



villages raise children and
faith communities make disciples

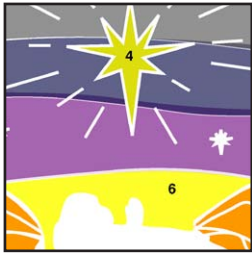
mini
moments of reflection & learning

Jesus: The Gift of God

At this Christmas time, as in times
past, Christians celebrate
Jesus: The Gift of God ...
but how do we:

- receive this special gift,
- explore it and
- make it our own?

Let's take a fresh look.



Jesus: The Gift of God

PDF Resource (724 KB): A Christmas sermon/ reflection with accompanying script, visual presentation and production notes. This can be used in its entirety or parts of it can be adapted where shorter contributions are required. Download this as a pdf from www.midst.suvic.org.au

Overview: At this Christmas time, as in times past, Christians celebrate Jesus: The Gift of God ... but how do we receive this special gift, explore it and make it our own? Let's take a fresh look.

Need:

- ☐ Linen stretched over a large frame with white wax painted on it, OR
- ☐ White poster paper supported by a wall / board / easel

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- ☐ White wax, OR
- ☐ Oil pastel

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- ☐ Dyes, OR
- ☐ Diluted acrylic poster paint: experiment with this to get the dilution right. See colour guides in script.

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- ☐ Brushes (Cheap, wide brushes can be sourced)
- ☐ Drop sheets galore (This can be messy!)
- ☐ Protective clothing for painters
- ☐ Script
- ☐ Large colourfully covered, Christmas-wrapped box with a large bow and a large tag with [Helper's name] on it.
- ☐ Large bottle of bubble mix and bubble wand

### Date / Place used:

☐  
☐  
☐

# Script and production notes for: Jesus, the Gift of God

This Christmas Christians celebrate again that Jesus is a gift from God  
... but how do we receive this special gift (*surprise, expectancy, arms out receiving*)  
... and explore it (*puzzled looks melting through to wide open eyes of wonder*)  
... and make it our own? (*a big smile, holding gift close to heart, contented body*)  
Let's have a fresh look at Jesus, a Gift from God

- • Let's get some dark sky happening ...

**Paint: Area #1 ... black line at top**

Out under the dark night sky nearly 2000 years ago, shepherds ... smelly, not-popular, dirty shepherds ...

- • How about some dark blue ...

**Paint: Area #2 ... dark blue over small stars near the top**

We read from the Bible in the Book of Luke that these shepherds were among the first to hear of the Good News about God's gift of Jesus to all the world. (*Out at night, dark, freezing cold, baaaaaa ... pretend baaa came from the group, "Ooh? what was that? You gave me a fright, but it was just you! Smile*)

- • Now for some indigo night sky

**Paint: Area #3 ... indigo over small stars near the bottom and horizon**

We read that Angels appeared ... { *fear, scream, ahhhhrrrgghhh, look scared* } ... they must have been frightened because the angels had to say : "Don't be afraid." { *relax, don't be afraid, just angels* } ANGELS!!!! { *fear, scream, ahhhhrrrgghhh, look scared* }

- • Perhaps some light for the angels' good news ...

**Paint: Area #4 ...yellow/orange over large star in the centre top**

The angels went on to say ... tonight we have some good news: a baby has been born in Bethlehem ... (*expand a little as appropriate and as necessary from Luke 2*)

Now we all know that the shepherds went off to search for and meet Jesus and his parents.

But what if ... (*pause*) What if ...(*pause*)

What if the shepherds didn't go. What if they'd said:

"Hmmp, angels, what would they know."

"Hah! Must have been talking to someone else, not us poor shepherds."

"Naaaahhhh, not really interested, just pop it over there, it will sort out."

"Baaaaahhhh, not really our scene, have to stay and do our thing right here."

*(Long sheepish pause),*

NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!! Inconceivable! Of course they went!

But it makes us think doesn't it? I wonder if it makes you think ...

WHAT IF ...

The shepherds didn't appreciate that this WAS good news and didn't go.

What if they just ignored the angels ... maybe thought the Good News was for someone else, they didn't believe it was for them or could affect them.

OR

I wonder, if they did go, when they found baby Jesus was in the stable, they just thought, "OK" "Close enough!" and just went home without going in to visit? Nothing further!

OR

If they did pop in for a quick visit, they didn't find out what it was all about or swap stories or wonder at it all?? Or ask, "What do you do with Jesus: the Gift of God?"

And this is the point ...

What do YOU do with Jesus: the Gift of God?

What COULD you do with Jesus: the Gift of God?

*This script here is the bare bones of a script. Add drama, expression and ad-libbing as required.*

To help us think about this, let's have a look at the sorts of presents WE receive.  
*(Bring out a large colourfully covered, Christmas-wrapped box with a large bow and a large tag with [Helper's name] on it.)*

[Leader]: Let me show you: *(holding up the large gift for all to see)*

[Leader]: [Helper], will you help me here please? I'm sure you have been listening, let's see if you can help us work it all out.

