them into cone shapes. You can add paper doilies to make the angels' wings.



## Activity three

Angel template for 'Pop-up angel surprise' (see page 18).



## Suggested songs

### **While Shepherds Watched**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/32008/while-shepherds-watched-christmas/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/32008/while-shepherds-watched-christmas/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/eSyUvOUZwxQ](http://youtu.be/eSyUvOUZwxQ) or [youtu.be/gprcoLYMoWo](http://youtu.be/gprcoLYMoWo)

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### **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7014599/hark-the-herald-angels-sing/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7014599/hark-the-herald-angels-sing/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/lCt1s44cfMM](http://youtu.be/lCt1s44cfMM) or [youtu.be/3P97yj-f4sc](http://youtu.be/3P97yj-f4sc)

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### **Mary, Did You Know?**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/839225/mary-did-you-know/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/839225/mary-did-you-know/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/ifCWN5pJGIE](http://youtu.be/ifCWN5pJGIE) or [youtu.be/F1H1-scfD1s](http://youtu.be/F1H1-scfD1s)

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### **Tonight (Glory to God)** (*Graham Kendrick*)

713, *Mission Praise (30th anniversary edition, 2014)*  
[grahamkendrick.co.uk/tonight-glory-to-god/](http://grahamkendrick.co.uk/tonight-glory-to-god/)

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### **Silent Night**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/27862/silent-night-stille-nacht/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/27862/silent-night-stille-nacht/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/sme8N2pzRx8](http://youtu.be/sme8N2pzRx8) or [youtu.be/nEH7\\_2c644Q](http://youtu.be/nEH7_2c644Q)

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### **We Three Kings (Star of Wonder)**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/38002/we-three-kings-kings-of-orient/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/38002/we-three-kings-kings-of-orient/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/jBwL3y-Wlms](http://youtu.be/jBwL3y-Wlms) or [youtu.be/E0BJonwPCds](http://youtu.be/E0BJonwPCds)

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### **Joy to the World**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7128618/joy-to-the-world-joyful-joyful/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7128618/joy-to-the-world-joyful-joyful/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/-Xo64Q2ucQ8](http://youtu.be/-Xo64Q2ucQ8)

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### **O Come, O Come Emmanuel**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/1936508/o-come-o-come-emmanuel/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/1936508/o-come-o-come-emmanuel/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/JfsTkkF17JU](http://youtu.be/JfsTkkF17JU)

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### **Gabriel's Message**

(*Traditional Basque, paraphrased by Sabine Baring Gould, arr Edgar Pettman, 1922*)  
[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7122439/gabriels-message/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7122439/gabriels-message/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/g5oA29INBH8](http://youtu.be/g5oA29INBH8) or [youtu.be/J99eBjzW5Wl](http://youtu.be/J99eBjzW5Wl)

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### **O Holy Night!**

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7095544/o-holy-night/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7095544/o-holy-night/viewleadsheet) or [youtu.be/Y1oLk54R5Xg](http://youtu.be/Y1oLk54R5Xg)

 **From the Squalor of a Borrowed Stable** (*Stuart Townend*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/2733786/immanuel/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/2733786/immanuel/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/ahgrPbdFUcl](https://youtu.be/ahgrPbdFUcl)

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 **Fullness of Grace** (*Keith Getty and Stuart Townend*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/4411752/fullness-of-grace/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4411752/fullness-of-grace/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/iH00vNlaz3w](https://youtu.be/iH00vNlaz3w)

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 **God of Wonders** (*Marc Byrd and Steve Hindalong*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/3118757/god-of-wonders/viewchordsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/3118757/god-of-wonders/viewchordsheet)  
or [youtu.be/704sA3q5\\_P8](https://youtu.be/704sA3q5_P8)

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 **Holy Forever** (*Chris Tomlin arr Phil Wickham*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7201044/holy-forever/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7201044/holy-forever/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/SIEEgMWwxhc](https://youtu.be/SIEEgMWwxhc)

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 **In the Darkness We Were Waiting (King of Kings)**

(*Brooke and Scott Ligertwood and Jason Ingram*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7127647/king-of-kings/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7127647/king-of-kings/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/dQl4izxPeNU](https://youtu.be/dQl4izxPeNU)

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 **Joy Has Dawned** (*Keith Getty and Stuart Townend*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/4408246/joy-has-dawned/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4408246/joy-has-dawned/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/AP5EUx93FRs](https://youtu.be/AP5EUx93FRs)

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 **Little Town**

(*Words and Music: Phillip Brooks, Lewis Redner, arr Chris Eaton; Performed by Amy Grant*)

[youtu.be/OD2BVp33QV0](https://youtu.be/OD2BVp33QV0)

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 **Love Incarnate, Love Divine (Noel)** (*Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Matt Redman*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7050419/noel/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7050419/noel/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/5Vwu-t7QRaE](https://youtu.be/5Vwu-t7QRaE)

