

## On your marks

This idea for a Christmas presentation links the miracle of Christmas with the mystery of Easter. It tries to put the Christmas story into the context of the bigger picture of God coming down to earth as Jesus, not just to be born but also to die for us.

## Get set

This presentation will need rehearsal and involves at least six children or adults and one or more narrators.

You will also need six plank-like pieces of wood or card – four shorter pieces and two longer pieces. When the children and adults hold these pieces together, they are going to create various patterns and shapes in a vertical plane, which must be large enough for the whole congregation to see. A guide to size would be that the shorter pieces should be 1 m x 20 cm and the longer pieces should be 1.5 m x 20 cm.

On one side the pieces should all be a dark brown colour and on the other side they should all be bright yellow or gold.

The shapes that will be made are: two stars, a manger, a table, a cross and a cross and star together

## Go!

**1** Here are the shapes that are needed and how to form them with the six pieces. This will need practice beforehand.

*For the first star:* the children and adults should hold the pieces on a vertical plane so they create a star with 8 rays. Use the two longer pieces to create an equal-armed cross as the centre, pointing north, south, east and west like a compass. The other four pieces radiate out, north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west. For this star shape, it is the yellow or gold side that should face the congregation.

*For the second star:* as above but this time it is the brown side that faces the congregation.

*For the manger or crib:* again this is to be seen on a vertical plane, so use the two longer pieces to be the top and bottom parts of the crib and then the four other pieces to be the two sides and two legs splaying outwards. To do this some children/adults will need to stand and some will need to kneel to enable the shape to be formed as they hold the pieces. For the crib or manger, it is the brown side of the pieces that faces the congregation.

*For the table:* again it will be seen on a vertical plane in cross section, so form this by putting the two longer pieces horizontally on top of each other to be the surface of the table, while the four



smaller pieces become legs going downwards below. For the table it is the brown side again which faces the congregation.

*For the cross:* again seen on a vertical plane, so put the two longer pieces together upwards vertically, while two of the shorter pieces should be together horizontally on one side, and the other two on the other side, at a point two thirds of the way up. Again it is the brown side that should be facing the congregation.

*For the star and cross together:* recreate the star shape as earlier but this time the two central, longer pieces in the cross shape should have their brown side facing the congregation, not the gold or yellow side.

**2** Once the shapes are well rehearsed, they should be formed at each stage to accompany the following narration, which could be shared between two or more speakers:

*First star shape - yellow/gold side*

The Star-maker smiled. It was just as he planned it. Swirling galaxies, beautiful suns, myriads of planets and endless space. All was light - bright, clean and pure. Each star named and numbered; each star reflecting his glory.

*Second star shape - brown side*

But then the Star-maker watched as one star with its solar system dawned. His face saddened as he watched it come out. This star began to dim. A darkness was putting out the light. It no longer shone as he had planned.

*Manger shape - brown side*

The Star-maker knew what he must do. He took off his own light and made himself very small. He sent himself down into the emptiness and became a thing that he had made. He shared the experience of being in the dark. The Star-maker chose to lay helpless on starlit hay and the people of the darkness called it Christmas.

*Table shape - brown side*

The Star-maker grew up and tasted the dark life, shining back at it with his own inner light.

He made tables in a carpenter's workshop.

He sat around a family table in a poor home.

He was invited to meals with people of all sorts.

He shared the light of heaven and at a table in an upper room he talked about bread and wine.

*Cross shape - brown side*

Then finally he went into battle with the darkness. Taking on all that was bad, he even let his own light be put out. The Star-maker became the sin-breaker and he who made the stars became scarred to bring back the light.

*Cross shape (brown) inside star shape (yellow/gold)*

The Star-maker won the victory and after the battle the light began to shine again in this part of his



creation. That light shines in the darkness still and the darkness has not overcome it, because Christmas is only the star-T