[Leader]: [Helper], I have a present for you

[Helper]: It's very expensive looking ... *(does NOT take it or touch it and does NOT say 'Thank you')* ... interesting ... *(looks all over it)* ... just pop it over there. *(Be careful not to say thank you or receive it in anyway)*

[Leader]: *Aghast!! Turns to group ...* What just happened? Can you believe it? What??????? *(speechless almost)* [Helper] didn't take it!!! I don't believe it!! You didn't show that you wanted it or received it!! *Turns to [Helper] ...* You didn't take it. You didn't say thank you!! *(incredulous)*

[Helper]: Hang on, hang on. I think I see where you are going with this ... *(sheepishly)*  
I thought this gift was really for me I would have taken it and made it mine by saying thank you???? Right!!! Soooo ... Maybe I was being a bit like the shepherds IF they didn't think the gift was really for them??? ... soooooooo, if we thought that Jesus is someone special from God, that Jesus is the Gift of God, then we could receive this and say thank you!!!!

[Leader]: Absolutely, I reckon God would love it if we believed that and said thank you... *(embellish a little if you like)* ... so let's try that again with this little present ...

*Gives the present to [Helper]*

- [Helper] *makes a bit of a deal about receiving it and saying "Thank you" ... pleased that he has this part right but instantly places it aside and doesn't open it or look into it.*
- [Leader]: *Aghast!!* O ... o ... o ... o ... o ... *stuck for words* You did it again!!
- [Helper]: *Defensively* I said thank you!!
- [Leader]: BUT you didn't open it, you didn't dive in, you didn't look into it to discover what it was.
- [Helper]: *(sheepishly)* I've done it again haven't I?? Whoops, let me guess ... I've been a bit like the shepherds if they went and found Jesus but didn't go in to visit??? ... soooooo, if we thought that Jesus was The Gift of God, someone who brings peace into the world, we would do more than say thank you, we'd look into it and find out more??
- [Leader]: That's right. Find out about Jesus and how special Jesus is: Let's try that again with this little present. *(Gives present)*
- [Helper]: "Thank you" *[Helper] receives and opens the present, finds a large bottle of bubble mix and a large bubble making wand.*
- [Helper] "Wow, wonderful, oohh ahhh!" *but then puts it to one side, ignoring it.*
- [Leader]: *Again aghast!!* I don't think so ... you ... you ... you ... YOU DIDN'T USE IT ... you didn't try it, you didn't have a go, you didn't experience the wonder and explosion of it all ... Imagine if the shepherds finding Jesus and then going away without it making any difference in their life! ... imagine if they didn't feel special or important and loved by God. Imagine if we received Jesus into our lives and said Thank You to God for the Gift of Jesus and then if we discovered heaps about how to follow Jesus but didn't actually do it or if Jesus didn't make a difference to our life??
- [Helper]: *(sheepishly)* I really did want to use it straight away ... on the inside ... promise!
- [Leader]: Let's go over this with a bit more paint to make sure you really have it.

- • Time to get back to some painting ... whose favourite colour is ... RED?

#### **Paint: Area #5 ... Outside: red**

Christmas is a fantastic time of gift giving and receiving. While this is being painted, we remember not only what we hope to receive but also the love that we can show as we prepare and wrap and give gifts to those around us. Some of us even give gifts to others who don't have much to say how special and loved they are. Maybe we'll remember to say thank you for the presents we receive and make them truly ours.

- • Let's go for some bright yellow paint next

#### **Paint: Area #6 ... Yellow, Highlighting the top of the baby Jesus**

However, we especially celebrate Jesus: The Gift of God. We can find ways to say thank you to God for the Gift of Jesus. In saying thank you to God we can receive Jesus into our lives. "Thank you God for the Gift of Jesus, I receive you into my life!"

- Two colours this time

**Paint: Area #7 ... Ribbon: Orange ... Box: green**

Then ... let's do all we can to find out more about Jesus ... explore Jesus ... find out about Jesus' life and death and resurrection ... read the Bible about Jesus ... work out the difference Jesus makes in people's lives ... find out more about the sort of forgiveness, friendship and love God offers us in the Gift of Jesus. There are lots of things to find out about how to follow Jesus and how to pray and love ourselves and others.

- And finally

**Paint: Area #8 ... Cross: yellow**

The Gift of God this Christmas is more than just a baby's birthday we can celebrate. Jesus is the Gift of God with our name on it ... given to you and to me ... given to the whole world. Jesus lived his life in such a way as to show that life with God ... now and forever ... is possible. Jesus' death on a cross made life with God possible. Making that story true for us is something God has already gifted to us but we are the ones that need to receive, open and allow the power and life God has made possible make a difference in our life.

God has made forgiveness possible ... use it, don't ignore it.

God has made love possible ... use it, don't ignore it.

God has made healing possible ... use it, don't ignore it.

May God's gift be ever real for each of us this Christmas.

