



**E-book Code:
REAU-8006**



For all primary years.

Celebrating Christmas

**A resource book exploding with
ideas and activities for Christmas.**

Written by Melinda Blyton. Illustrated by Terry Allen. © Ready-Ed Publications - 2000.
Published by Ready-Ed Publications (2000) P.O. Box 276 Greenwood W.A. 6024
Email: info@readyed.com.au Website: www.readyed.com.au

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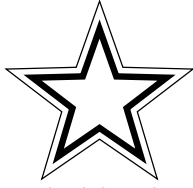
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ISBN 1 86397 350 8

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Preface



As a child Christmas was a very special and magical time for me. The lead up to Christmas was a time filled with anticipation and preparation. My family celebrated a traditional English Christmas where the focus was on the family and sharing. On Christmas Eve my family and I would attend a Christmas church service and on Christmas Day we would congregate at my grandparents' place with all the relatives. Christmas lunch was roasted chicken, ham on the bone and baked vegetables with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas pudding and brandy custard.

As an adult and mother, Christmas remains a very special season for me. I still look forward to the preparations for Christmas as well as the family gatherings and the traditional baked dinner.

As a teacher in the Australian education system, I find Christmas comes at a busy period of the school year. It falls at a time when student reports are due and end-of-year school concerts and presentation nights are being organised. At this time of the year, I often find myself giving the classroom a big clean-up and attempting to finalise any outstanding school business. Amongst all of this, I try to find time to focus on the meaning of Christmas with my students.

This book is written mindful of the many commitments which occur in mid to late December. It is designed to help teachers to gain a new perspective towards dealing with Christmas in the classroom. The book is exploding with ideas and activities to assist children of all creeds and cultures, to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of this special time of the year.

December 25th has long been celebrated as a day of festivities. This book explores the history and traditions that surround this season of promise and hope. It helps to illustrate that the "Australian Christmas" is really a multicultural celebration with many traditions borrowed from many parts of the globe.

How to use this book

This book contains six chapters, each of which focuses on a different aspect of Christmas. The book follows the format of:

- ❖ Historical information and related stories and legends.
- ❖ Suggested activities based upon the chapter's theme. The activities have been designed to be incorporated across the curriculum and all are fun and educational.
- ❖ Activity sheets that may be photocopied for classroom use.

The activities can be adapted to suit children from kindergarten to year six. Teachers are encouraged to modify the activity sheets, adding or deleting written information and instructions where necessary.

Most of the art and craft activities in this book use recycled materials. To help gather these resources send a note home in early October informing parents and guardians of the type of materials that would be useful for the children's Christmas art and craft activities, such as old Christmas cards, unloved Christmas decorations, Christmas stamps, buttons and fabric scraps.

It is unfortunate that Christmas is at the end of the school year when display boards, walls and ceilings are cleared of the children's work. Instead of restricting artwork to only 'take-away' art and craft and colour-in sheets, the activities provided allow you to put the children's excitement and energy for Christmas into artwork that can be displayed around your school and local community. Choose places where the children's talents can be appreciated, while at the same time spread a little Christmas spirit. For example, exhibit the children's work on school notice boards, in the school office or outside on a portable pin board on assembly day. In the wider community places such as nursing homes, hospitals, post offices, the bank or your local church may also welcome a little festive cheer. These displays do not need to be elaborate or time consuming. Remember - children's artwork is always appreciated for its originality and innocence, plus it does wonders for your children's self esteem and your school's image!

So ... plan and get organised for your Christmas studies well in advance and you will find that you will have plenty of time to enjoy spreading the Christmas message of promise and joy, and in what better way than through the eyes of children whom you know and love.

Happy reading and have a wonderful Christmas!

Melinda Blyton

A Quick Christmas Quiz

Put your knowledge to the test!

Scoring

10/10 — Excellent (Go straight to the activities!)

