

Ideas for Active Christmas Prayers to involve the whole congregation

Christmas poetry

For this activity, you can either use a set of fridge magnetic poetry or magnetic pictures, or you could cut up your own words and pictures.

You might like to take select words from the bible reading or prayers from your service along with other words to talk about Jesus' birth in the world – refugee, poverty, no room, turned away etc. You could also use pictures from newspapers.

Invite people to choose a word or image that speaks to them of Christmas and place it in a large Christmas shape (a tree or dove or manger or star) to create a shape poem.

Passing the peace

Cut out shapes of doves and pass these (and a pen or pencil) around to members of the congregation. Ask people to write down something specific in their own life or a situation in the world that they would like to see changed in some way. These could then be taken home as a reminder or collected together and placed in a manger or tied to a tree branch, offered as a symbol of hope that Christ's coming into the world offers us.

Born into poverty

The birth of Christ (the King) in a humble stable is a powerful image. It is difficult to imagine what this would be like for us living in a developed country like Australia but for others around the world this is still a reality. Every two minutes a woman dies of a pregnancy related complication that is easily preventable. The picture below is of a house in Nepal with the cowsheds underneath. Women are often required to give birth in the unhygienic conditions of the cowshed, as giving birth is culturally seen as too unclean to allow in the house. Ask people to offer a prayer for mothers and children around the world.

You could also ask people to take a clay baby and mould it into a grown person or make an origami mother and child as part of the Micah Challenge campaign on maternal and child health. Details on these prayer ideas are available from the Micah Challenge website: <http://www.micahchallenge.org.au/toolkit>



Prayers for Peace at Christmas

Lord of Life – Lord of Compassion –

We come to ask for help on behalf of the suffering people of your world:

The hungry; the despairing; the families ravaged by poverty, disease and warfare.

O Lord, please open the hearts and minds of politicians, financiers, business men and women, scientists and technicians –

That they may use the powers you have entrusted to them to effect healing of the great woes afflicting so many our fellow human beings.

We pray also for those who are the perpetrators of violence –

May Your Spirit of Compassion and Reconciliation overcome greed, hate and vengeance –

That Your Kingdom may come on earth.

Thank You, our Lord and Redeemer.

Amen

(from St Paul's Anglican Church, High Street, Frankston)

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others.

Open my ears that I may hear their cries

Open my heart so that they need not be without succour.

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak

Because of the anger of the strong,

Nor to defend the poor because of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,

And use me to bring them to these places.

Open my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day,

Be able to do some work of peace for you. Amen

Alan Paton, Instrument of The Peace, 2nd edn.

Leader: In the midst of hunger and war

All: We celebrate the promise of plenty and peace

Leader: In the midst of oppression and tyranny

All: We celebrate the promise of service and freedom

Leader: In the midst of doubt and despair

All: We celebrate the promise of faith and hope

Leader: In the midst of fear and betrayal

All: We celebrate the promise of joy and loyalty

Leader: In the midst of hatred and death

All: We celebrate the promise of love and life

Leader: In the midst of sin and decay

All: We celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal.

We celebrate the promise of the living Christ. Amen