



# MOST WONDERFUL TIME

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## CHRISTMAS PACK

*Ideas to make this your  
best Christmas yet*

# CHRISTMAS PACK

*Ideas to make your Christmas season the best yet!*

*Prepared by the Mission Resource Department with assistance from Creative Ministries Department and the Territorial Children's Department.*

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## INTRODUCTION:

We've collated a large range of ideas to help you with Christmas in your setting. Our suggestion is to look through and find a couple of ideas that you could adapt in your setting. Whatever you choose to do to celebrate in your setting, our top recommendations are:

- 1. Do it well:** Whatever you do, do it well. Stick to one or two ideas and make them great!
- 2. For the community:** Cater your event for your local community and share the Christmas story!
- 3. Eve vs. Day:** Pick one and do it well. Our suggestion is Christmas Eve – this seems to have the biggest community buy in - base it around carols, make it really family friendly and spread the word!
- 4. What's next?** However you choose to celebrate Christmas in your setting, figure out what's next?  
What's the follow up for visitors? What could they take home to remind them of their experience?  
What is the next service/event/activity you'll invite people to? What's your next series – is it relevant?

# EXTERNAL RESOURCE HUBS:

*A list of websites that have a huge range of resources to draw on. We've compiled some of these ideas and resources further into the pack, but these are great one-stop-shop options to check out to get inspired.*

**RightNow Media:** A video streaming service that has a huge range of videos available to use. Our Territory currently plays for a subscription for this service so you can access this repository for free.

- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/nz> > search Christmas or Advent!

To sign up, head to the following link and enter your email address:

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/user/NZFIJITONGA>

**Life.church:** Life Church is the largest church in America (Craig Groeschel's church) and they share a great collection of resources for free for other churches to utilise. They have a great Christmas section.

- <https://open.life.church/christmas>

**Strandz:** Strandz is the kids and families branch of the Anglican Church in New Zealand and each year they compile an awesome range of Advent and Christmas resources and ideas. A really good place to start to keep kids and families in mind!

- <https://www.strandz.org.nz/advent--christmas.html>

**Sunz:** Scripture Union NZ has compiled a list of resources for Christmas – a great place to start for all ages.

- <http://childrenandfamiliesnz.blogspot.com/p/christmas.html>

**Sunz - intergen:** Scripture Union NZ has compiled a list of intergenerational resources.

- <http://childrenandfamiliesnz.blogspot.com/p/all-age-resources.html>

# SERVICE THEME IDEAS:

*A list of theme ideas you could use for a Christmas/Advent series or Christmas Eve service.*

**Advent:** The classic Advent series focusing on the different themes of advent. There are a range of great resources to base this off. Check out the separate Advent section of this pack.

**Light / star:** Explore the significance of the 'light' of Christmas and about how Jesus came as the Light of the World and how we're each meant to be bearers of that light.

**Kiwi Christmas:** Focus each week on a different 'value' of a classic Kiwi Christmas and how these are Biblical concepts. This could include things like family, coming together, food and fellowship, hospitality, celebration, generosity, relaxing/peace, getting outdoors/creation.

**Gifts of Christmas:** Spend time exploring the different 'gifts' given to us at Christmas. This could be along the lines of hope, peace, love, joy etc.

**Characters:** Explore Christmas from a different Nativity character's perspective each week - i.e. an angel, a shepherd, Mary or Joseph, a Wise Man, King Herod.

**Song titles or lyrics:** Base each week on different Christmas carol titles that tell the story of Christmas, or the meaning/significance of Christmas. Or base each week on different lines from a carol. An example would be O Holy Night (Long lay the world/The soul felt its worth/A thrill of hope/Fall on your knees)

**This Changes Everything:** Explore how Christmas changes everything – this could be great as a series exploring how different aspects of Christmas change everything or is a one-off service like Christmas Eve.

**Wonder:** In all the busyness of life, we can sometimes miss the 'wonder' of Christmas. This series or service could encourage us to press pause and rediscover the wonder of Christmas.

**The Journey:** Follow the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem – exploring all the different things that led them there. Could tie it into we're all on a journey.