7/10 — Very Good (But do read on!)

less than 6/10 — **READ ON!**



1. December 25th has been known as the birth date of the SUN or SON?
2. Why is the day after Christmas called Boxing Day?
3. Which country officially cancelled Christmas in the 17th century?
4. What are the traditional colours of the four candles on the Advent Wreath?
5. What do the Australian Aborigines have in common with one of the three gifts given to baby Jesus by the Wise Men?
6. When the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem, where did they find Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus? (a) in a house (b) in a cave (c) in a stable
7. What country did the Christmas tree, as we know it, originate from?
8. In what year was the first Christmas card printed? (a) 1833 (b) 1843 (c) 1853
9. In the song, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' what did 'my true love' send to me on the fourth day of Christmas?
10. Who invented Christmas Crackers? (a) John Jones (b) Tom Smith (c) Bob Brown

1. Both are correct. (See chapter 1.)
2. It has got nothing to do with the sport boxing or family fights, but rather the opening of poor boxes and distribution of the money to the needy. (See chapter 1.)
3. England in 1647. (See chapter 1.)
4. Three candles are purple and one is pink. (See chapter 2.)
5. Frankincense (a sweet smelling smoke) is used during religious ceremonies as a medium for purification. Similarly some tribes of Australian Aborigines traditionally walked through smoke to cleanse their spirit. (See chapter 3.)
6. (a) in a house. (See chapter 3.)
7. Germany. (See chapter 4.)
8. (b) 1843 — commissioned by Sir Henry Cole and designed by his friend John Horsley. (See chapter 5.)
9. Four 'colly' bird — black birds. (See chapter 6.)
10. A baker by the name of Thomas Smith. (See chapter 6.)

ANSWERS

Activities

CPAS — Christmas Past Activity Sheet

Christmas Booklet

(CPAS 1)

During Advent (the four weeks leading up to Christmas) a great way to record the children's drawings and thoughts about the Christmas Season is to make a Christmas booklet.

The booklet is made up of a number of photocopied activity sheets (using this book and other sources) stapled together with a cover page. It is important to decide what purpose the booklet is going to serve in your classroom. Will it be used for the children to complete on their own / with a friend during free time or when they finish their work early? Or for the class to complete together after discussions and verbal instructions? Perhaps a mixture of both! Make the activities you choose **challenging, fun** and **informative**.

Using old Christmas cards, direct the children to design, cut out and glue a Christmas collage onto the rectangle on CPAS 1. Colour the other pictures on the page to complete the cover. Alternatively the children may draw a picture of their family celebrating Christmas or their favourite part of the nativity story.

Family Celebrations

How does your family celebrate Christmas?

Ask the children to share with the person sitting next to them two things that their family does each year to celebrate Christmas. Allow each child to share one of the things his or her family does to celebrate Christmas with the rest of the class. Record the answers on a large piece of paper. Tally the answers given if others in the class do the same things.

Discuss possible reasons as to why families do these things at Christmas time. Record answers. Encourage the children to ask their parents why their family celebrates Christmas this way?

Have the children write a poem or make a booklet titled "Christmas at My House".

Example:

*Every year at Christmas time at my house
We decorate the big old pine tree in our front yard with Christmas lights
My little sister thinks we do this so that Santa knows where to find us
But I know we do this because we like telling everyone that
Jesus will soon be born!*

Make a class big book titled "Christmas in Australia". Have each child contribute one of the things that his/her family does to help prepare for Christmas or something that they do on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

A Christmas Game

(A game for 3 - 4)

(CPAS 2)

Children colour in and cut out the category list from the page and glue or tape it to a cardboard roll.

Each child will need to make a scorecard from scrap paper. If four children are playing, eight lines will be required on the scorecard. (Refer to CPAS 2)

The children take it in turns to roll the cardboard category roller. The category that is revealed facing up is the one that the roller reads out. The children have 30 seconds to think and write down one thing that fits into the category stated. Each child shares their answer and scores 5 points if no one else has the same answer and 1 point if someone else has the same. The game ends when everyone has two turns. The child with the most points wins.

Christmas Past Survey

(CPAS 3)

Organise an excursion to your local nursing home for the children to meet with the residents and discuss Christmas when they were young. Children pair up with a resident to complete the survey sheet.

In return, the children could sing some Christmas carols, put on a Christmas play or organise a special morning tea for the residents. Take photos of the morning and make up a class Christmas newsletter or a display with the pictures and the information collected.

Alternatively, invite some members of your local Historical Society or some of the children's grandparents in to talk to the children about Christmas when they were young.

Activities

AAS — Advent Activity Sheet

Getting Ready Book The First Christmas

(AAS 1, 2, 3 & 4)

Photocopy AAS 1 & 2 and AAS 3 & 4 back to back. Place AAS 3/4 on top of AAS 1/2 and fold in half to make the book.