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 **May We Never Lose Our Wonder** (*Amanda Cook*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7029039/wonder/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7029039/wonder/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/3F7lxt5FTeo](https://youtu.be/3F7lxt5FTeo)

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 **The World Waits for a Miracle** (*Lauren Daigle, Paul Duncan and Paul Mabury*)

[songselect.ccli.com/songs/7023299/light-of-the-world/viewleadsheet](http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7023299/light-of-the-world/viewleadsheet)  
or [youtu.be/\\_cLhaZIBSpo](https://youtu.be/_cLhaZIBSpo)

# Chloe's\* story

Last winter, six-year-old Chloe\* spent every day she was home with her mum sitting together under blankets in the living room, because they had no money to heat the whole home.

Despite working as a care worker, Chloe's mum, Layla\*, still struggled to make ends meet. There were days when she would skip meals so her daughter could eat.

***“ I barely had enough money for food, let alone decorations and Christmas presents. I just didn't know how to make Christmas special for Chloe, and she was so excited about Santa coming to visit our house. ”***

Chloe was passionate about playing football, and written in gold capital letters at the top of her Christmas list to Santa was 'football boots'.

At bedtime, two weeks before Christmas, Chloe told her mum she'd crossed off the presents on her list. Instead, she'd asked if he could bring her mum some 'special food' to make a Christmas dinner. Layla realised Chloe must have overheard her crying down the phone to her sister about how she couldn't afford to make a Christmas dinner.

"She was saying, "I really don't mind, Mummy. I don't need any presents" like it just didn't

matter. I was so sad. I knew how much she wanted those football boots so she could go out and play with her friends.'

The family was referred to Action for Children for support, and the vouchers they received meant that Layla could afford to buy food and heat the house for the next few weeks.

"Our support worker was so kind and understanding and said she wanted to make sure Chloe had a nice Christmas. I gave her Chloe's Christmas list but honestly I wasn't expecting anything."

The week before Christmas, their support worker arrived at Chloe's house with fairy lights, chocolate

decorations for their little tree, a hamper filled with fresh fruit and vegetables, biscuits and chocolates, and a bag full of wrapped presents.

On Christmas morning, Chloe found the presents under the tree.

“At first she couldn’t speak. She was just staring at the presents with her mouth wide open.”

As Chloe started to unwrap the biggest box, her face lit up. It was the football boots that she had been wanting all year.

**“Watching Chloe’s face was just the best feeling ever. The excitement, the pure joy, I will never forget it. She burst into tears and kept saying ‘Santa came, he really came!’”**

“She couldn’t get the boots on quick enough and was running around the house in them. She didn’t want to take them off at bedtime, so she slept in her boots!”

On Boxing Day, Chloe went to her local green to play football with her friends all afternoon.

“It was the happiest I’d seen her in months. She literally did not take the boots off the whole Christmas holidays.”

For Chloe it was the best Christmas ever. For Layla, it was the Christmas she never thought she could give her daughter.

**“We weren’t worrying about heating or food or bills. We were just a family, making happy memories. I was so, so grateful. Action for Children’s kindness and generosity meant we could enjoy a Christmas meal together and most of all, you made sure Santa visited Chloe. It was a day we will never forget.”**

\*This story is based on real examples of children Action for Children support, illustrating what they’ve been through while protecting their identities.

# Children's Christmas activities

## Pop-up angel surprise

Craft | 20 mins

You will need:

- ★ Black or dark blue paper cups, or white ones to colour.
- ★ Gold or silver star stickers.
- ★ Lolly sticks/craft sticks.
- ★ Copies of the pop-up angel template from page 13.
- ★ Scissors.
- ★ Glue stick or sticky tape.



Ask the children to decorate the outside of their paper cups to look like the night sky, using the star stickers (and pens if needed), then to colour and cut out the angels. The lolly stick is then attached to the base of the angel.

An adult should cut a small slit to the base of the cup, then the angel 'hides' in the cup with the lolly stick passing through the base. The lolly stick is pushed up and the angel appears!



## Racing shepherds

Game | 15 mins

You will need:

- ★ Three to six model shepherds (which could be the ones from the craft on page 12).
- ★ A game board made of cardboard marked with squares from the fields to the stable (you could use a wooden Nativity set to help set the scene).
- ★ Party poppers.



Like Ludo or similar games, teams of players roll a dice to move their shepherd along the path to the stable. Keep playing until all the shepherds have arrived, and then let off the party poppers to demonstrate the joy and excitement of the shepherds.

## Origami heart prayer box

Craft and prayers | 20 mins

You will need:

- ★ Red squares of paper (ideally 20cm x 20cm).
- ★ Strips of paper for writing prayers on.