**Following the star:** Explore the significance of following the star, this could include how Christ came to be light in the world, that sometimes we have to leave something to follow Him, that we'll find what we're looking for when we follow the 'star' or looking for signs (stars) in your life.

**The Plan:** This series or service could emphasis that the coming of Jesus was the plan for salvation / redemption all along. It was prophesied, there was no back up, it was unexpected etc.

**Twos the night before Christmas:** Retell the classic Christmas story with the true Christmas/Biblical narrative in the same style. There are some great books and stories in this format.



# OUTREACH IDEAS:

*A list of outreach ideas you could use for various events or activities in your community.*

## **FOR INDIVIDUALS:**

***Ding dong dash:*** The challenge is to deliver a gift to someone by ringing their doorbell and ‘dashing’ without being seen – but you’re only allowed to take five steps from their door. Challenge your congregation to give it a go with someone they know.

***Reverse advent:*** Give out a box or bag to members of your congregation to do a ‘reverse’ advent - choosing to put an item into the box/bag each day that can be gifted to someone else, or donated to your foodbank or Christmas hampers.

***Christmas workers:*** Ask members of your corps to write thank you Christmas cards for shift workers like the Police, fire brigade, hospital workers, service station attendees etc. You could even include baking!

***Hide baby Jesus:*** Over the month of December, hide 'baby Jesus' around your neighbourhood. This could be hiding lots of small objects like stones painted with a baby on them, or it could be an advertised, larger scale scavenger hunt event.

***Cards:*** Give out blank Christmas cards to every member of your congregation and encourage them to write a message and give these to people in your community. This could be anyone; neighbours, supermarket attendant, doctor or school teacher.

***Advent countdown:*** During the month of December, why not include an advent calendar countdown somewhere in your community? This could be as simple as numbers displayed in a church or Family Store window, large letters in your church grounds/carpark or different locations each day, social media posts in your Facebook group and page etc.

## **FOR YOUR CORPS/CENTRE:**

***Tree event:*** Create a Christmas tree forest or Christmas tree wonderland for families to come and explore. You could partner with local businesses to donate or decorate trees.

***Party or event:*** Hold a Christmas themed party for families in your community - make it fun and big! It could be a birthday party for Jesus...

***Childcare night:*** Hold some sort of night event just for kids that allows parents the freedom to head out and do the Christmas shopping or have a date night.

***Live animals:*** Recreate the nativity scene as part of an event or service and include live animals - animals always attract families!

**Be part of the scene:** Have the nativity scene set up in your Family Store, church building or local shopping area where people can dress up as part of the nativity scene and have their photo taken.

**Carol service:** Put on a carol service at your corps/centre, or partner with a local school or other local churches and host a night of carols. Make sure to create some atmosphere!

**Senior's party:** Hold a special Christmas event just for seniors in your community. This could be part of your usual Companion's Club or Home League, or a special one-off event.

**Community meal:** Host a community Christmas meal and invite people that may not get to experience this otherwise. Make it really special; decorate, have delicious food and include some special elements (small gifts, entertainment).

**Retirement homes:** Host a morning tea at a local retirement home. Get a small brass band together or come up with some other entertainment, crafts or items that could bless that community.

**Gift shop:** Collect donated gifts (or purchase items) that can be gifted to families in your community. Invite families to come to your 'Christmas shop' and personally choose the gifts for their family.

**Longest Night:** Host a 'longest night' (Blue Christmas) service for those in your community that struggle this time of year due to loneliness, bereavement, or past events linked to Christmas. Focus the service around music, prayer and Scripture that bring comfort.

**Markets/events:** Why not partner with something already happening like a market, or have a presence at an established event? Maybe a brass band, carol singers, free face painting or get creative!

**Prayer tree:** Place a Christmas tree in a prominent area like your foyer, Family Store or local mall and invite people to write a prayer request and hang it on the tree. Ask people from your corps to pray for these over the following weeks.

**Gift wrapping:** Have a gift-wrapping stall at a local shopping area. Have info about your service times/events and have friendly people willing to chat and wish people a happy Christmas.