This fun little photocopy book is a great way to begin the season of Advent. It is also an economical and practical way for the class to read the Christmas Story together. Throughout the story, people are 'getting ready'. At the end of each page discuss who, why and what needed to be prepared. Ask the children how they and their families may 'get ready' for Jesus' birthday.

Using the same pattern as 'Getting Ready' ask the children write and make their own 'Getting Ready' story book. They may like to write individually, in a small group or as a class with an elected scribe. The topic may be — Christmas Day, a Birthday Party, a Baptism, a Wedding or the End of Year Class Party.

Are You Ready?

(AAS 5)

Read AAS 5 as a class and discuss. Share with the children that when we prepare for special events we prepare physically - clean and decorate our homes, prepare special food, buy or make gifts etc. These are a more obvious sign of preparation. But we also prepare mentally and spiritually — that is our minds and our feelings. Many families light candles and pray together, make the effort to visit or phone family and friends that they have not seen for a long time. Many families go to 'Carols by Candlelight' and to church on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning to help prepare their minds and feelings. Ask the children to share the ways their family prepares for Christmas both physically and spiritually.

Miming Game - Preparing

During Advent we prepare ourselves in our own special ways. In fact every day we are preparing ourselves for something — sometimes consciously and other times subconsciously! Ask the children to write on a strip of paper one thing that they have to prepare to do and place it into a container. Give examples. Choose a child to begin. He or she pulls a topic out of the container and reads it — e.g. clean my teeth.

He or she then must think — **I am going to clean my teeth. What do I need to do?**

The child then mimes getting ready to clean his teeth but not the actual cleaning. Other children then try and guess what he or she is **preparing** to do. The student who guesses correctly then selects a topic from the container and the game begins again.

This game may be played in one sitting so that everyone in the class has a turn or it may be played for three turns, 5 minutes before lunch as a treat, everyday during Advent.

A Class Christmas Tree or Jesse Tree

Using a plastic or real Christmas tree, each morning choose a child to select a Christmas decoration or Jesse Tree character to hang on the tree. As each decoration is placed on the tree, sing a simple song or recite a special Christmas verse. If you are using bible characters perhaps the story about that person may be read or told by a class member.



A Spicy Wall Wreath

On a large sheet of paper or cardboard draw the outline of an Advent Wreath. Using blue and yellow paint direct the children to finger paint and/or sponge paint a variety of textured paper, i.e. A3 sheets of paper, newspaper, recycled paper and corrugated cardboard. When the paint has dried, have the children draw large leaf shapes on the back of the paintings. Cut out and glue around the wreath, over lapping as you go. Add leaf shapes cut out of tissue paper as well. When the leaves are dry apply small amounts of PVA glue evenly around the wreath and sprinkle on mixed spices, cloves and cinnamon sticks. For a bit of colour carefully peel four oranges and using small star biscuit cutters, cut out star shapes and glue them around the wreath. Add tartan or raffia bows, bells, pieces of red netted onion bags, small pine cones etc. to complete your wreath. Cut around your wreath or lightly sponge paint the background. In the centre write a Christmas message and hang in your classroom or present it to your local nursing home. Alternatively make individual smaller versions of the Spicy Wall Wreath for the children to take home.

Advent Tree Calendar

(AAS 6)

Beginning on December 1 direct the children to choose, colour, cut out and glue a Christmas decoration onto the bare Advent tree, beginning with the tree skirt (number 25) and finishing with the star on the top of the tree.

Advent Activity Calendar

(AAS 7)

This calendar may be enlarged onto a poster sized sheet of paper for the whole class to work from or photocopied for each child. Time may be allocated each day to complete the activities or the children may complete the activity when they finish their work early. You may wish for the children to complete each activity starting in the top left hand corner and move along the top row or you may wish for the children to choose any one of the activities listed in the Monday column to complete on Monday, any activities in the Tuesday column to complete on Tuesday, etc.

The Advent Angel

Before you begin to make this Advent calendar decide if you wish to count the days that are left in the school year or days in Advent — if you would like each child to make a star then you may choose to count the days left until school ends, i.e. 30 children — 30 school days or if you would like to count the days in Advent, some children may like to pair up in making a star.

