



Introduction

This is part of a series of ideas for four sessions that you can use with Foundation in preparation for Christmas.

Preparation

You will need a copy of [My First Bible](#) or a similar child-friendly version of the Bible to read to the children.

Setting up a focus table

- A coloured cloth: this could be purple or you could have a colour associated with Christmas, for example green.
- A clear bowl, water and four floating candles for the reflection; if this table is left out, use an unbreakable bowl.
- A nativity set. It is better if this is unbreakable so that the children can be free to touch the figures. For this part of the story, you will need the figures of an angel and Mary.
- Pictures with different styles of artwork that depict different stages of the Christmas story. Old Christmas cards can be very helpful.

Development

1. The Story

Getting ready

Prepare a storybag (a simple drawstring bag). In it, put an angel (perhaps a Christmas tree angel), the figure of Mary, a figure of a baby and a small musical instrument. Begin by bringing out the bag.

I wonder what our story will be today. Is there something in here that will give us some clues?

Bring out the following items one at a time, talking about each one, and then place them on the focus table. In doing this, build up a playful sense of mystery.

- The angel: explain that in the Bible, when God had something special he wanted to say to a person, he might send an angel with his message. We don't know what angels in the Bible really looked like, but when people draw pictures of angels, they sometimes draw them like this.
- The baby: talk about babies, perhaps with reference to a recent new baby in a family.
- The instrument: sometimes people use music to talk to God. Sometimes people sing to God when they want to say something special to God.

So - an angel, a baby, some music. I wonder how these are part of our story.



Telling the story

Begin by telling the children that this story comes from the Bible. See [My First Bible](#), pages 136-137: 'Mary meets an angel'.

After you have told the story, bring out the figure of Mary from the storybag and replace the story items on the table with Mary and the angel.

Talking together about the story

I wonder...

... what you like about the story.

... how Mary felt when she saw the angel.

... how Mary felt when the angel told her she was going to have a special baby.

... if you have ever sung a song because something special had happened.

... what the angel meant when he said that Mary's baby would be called the Son of God.

(The children might not give any response to this, but it is important that they are left with a sense that there is still more to think about in this story.)

2. Songs and rhymes

'Mary's Song' in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 37, to the tune 'London Bridge is falling down'.

'The song of Mary and the angel' in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 43, to the tune 'Ring-a-ring o'roses'.

3. A time for reflection

Many churches light a series of candles during Advent. This is an adaptation of that tradition which you could use in your group.

Set up the bowl with the water and the four floating candles. Encourage the children to be still and quiet as you get ready. When everyone is ready, light one of the candles.

A possible prayer: *Dear God, thank you for Mary. Thank you that she said 'Yes' when the angel told her that you wanted her to be Jesus' mum. Amen*

Leave a moment of quiet before blowing out the candle and moving on to the next part of the session.

(Safety note: Be particularly careful using lighted candles when young children are present. Never leave children unattended near candles that are lit or have recently been lit.)

4. A craft activity

Make a hanging angel

For each child, you will need:



- One angel body piece, cut from silver or silver holographic card (it should be about 12.5 cm long and 10 cm at the widest part)
- A circle of white card (about 5 ½ cm diameter), with a hole punched in the top
- Half a paper cake doily, cut in half
- A strip of silver or gold narrow ribbon (of the kind used to wrap up presents) about 4 ½ cm long, for the halo
- A length of silver or gold ribbon for a hanging loop
- You will also need crayons and gluesticks

Instructions

1. Using the crayons, draw in the features for the face.
2. Glue the angel head to the top of the angel body.
3. Glue the two pieces of paper doily to the back of the angel to form wings.
4. Glue the shorter strip of ribbon across the top of the head for the halo.
5. Thread the hanging loop through the hole in the top of the angel and tie to make a hanging loop.