**Sellotape standoff:** Everyone needs sellotape at Christmas time, so why not gift it to people as they shop at the mall or walk down your main road. Include a small flyer with the roll with your Christmas event/service details on them.

**Scavenger hunt:** Create a scavenger hunt in your area for your church families/congregation to get into or your community. This could be as simple or creative as you like. Maybe it's a photo scavenger hunt and people upload theirs to your private Facebook group, maybe it's an Amazing Race type event, maybe you could put some items or displays out for people to discover.

# CREATIVE ELEMENT IDEAS:

*A list of creative ideas you could use to tell the Christmas story in your services / events.*

## CREATIVE SERVICE ELEMENTS:

**Live Christmas story retelling:** This could be someone reading a script while a video / images are on the screen, or people dressed as the characters from the Nativity enter the room, or while a live painting or similar is done. There are a range of great stories online or use the relevant Bible passages as your basis.

**Live painting:** Have someone paint a picture / sketch on a large canvas during your service – this could be during a reflective song, during a story / script or part of the message. Here is a simple [Nativity Silhouette painting on YouTube](#) you could easily adapt on a large canvas.

**Live dance:** If you have someone from your congregation or centre can dance, why not include a live dance in one of your services?

**Live animals:** A great way to engage all ages in your service or event is to include live animals. Sheep and donkeys are always popular. Just make sure to source this from a reputable source, and ensure they are adequately cared for.

**Advent candles:** Lighting the Advent candles each week is often a tradition in churches/families. Why not include it in your service this year? Check out our Advent section in this pack.

**Drummer boy:** During your service or advent, invite kids (and adults!) up the front to participate in the little drummer boy. Have different parts of a drum kit or drums available for them to have a go at while the congregation sings the song.

**Christmas traditions:** As part of a service or your whole Christmas series, include a segment about Christmas traditions. You could invite a different family or individual each week to share about a Christmas tradition they have – a great way to get to know people, include different people and get people reflecting on Christmas.

**Christmas around the world:** During a service or across your Christmas series, highlight different traditions from Christmas around the world. Some interesting places with unique traditions to include are Sweden, Germany, Samoa or other islands, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, Venezuela – Google it!

**Testimony / interviews:** As part of your Christmas/Advent series, have different people share what Christmas means to them through a testimony or interview.

**Story telling pictures:** There are a range of great story telling books / images that you could use to help tell the Christmas story at an event or during a service. Lost Sheep have a great story (Bethlehem Town) with downloadable images and resources – some free, some for purchase.

- <https://www.lostsheep.com.au/stories/bethlehem-town/>

**Kid's stuff in room:** Another great way to keep kids (and their families) engaged in a service is to have some kid-friendly play things in the room. This might be an area with a rug so kids can play, a book nook, a felt Christmas tree that kids can place things on or a small nativity set.

**Themed food:** Everyone loves food so celebrate with Christmas themed food as part of your morning tea after church, or the food you serve at your event. Some ideas include gingerbread, candy cane hot chocolates, cookies or baking in Christmas theme shapes (tree, angel, star). Check out Pinterest!

- [https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=christmas%20baking&rs=typed&term\\_meta\[\]=christmas%7Ctyped&term\\_meta\[\]=baking%7Ctyped](https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=christmas%20baking&rs=typed&term_meta[]=christmas%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=baking%7Ctyped)

**Why Christmas:** Explore why we do certain things at Christmas, or the significance of certain traditions and symbols. Research the meaning reason behind candy canes, Christmas trees, gift giving, stockings etc. You could include this as an activity at an event or as a segment in your services.

## VIDEOS:

**YouTube Playlist:** Check out our playlist of top picks we found of Christmas story videos on YouTube.

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLt1UoHvf-FJvKcXtuisyYY4RTIWW1Nx58>

**Shift worship:** A range of different video formats at reasonable prices, including openers, timers, storytelling, pre-message and background.