Give each child a numbered star, (approximately 10 cm across) to decorate with Textas, crayons, glitter, paper and fabric scraps. Prepare a long strip of paper, approximately 10 to 15 cm wide, divided into as many sections as stars. Colour or paint the sections different festive colours. Using a piece of cardboard, select a child or group of children to draw and decorate the class angel. Using strong glue or tape, attach a peg or bulldog clip to the back of the angel. Glue the stars onto the background strip, starting with the highest number at the top. At the bottom of the star strip, place a crib and nativity characters (commercial or class made). Each day a special member of the class is chosen to carefully move the angel down the strip indicating how many days are left. Discuss the factors or characteristics of each number as the angel moves down.

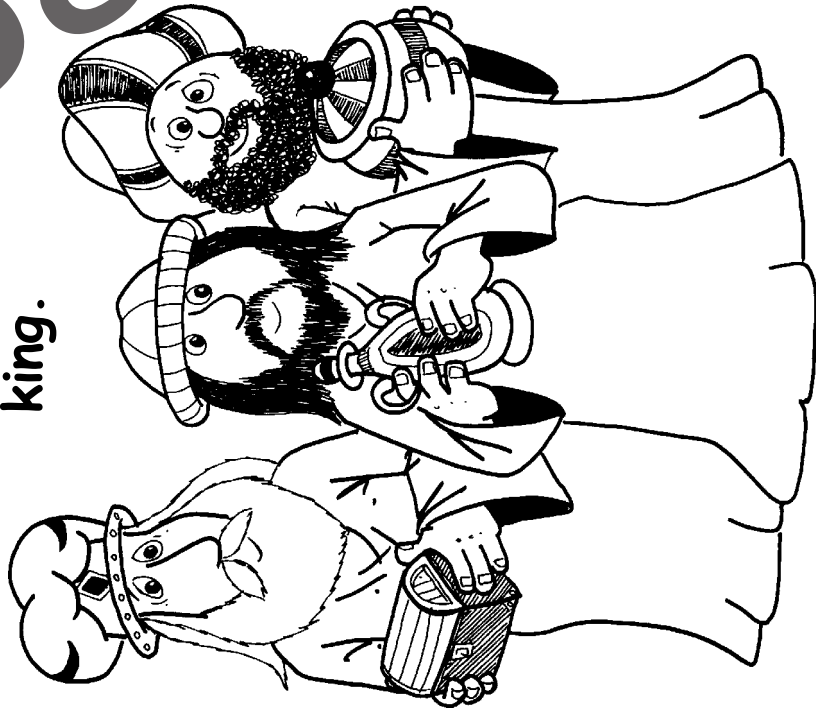
A Starry Sky

Similar to the Advent Angel activity, you will need to decide if you will count the days in Advent or days left in the school year. Each child makes a star from a variety of scrap materials, i.e. foil, cardboard, sticks, wool, ribbon, fabric etc. On a pin board write a Christmas message or verse and pin the stars around it. As each day passes a star is chosen from the notice board and hung from the ceiling using fishing line, ribbon, wool etc. As the star is moved to the 'sky' the class may say a simple prayer, sing a song or recite a verse of a poem. You may also like to decorate a special Advent candle that could be lit each morning as the star is moved.

The Advent Advertiser

Using the children's artwork, stories, poems, quotes and facts that they have acquired about Christmas, construct a class or school Advent Newsletter that is issued every Friday in Advent. This may be a simple A4 photocopied sheet or a more elaborate A3 newsletter. Make sure the children are involved at every level of its creation, from the planning to the photocopying and distribution. You may like to send an advance copy to your local newspaper or parish bulletin.

Three wise men, who studied the
skies also saw the star that night.
They got their camels ready and gifts
of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
They set off to see the new born
king.



**How are you and your family getting
ready for Jesus?**

1 Getting Ready

The First Christmas

by Melinda Blyton



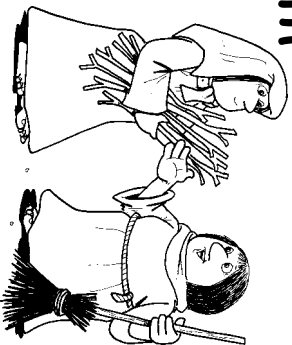
(This is not a story about grooming reindeers!)

For a long time God sent many men and women to help the people of Israel get ready for Jesus.

