

The most Wonder Filled Time of the Year

The story of fear and joy, journey and rest, struggle and gifts... the story of Christmas. For hundreds of years all around the world this story has been retold through small children to grand performances. The story has been told in many different, but remains the same. A tale of the ordinary becoming the extraordinary, lives changed - a story of hope.

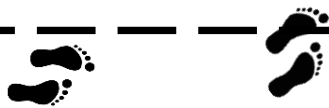
Over the past two years our lives have changed, we've faced fears and we have found joys. We have been through struggles but maybe we've discovered new friendships with neighbours, appreciated the kindness of strangers or taken time to pause.



One of the things many of us have found is the appreciation for small things, noticing what is happening, growing or simply being. For Muddy Church this is one of our passions - slowing down, taking time to get outside, connecting with nature and each other and wondering at the world around us.

The great thing is that getting outside and visiting the places and spaces nearby doesn't have to cost a lot of money. It could be a quick walk to the local park or a weekend wander to somewhere new. Take whatever time you have and enjoy remembering something that has been with us for hundreds of years - the story of Jesus!

The Journey



The story began with a journey. Why don't you challenge yourselves to walk together each day of Advent? It may be a five-minute wander around the block, taking the dog for a walk or walking to school instead of driving. This gives you a healthy activity and precious time together.

If you can't manage every day how about a weekend wander through Advent?

Star of Wonder



The Bible talks about the heavens and the stars displaying God's glory. There is something true about the wonder that can come through watching stars on a clear night. You could think about what things are guiding you or what are you following - are these good and reliable?

Finding Shelter



I love how the kindness of strangers is demonstrated in the story, especially as the inn keeper provided Mary and Joseph with shelter. It doesn't matter whether it was an inn, cave, stable or house, what matters was providing the space when everywhere was so busy.

You could think about refugees and asylum seekers, those who are homeless or people who may need safe shelter, not only at Christmas but throughout the year. This is a great opportunity to put a sheet over a table or build a den and sit inside, talking about how you can care for others.

Gifts

The Christmas story demonstrates gift giving as the wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh to baby Jesus. We also read in John 3:16 how God loved the world so much that he gave his son Jesus as a gift to us. We can take this season to think about our gift to future generations - by choosing ethical gifts, wrapping paper and cards and thinking about our waste and how we recycle.

You could provide gifts of kindness for neighbours, such as an encouraging note through their door, or make a simple bird feeder or bug shelter as a gift to nature..


It's also good to take time to think about the present of presence - giving time and focus to each other and celebrating this season with love and peace.




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Find a pine cone.



Spot a robin.



Find a tree that still has leaves on it.



Add a flower, leaf or other item to a small container of water. Freeze it to make an ice suncatcher.

Have a winter picnic.



Make a snowstorm in a bottle. Add biodegradable glitter to water in a bottle (you can also add food colouring).




Find a feather.




Find a winter flower.



Build a snowman.



Go puddle jumping.



Make a painted handprint so you can see how much you have grown next year.



Make a maze from sticks.




Find an acorn.




Carefully toast a marshmallow (over a candle or fire).



Find a frozen puddle.



Light a candle and watch the flame dance.



Make paper snowflakes. Fold and cut a piece of paper to create a snowflake pattern (you can find instructions online).



Go for a torchlight wander.



Put some mud into a pot and mix it with water if needed. Use this to paint a mud picture, you could even make a paintbrush from twigs and pine needles.

Make a card to say thank you to someone




Find an animal print.




Collect some items from a wander, bring them home and use them to create a story.

Go for a night-time walk to see the Christmas lights.



Drink a hot chocolate outside.