- <https://shiftworship.com/search/?q=christmas>

**Skit guys:** A range of different video formats at reasonable prices.

- <https://skitguys.com/videos/theme/christmas>

## DRAMAS / SCRIPTS:

**Skitguys:** A range of different Christmas themed scripts for purchase



<https://skitguys.com/scripts/theme/christmas>

**Richmond Park Church:** A range of short, free Christmas themed scripts.

- <http://www.richmondparkchurch.org.uk/christmas-drama-sketches.html>

**Christian Drama:** A range of short, free Christmas themed scripts.

- <http://www.christian-drama.org/christmas-scripts/>

## SETS / DÉCOR:

**Church Set Design:** The Church Set Design website has a great range of Christmas set/décor ideas – from simple to very complex!

- <https://www.churchstagedesignideas.com/?s=christmas>

**Pinterest:** Pinterest is a great place to start for décor / set inspiration.

- <https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=christmas%20stage>
- <https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=christmas%20decor>

## HELPFUL LINKS:

**Life.Church:** Life Church have a range of free resources including sermon ideas, image options and small group series.

- <https://open.life.church/christmas>

**RightNow Media:** RightNow has a range of free resources – from Bible studies, to sermon ideas, kids' videos, testimony videos etc.

- [www.rightnowmedia.com](http://www.rightnowmedia.com)

# ADVENT IDEAS:

*A range of ideas for marking the season of Advent in your setting. Ranging from prayers, readings, candles and other creative elements.*

**RightNow Media:** RightNow has a range of free video resources that could work for Advent.

- [www.rightnowmedia.com](http://www.rightnowmedia.com) > search advent

**Aotearoa Advent Candle Lighting:**

- <https://blundell.net.nz/liturgy/advent/aotearoanew-zealand-candle-lighting/>

**Aotearoa Advent Circle/Wreath display or segment:**

- <http://childrenandfamiliesnz.blogspot.com/2020/10/an-aotearoa-advent-circle.html>

**A journey through Advent resource - Sunz:**

- <https://sunzbreakthrough.squarespace.com/resources/certaintyofchristmas-at-home>

**Mt Bethel readings – scripture, reading, prayer:**

- Week one <https://mtbethel.org/2022/11/week-1-expectation/>
- Week two <https://mtbethel.org/2022/12/week-2-preparation-and-peace/>
- Week three <https://mtbethel.org/2022/12/week-3-proclamation-and-joy/>
- Week four <https://mtbethel.org/2022/12/week-4-revelation-and-love/>

**Readings for lighting candles (with video options) – Inclusive Church:**

- <https://inclusivegathering.org.uk/readings-for-lighting-the-advent-candles/>

**Interactive Prayer Stations:**

- <https://theresaecho.com/2011/10/24/interactive-prayer-stations-for-advent-i/>

**Interactive advent/Christmas Stations:**

- <https://buildfaith.org/advent-prayer-stations/>

**Advent themed church service resources:**

- <https://intergen.org.au/product-category/resources/2022-lectionary/advent/>

**Advent Spiral printable resource for at home or on the wall at church:**

- <https://goodgodideas.wordpress.com/2015/11/25/advent-spiral-praying-in-color/>

# KIDS AND FAMILIES IDEAS:

*Almost all the ideas listed in previous sections are intergenerational ideas & resources that families and children will love to be part of. Here are some ideas to help children and families specifically as you journey through December. Help parents make the most of this Christmas!*

## TOP PICK:

**Strandz website:** Our top pick is to check out the Strandz website has a whole section dedicated to engaging kids and families at Christmas. You almost don't need anything else! Check out this site before you do anything else, trust us!

- <https://www.strandz.org.nz/advent--christmas.html>

## AT CHURCH:

**Lifting the Lid:** Introduce a segment in your service that brings the whole congregation together, but seeks to specifically engage children. Use a vintage suitcase/beautiful gift box & hide inside a special item that represents the connection between your children & adult service themes. Hide the suitcase/giftbox somewhere in your auditorium and ask children to find it, then gather around as you discover what is inside and speak to it.