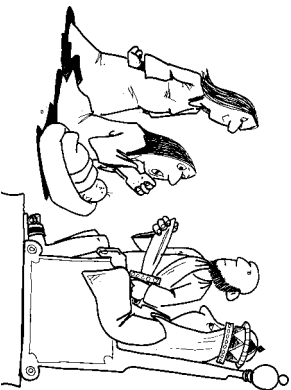
Noah



Ruth



Solomon

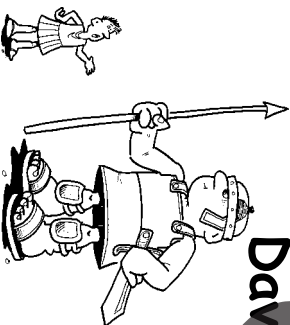


The same night some shepherds on a hill nearby saw a bright star in the sky. An angel appeared and told them about Jesus. The shepherds got their sheep ready and hurried off to Bethlehem to visit.

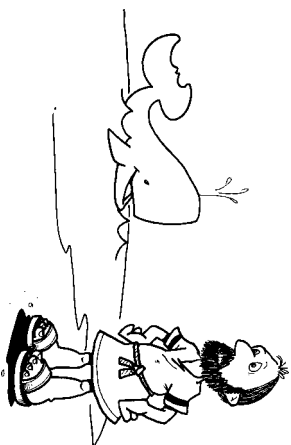
Moses



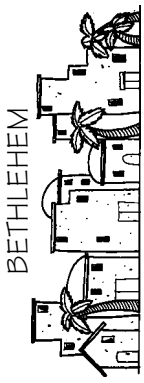
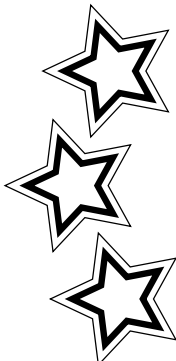
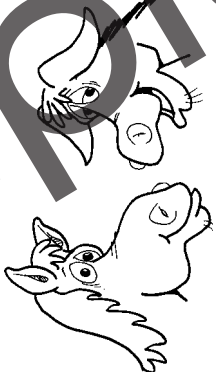

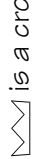
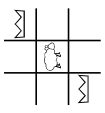
David



Jonah



Advent Activity Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Can you draw these pictures without lifting your pencil off the page?</p>	<p>If a = 1, b = 2, c = 3 etc. add the letters together to find the value of ox, camel, sheep, donkey, lamb</p>	<p>Name all of the people in the Nativity story. Put them into alphabetical order.</p>	<p>If 6 donkeys, 4 camels and a goat with only 3 legs were tied up outside the "Best Bed in Bethlehem Inn" how many legs would you count? Write your own number story!</p>	<p>Find the name of a town / city for each letter in the word BETHLEHEM</p> 
<p>Find a boy's and a girl's name in your class / year / school for every letter in the name Immanuel</p>	<p>Using an atlas find Israel. How many kilometres did Mary and Joseph have to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem?</p>	<p>Secret Message 19 12 4 14 26 13 2 8 15 22 22 11 8 6 13 7 18 15 24 19 9 18 8 7 14 26 8?</p>	<p>How many different forms of accommodation can you think of? Make a list and write a short definition next to each.</p>	<p>Using the letters in "Merry Christmas" make as many words as you can. 15 good 30 excellent 25 very good 35 fantastic!</p>
<p>Christmas Cancelled! Write a letter or a list of reasons why Christmas should never be cancelled.</p>	<p>How many rhymes / songs do you know about <u>stars</u>? Make up one of your own.</p> 	<p>What are 3 differences between a donkey and a horse? What is a mule?</p> 	<p>If vowels = 10 points and consonants = 4 points, position these words in order from lowest point value to highest value: star, angel, sky, night What is the value of your name and the names of 3 of your good friends?</p>	<p>Did you know that the Christmas tree originated in Germany? Can you make a 3D tree using only: a newspaper, a 12 cm piece of sticky-tape and a pair of scissors?</p>
<p>Play Shepherds and Kings (noughts and crosses) where a  is a nought and a  is a cross.</p> 	<p>Choose your favourite person from the Christmas story. Draw a picture of him/her using chalk and a patch of concrete in the playground. Remember to use lots of detail and patterning!</p>	<p>Thomas Smith made the first Christmas Cracker in the 1890's. With a friend make a list of things that go BANG! Now put them into a poem.</p>	<p>Being a baby today is a lot easier than being a baby 2000 years ago. Name 10 things babies have today that they didn't have 2000 years ago.</p>	<p>Find, draw and colour the flag of Israel.</p> 