Follow instructions for making an origami heart box such as [twinkl.co.uk/resource/how-to-make-an-origami-heart-box-tp-1655116876](http://twinkl.co.uk/resource/how-to-make-an-origami-heart-box-tp-1655116876) or [youtube.com/watch?v=LTI78mmyrqs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTI78mmyrqs). Depending on the ages and abilities involved, adult help and/or some pre-made hearts may be needed.

Talk about the way 'Mary hid these things in her heart' (Luke 2:19) and that she continued to think about them.

Discuss how we can pray for those who need extra support at Christmas and ask the children to write or draw their prayers and put them inside the heart boxes.

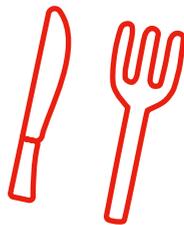
You could also talk about the way God sometimes uses us to answer people's prayers, and how we can take action, including supporting other helpers such as Action for Children.

## Christmas dinner challenge

Craft and discussion | 20 mins

You will need:

- ★ Uncoated paper plates.
- ★ Wooden cutlery.
- ★ Pens.
- ★ Glue.



Ask the children to draw on their plate all their favourite things to eat at Christmas.

As they finish, have a conversation with them about how it would feel to have none of those things. You might also like to talk about charities and how Action for Children works to help people who need a hand to put food on the table, and how anyone can find themselves needing extra help.

Then hand out the wooden cutlery, and ask the children to write on each piece one thing they could do to help someone who has less than they do at Christmas. Perhaps something they could share, or an action they could take. Glue the cutlery to the plates, and challenge them to take action when they are able.



# Sheep biscuits recipe



**Biscuit decoration | 20-30 mins**

**You will need:**

- ★ 16 circular shortbread biscuits.
- ★ 100g of icing sugar.
- ★ 1 tsp of vanilla extract.
- ★ 200g of margarine or softened butter.
- ★ 100g desiccated coconut.
- ★ A tube of white writing icing.
- ★ 16 chocolate buttons.
- ★ 16 giant chocolate buttons.
- ★ 32 edible sugar eyes.
- ★ A plate.
- ★ A knife.

- 1** Make buttercream by mixing the icing sugar and margarine or butter to make a thick but spreadable consistency.
- 2** Pour the desiccated coconut on to a plate.
- 3** Spread a generous layer of buttercream on the top of each of the biscuits, then dip them into the desiccated coconut so they are covered with the coconut on the top.
- 4** Use the writing icing to 'glue' two eyes on to each of the giant chocolate buttons.
- 5** Use the knife (helping children who need it) to cut the smaller chocolate buttons in half, and then use more writing icing to glue them behind the bigger chocolate buttons to make ears.
- 6** Use writing icing or spare buttercream to attach the faces to the coconut-covered biscuits.
- 7** The biscuits can be eaten straight away, or will need half an hour for the icing to set if they are going to be taken home.

As you make the biscuits, you could talk about how important the sheep were to the shepherds, and that the shepherds slept in the fields every night to protect them from other animals that might try to attack them. But the news about Jesus was so important that they left the sheep in the fields and rushed to the stable to find him!

Recipe inspired by: [eatsamazing.co.uk/easter/easter-treat-recipes/easy-shortbread-sheep-cookies-recipe](https://eatsamazing.co.uk/easter/easter-treat-recipes/easy-shortbread-sheep-cookies-recipe)

**Be a**  
**Secret**  
**Santa**  
**for a vulnerable child**



## **The magic of Christmas begins in childhood. Hanging stockings. Sharing festive food. Presents under the tree. It's a time for children to feel loved and make memories that last a lifetime.**

But for too many children across the UK, Christmas is anything but magical. No stockings. No presents. No festive food – often no food at all. Imagine your first memories of Christmas being going to bed hungry, being too cold to sleep and hiding your disappointment when Santa doesn't come.

But you could help change that. Your gift could help a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas.

### **Children across the UK need a Secret Santa like you.**

4.5 million UK children now live in poverty. That's 31% of all children. And, devastatingly, 100,000 more children than the previous year. More children are suffering. More families are at breaking point.

It's easy to think that poverty happens elsewhere. But it's affecting children in your community. Christmas becomes just another day of empty cupboards, putting on an extra jumper to keep warm, and wondering why Santa remembered their friends and not them.

Childhood is short. We only get a few chances to make magical memories. That's why we need your support now.

Donate today and you could bring back the magic. You could give the essentials of warm clothes, a hot meal, or a Christmas present for a child who wouldn't otherwise get one. Thanks to you, they could wake up knowing Santa has remembered them after all. They just won't know that Santa is you.



**Be a Secret Santa and you could help a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas.**

**[iamsanta.org.uk](http://iamsanta.org.uk)**

## Share the wonder

We love seeing pictures and videos from your events. Send them to us or post on social media (...and make sure you tag us!)



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## Get in touch

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