*eg. A toy sheep: "Today in Kids' Church we're going to hear how Shepherds and their sheep were frightened by the great light in the sky, until they hear the angels' good news that baby Jesus was born. In adults church we're talking about Jesus who, like a shepherd, was prepared to go to a dangerous place to save us. After church, ask each other: 'What's something you love about Jesus?'"*

**School and childcare centre engagement:** Whether your church is offering a Christmas Eve service, Christmas tree wonderland, concert, or something else entirely, contact local schools and childcare centres with the info - they are usually happy to advertise kid-friendly events in the area. Ramp up engagement further by asking schools/centres to create and contribute decorations to a Christmas display at your event or in your Family Store window!

**End of Year Kids' Church Wrap Up:** Help kids remember what they've discovered in your children's environments throughout the year by creating and playing a few rounds of Kahoot! It's a free gamebased learning platform that children all over the country are utilising at school. You can create your own quiz rounds, based on your teaching themes, plus why not include a Christmas round!

Can be played either on tablets or phones, plus you'll need a computer and screen to display the questions/score cards throughout the quiz. This is SURE to be a winner with your kids! Sign up at

[kahoot.com/](https://kahoot.com/)

**Christmas Create Event:** Host an event where the creative folk within your congregation can learn to make Christmas-related crafts from one another. Older people could teach kids and young people to knit mini stockings or bake Christmas pies, while kids could teach adults about Christmas coloured slime or loom bands!

## **AT HOME:**

**Family Time podcast:** The Territorial Children's Department created an awesome podcast for kids and families to enjoy. There are three episodes that can be a source of entertainment and a conversation starter as families travel, relax or scramble your way through this Christmas season!

- <https://children.salvationarmy.org.nz/resource/family-time-podcast-christmas-episodes>

**Service/Generosity advent calendar:** Distribute to families the free Service/Generosity Advent Calendar resource attached which gives 24 ideas for serving others through December. Families can insert these in their own advent calendars or use it as a checklist! We suggest printing in colour on A4 card if possible.

- <https://children.salvationarmy.org.nz/resource/generosityservice-advent-calendar-printable>

**Christmas themed prayers for families to use at home:** Prayers that you could pass onto/print for families to use at home, for things like Christmas dinner, setting up the Christmas tree or Nativity set, opening gifts etc. A cool way to encourage families

- <https://goodgodideas.files.wordpress.com/2021/12/prayers-for-celebrating-christmas-in-the-home.pdf>

**Bible Society Resources:** The Bible Society often create Christmas resources each year. These are usually available to order as individuals or as a church/organisation. These would be a great giveaway in Christmas hampers, at an event or for families connected to your corps/centre – keep an eye out for what resources will be available this year! <https://biblesociety.org.nz/>

**Family Moment:** Designed with adventure in mind, this booklet is packed with ideas to help families discover the true meaning of Christmas together. Bake, photograph, serve and craft your way to understanding what the story of Jesus' birth can mean for us today.

- <https://children.salvationarmy.org.nz/resource/create-family-moment-christmas>

# SONG IDEAS:

*A list of song ideas you could use for various events or services.*

**Brass band carols for a service:** If you don't have a band at your corps but want to include some classic brass carols, check out the Carols for Corps album by the Creative Ministries Department.

- <https://open.spotify.com/album/7kUldRIG2vo8SXStJzyzyh?si=CsiNJT20S-eXe745hH6fhA>
- <https://soundcloud.com/cmdnzft/sets/carols-for-corps-vol-1>

**Playlist of Christmas music:** A playlist perfect for playing during an event or pre / post a service – a mix of older and newer music, classic carols and contemporary Christmas songs.