I wonder how you will respond? Take a few moments of prayer now or over this communion time to make your own response to God and Jesus: the Gift of God. Perhaps some of us will need to apologise for ignoring God and Jesus: the gift of God. Some of us will need to find some personal response. Some of us will be thinking about what this means for our church. Take this time now to work and pray through that.

~~~~~ pause and/or a prayer ~~~~~

Have a happy and safe Christmas ... giving gifts... as well as receiving them; celebrating, exploring and using the Gift of God.

Image: Preparation

Construct a white 'canvas' in the same proportions as shown by the image below (4:3 approx.). The 'canvas' can be either:

- A stretched, white linen stapled to a pine timber frame. Sheeting from the local 'Spotlight' is great. If you can pre-wash the sheeting before stretching and stapling to the frame it works a little better. Apply melted candle wax carefully with a brush to all the areas and lines shown by black. Make sure the melted wax is neither too hot to burn the material or too cold as to clog onto the material. The result should be almost invisible.
- B high quality white paper attached to a board and placed on easel also works. Apply a high quality artist's oil pastel or melted wax (as above) carefully everywhere shown as black. Again, the high quality white paper and wax or oil pastel should mean the image is not really noticable.

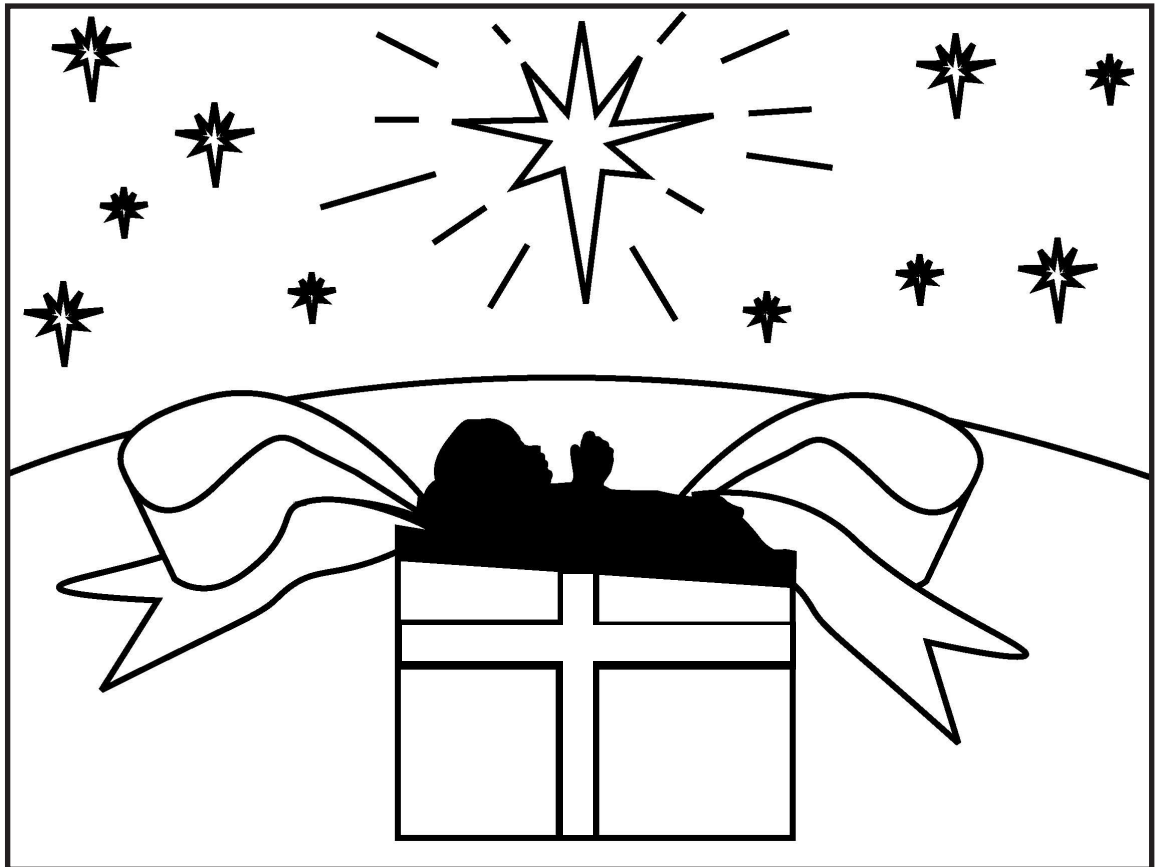


Image: Colours

As a wash is applied, the wax or oil pastel repels the water-based dye or acrylic paint wash and reveals the image. Use the image below as a guide for the order of applying colours and for the final look. Water-based material dyes are the best as they give vibrant colours in very wet, thin covering but they are expensive. It is important to experiment with the thinness of acrylic paints if this is used. The wax or oil pastel needs to easily and effectively repel the water-based wash for this idea to work so experimentation beforehand on some scrap is essential.

