



Nick has set out a wonderful idea in his video: the simplicity of sharing and resourcing each other. Instead of competing with the church down the road for the biggest carol service, biggest Christmas tree, best hamper appeal, most downloads of our online service, what if we actually shared resources with each other? When it comes to evangelism, Canon J. John says that, *"Christmas is the most fertile season of the year,"* and I would agree with him. It's a wonderful opportunity to share the story of Jesus with others, and I'm quite sure many of you reading this will already have some great resources at your disposal to bless the wider church.

With this in mind, we are going to outline a few suggestions and encourage you to help us populate this page over the coming weeks. If you have resources, suggestions, useful links etc please send them to info@crownejesus.org.

Suggestions:

- **Sending Christmas cards**

This is a wonderful opportunity to share the real meaning of Christmas with others. Why not include a tract or booklet such as *'The Christmas Connection'* by Canon J. John, or *'A Very Different Christmas'* by Rico Tice?

<https://canonjohn.com/shop/>

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/a-very-different-christmas>

Additionally, think about cards that have a clear Christian message on the front cover. As they say, a picture can paint a thousand words. The Goodbook company have some excellent resources:

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/christmas/christmas-menu/christmas-cards/>

- **Buying someone a book**

A book themed around the Christmas story is another great idea. You could ask them to have a coffee with you afterwards to discuss their thoughts and hear any questions they may have. If cost is an issue there are some brilliant reads online such as this one from Max Lucado:

<https://maxlucado.com/it-began-in-a-manger-christmas/>

- **Inviting people to attend a carol service with you or watch one online**

Canon J. John has produced a fantastic resource with over 500 churches committed to showing it this Christmas.

The '*Christmas Unwrapped*' initiative is a powerful way of bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible this Christmas. By signing up you will receive a number of items which you can choose to use in your online service:

- A Christmas message recorded in their new purpose-built TV studio
- A Bible reading by Sir David Suchet
- '*What Christmas means to me*', by Sir Cliff Richard
- A recorded Christmas song from Matt Redman
- An animated re-telling of the Christmas Story for children

- Social media graphics which you can use to promote the Christmas service

Perhaps you could ask your church to use this resource? For more information visit:

<https://canonjohn.com/christmas-2020/>

• **Street evangelism**

Now please don't be put off by past experiences or your understanding of what street evangelism is. We started our Belfast Prayer Room as a Christmas project 6 years ago. The idea was to use a vacant shop unit in the city centre as a place for people to rest from the busyness of shopping, have a coffee and mince pie, a conversation around Christmas and receive prayer.

It didn't stop there. 6 years on, the prayer room is still open each Monday and we have seen more adults respond to the gospel on the street than through any other means of evangelism.

By going onto the streets in a team (not alone) and offering to pray with others, you will open up more opportunities than you can imagine. People are looking for meaning, truth, peace, hope and a future, and Jesus has the answers. Remember, don't miss the moment to be invitational - ask the question: *"Would you like to be forgiven? Would like to invite Jesus into your life?"*

• **Sharing the Christmas story with others through conversation**

Below is a helpful message you may want to use when sharing the good news of Jesus with others. You could read it with a friend over a coffee, or better still summarise it in your own words. **What is important is that you pause, ask questions and invite conversation:** *"Does that make sense?", "Can you follow this ok?", "Have you heard*

it like this before?", "Do you have any questions?" This can help people process what is being said.

What is Christmas really all about? I'll give you a clue: it's in the name - Christmas...a celebration of Christ. We celebrate the fact that the King of Heaven willingly stepped from His throne, removed His crown and royal robe and descended into our world. He became a baby, was birthed into a cold night amongst sheep, cows, donkeys and bugs.

C.S. Lewis describes it like this, *"God has landed on enemy occupied soil."* He breaths our air, cries for His milk and depends on the very people He created to warm Him and love Him. Michael Card wrote in a song, *"There is nothing more fantastic and wild, as a mother made by her very own child."*

It's astonishing that Jesus, the son of God, would give up the riches of Heaven to lie in an animal feeder. His mother, a teenage girl, I'm sure had no idea what to do with a baby that is now crying for milk while His surrogate father Joseph watches on in wonder...What will become of this child? Who is he?

An angel helps us understand more, declaring, *"A **Saviour** has been born."* The baby sleeping in a manger would one day hang on a cross. Those hands that playfully reached out to his mother would one day be pierced by nails. This is the wonder of Christmas; that this baby is the saviour of the world.

We really only appreciate Christmas when seen in the light of the cross. Jesus would one day become a man known to many as a faith healer, preacher, prophet and Rabbi but to others, the son of God. By age thirty he was feeding the hungry, healing the sick, making friends with misfits and sharing a radical message of love and hope. Three years later he died after being showered with spit, whipped and nailed to a cross for claiming to be God.

The following Sunday Jesus rose from the dead, was seen by over five hundred people and within weeks this new faith was spreading like wildfire. He is the most famous person in human history. No politician, army, nation, or religious leader has affected the world like Jesus.

Christmas only makes sense in the light of the cross, only when we see the significance of his death can we truly celebrate his birth.

His death was unlike any other because he died for each of us. One thing we all have in common is sin (our own selfish words, thoughts and deeds). No matter how big or small, the verdict is the same. We are guilty of sin before a loving, holy God and justice must be done. Either we pay for our sin or someone else pays it for us.

The Good News is that Jesus came to take our place and the punishment we deserve so that we might be forgiven and reconciled to God. When we admit we are sinners and invite Jesus to be our personal rescuer, friend and Lord we are given a new life.

That first Christmas ordinary people encountered the extraordinary King. The supernatural meets the natural, the creator meets the created, the King of Heaven meets peasants on the hillside, the immortal meets the mortal. 2,000 years later Jesus is still doing the same and touching the lives of ordinary people.

Maybe He will do it today for you? By remembering Jesus, understanding his mission, recognizing your need for Him and receiving this free gift you can enter into a real living relationship with Jesus. Today you can invite Jesus to take up residence in your heart. The Inn keeper had no room for him...what about you?

Romans 5:8: *"For God demonstrated His own love towards us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."*

The best Christmas present isn't wrapped in paper. The best present isn't even wrapped in foil and tinsel. The best present is wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Invite others to pray this prayer with you:

Father God,

I am truly sorry for the wrong things I have done. Forgive me.
Thank you for sending your son Jesus to die on the cross for my sin.
Today I invite Jesus to be my personal Lord and saviour.

Father God, fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to turn away from my sin and live for you.

In Jesus name,

Amen