- Christmas-only  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0m5JMZFJauy4ISsOCYCkoL?si=302KdifSRmqOKIQ-clhg7A>
- Christmas and worship mix  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4aLY0lq1grShUujVo24avj?si=f4dfeced9f114d55>

**Playlist for music teams:** A playlist with a range of carols and Christmas songs with music teams in mind.

- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/53V8bGU5osthm0hnpfwoSN?si=Dj47YcnhRdmWr464t2D8FA>

**Contemporary Christmas songs for a service:** Here are our top picks for contemporary Christmas songs to use in a service alongside the classic carols:

- Behold the Christ – Creative Ministries Department  
- <https://soundcloud.com/cmdnzft/sets/behold-the-christ>
- Prince of Peace – Hillsong Worship
- Arrival – Hillsong Worship
- Our King Has Come – Hillsong Worship
- Make Room – Casting Crowns
- Somewhere in Your Silent Night – Casting Crowns
- Into the Silent Night – of King and Country
- Baby Boy – of King and Country
- Come Thou Long Expected Jesus – Meredith Andrews
- He Shall Reign Forevermore – Chris Tomlin
- Adore – Chris Tomlin
- The Earth Stood Still – Future of Forestry
- Oh Light - The Liturgists, Gungor
- Oh What a Glorious Night – Sidewalk Prophets
- Evermore – Phil Wickham

**Modern carol versions:** A few album suggestions for modern renditions of classic carols.

- Christmas: The Peace Project – Hillsong Worship
- Adore: Christmas Songs of Worship - Chris Tomlin
- Songs for Christmas - Phil Wickham
- Campfire Christmas (Vol. 1) - Rend Collective
- A Worship Initiative Christmas – Shane & Shane

**Songs for a remembrance slot:** Song ideas to be used during a time of remembrance.

- A Light – The Liturgists, The Brilliance
- The Earth Stood Still – Future of Forestry
- Oh Light – The Liturgists, Gungor
  
- Love is Christmas – Sara Bareilles
- Somewhere in Your Silent Night – Casting Crowns

**Worship Tutorial:** A resource with multi-tracks, sample worship leads and other downloads for \$8USD

- <https://worshiptutorials.com/product/christmas-resource-bundle/>



## RUNSHEET IDEAS:

Take a look at our sample runsheets and see how you could adapt them for your setting by adding your own creative / live elements.

- <https://tsanzf.sharepoint.com/sites/MissionResources/SitePages/Church-Service-Resources.aspx>



## SOCIAL MEDIA & PROMO IDEAS:

A range of images to use for social media, posters, flyers and slides.

**Download pack:** A range of images with details on them or generic images to be used as slides or for social media.

- <https://tsanzf.sharepoint.com/sites/MissionResources/SitePages/Church-Service-Resources.aspx>

**Unsplash:** Unsplash is a repository of free images – a great option for promo photos.

- <https://unsplash.com/>

**Canva:** A free online design tool – a really good option for poster, flyers and Facebook designs!

- <https://www.canva.com/>

# THINGS TO CONSIDER CHECKLIST:

*A checklist of things to consider when you're preparing for your Christmas events, activities and services.*

## **The people:**

- Who is your event for – is it an in-house event, for your local community or both?
- How will you communicate about your event? To your congregation? To your community?
- How is your event catering for: kids, families, older people, teens, singles, Christians, visitors?
- How many volunteers will you need to run the event?

## **The event:**

- How will you advertise? Facebook, local schools/clubs, posters, Eventbrite? How will you resource your people to share about the event?
- Have you checked dates with other local calendars / events?
- Have you considered the budget for this event? What will you need to do to find the money needed?
- Have you considered any safety needs / issues?
- How could you partner with other churches or community groups?

## **The environment:**

- How will you meet MOH and government COVID guidelines for your area?
- How will you communicate about your facilities - toilets, other important locations, safety?
- Have you considered the type of language you will be using? Remember, you will have visitors!
- Have you looked around and through your building? How does this look to new people?
- How will people be welcomed to your event/service?
- When / how will you communicate around how long your event will be to attendees?

## **The effectiveness:**

- What are your desired outcomes for your event/service? Will your plans help you get there?
- Is there a simple phrase, an experience or takeaway that you would like attendees to remember from your event? How will you emphasise this?
- What are the next steps for visitors? What is your next event/service that you could invite them to? What are the next steps for those already attached to your corps/centre?
- Will you give a takeaway to attendees? What will this be? What will it communicate?
- How will you thank and celebrate your volunteers who have served?