

JOY TO THE WORLD



12 DAYS OF
CHRISTMAS

AROUND THE WORLD



★ HAYIEY YUEN ★



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

FROM LCA
INTERNATIONAL MISSION!

We are so thankful for these people who contributed to this resource: Dasmariana Natalia Tondang, Olli Pitkänen, Ruos Sinuon, Duy Saran, Arnim Doerfer, Marey Sundaraj, Ivy Peng, Thorsten Krafft, Samuel Wang, Franklin Ishida, Naoki Sugioka, James San Aung, Anne Storstein Haug and Harison Ratovohery.



We love Christmas time - spending time with our families and friends, eating delicious food, opening presents, and watching Christmas pageants. It is also a special time to remember how God the Father sent His precious Son to be born as a gift for the whole world.

The Twelve Days of Christmas (named Twelvetide) mark the period between the birth of Jesus and the visit from the wise men. Will you join us as we prepare for this time of Christmas by spending 12 days reading and reflecting on the story of Jesus' birth?

In Australia and New Zealand, Christmas is a popular holiday, but did you know that not every country celebrates the way we do? If you went to a country that does not celebrate Christmas, what would you tell them about this special day? LCA International Mission have friends who live in different countries, and we thought it would be interesting to share with you how they celebrate Christmas. What might you see, hear, cook, or make in one of those countries at Christmas?

We hope you enjoy travelling with us around the world this Christmas and while doing so, remember that Christmas is not just about carols, decorations, beautiful lights, or gifts that we give and receive. It is about Jesus Christ. Jesus' birth fulfilled God's promise that He wants to bring us into His loving arms forever.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MATT, NEVIN AND ERIM



DAY 1 CHRISTMAS IN INDONESIA



A nativity play at
GKPS Menteng
Indah, Indonesia

In the Indonesian language, 'merry Christmas' is ***Selamat Hari Natal***. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Indonesian.

In early December, people start making a Christmas tree for their home. The tree can be made out of all different types of materials. Some people even use discarded products such as plastic bottles, cans and broken CDs to highlight caring for the environment by re-using and reducing plastic garbage. There are also large and beautifully decorated Christmas trees placed in the shopping centres.

Indonesian people purchase new clothing to prepare for the Christmas functions and events they will attend. Biscuits are a popular snack during Christmas and

include *Nastar* (which has pineapple jam filling), *Kastengel* (a cheese biscuit) and *Putri Salju* (which is covered with powdered sugar and cheese).

Among the Lutheran Churches in Indonesia, Christmas celebrations are prepared by different groups – the Sunday school, youth, women, pastors and families. There are Christmas-specific groups set up to organise a time of worship where a drama of the birth of Jesus is acted out by the children. After the drama will be some entertainment including dance, comedy and singing. Some people also use this time to give to those who have little money and possessions.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY



Singing during a Christmas service at GKPS Menteng Indah, Indonesia



The Bible doesn't describe the angel who visited Mary. What do you think angel Gabriel might have looked like?

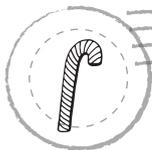
Indonesian people use different materials to make their Christmas trees.

Use materials you already have around your home to create what you think angel Gabriel might have looked like. Place your angel somewhere where you can see it and be reminded of Gabriel's special message for Mary, that God our Father is always with you through the Holy Spirit, even when you feel like you have been waiting for a long time.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her: 'Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, beautiful inside and out! God be with you.

LUKE 1:26-28

The Jewish people had been waiting many years before Jesus' birth for God to send them a leader to set them free from the rulership of other nations. Then God sent an angel to Mary and told her that she would have a baby. Their waiting was over.



DAY 2 CHRISTMAS IN FINLAND



A nativity set up as part of a Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church service

In Finnish (the language spoken by people in Finland), 'merry Christmas' is ***Hyvää joulua***. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Finnish.

Some people believe that Father Christmas comes from Finland and that he lives in northern Finland, north of the Arctic Circle.

In Finland, the main Christmas activities happen on Christmas Eve day. The night before, a ham is put into the oven to cook overnight. In the morning, Christmas delicacies are prepared. Finns eat fish (grilled salmon and herring) and have boiled potatoes, carrots and mushroom salad. The delicious food fills the homes with beautiful aromas. During lunch, Finns eat rice porridge which is sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar or served with a little butter. A single almond is hidden inside the porridge for someone to find. The Finns have a saying that at Christmas, you are allowed to eat the whole night!

If there is a lot of snow, children go zooming down the hill on their sleds or ice-skating in the afternoon.

Before dinner, families go to the sauna. This tradition comes from the time when houses did not have running water, so the sauna was used as the place to be cleaned.

After the sauna, it is dinnertime. All the delicacies are brought to the table but before eating, the Christmas story is read from the Bible. Then it is time to eat and celebrate!

After dinner, Father Christmas comes and gifts are shared.

In the evening, people go to a church service. Even those who normally do not worship, want to hear the Christmas message – a child is born! Jesus is born! The church building is filled with people singing Christmas carols and the Christmas story is read.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Himmeli are Finnish Christmas ornaments in the shape of a little geometric mobile which people hang up in their house or on their Christmas tree.

Make your own *himmeli* (you may also like to experiment with other designs and materials) and display it in your home, as a reminder that Jesus is our King and he rules his kingdom with mercy, grace, justice and selflessness.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Four straws
Wool, bakers' twine or string
Scissors

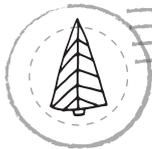
HOW TO MAKE A HIMMELI

1. Cut your straws into thirds. Take three pieces of your straw and thread them onto the wool. Shape them into a triangle and tie a knot with the wool.
2. Add two more pieces of straw to create a second triangle and tie a knot with the wool.
3. Repeat Step 2 until you have one piece of straw left which is not joined.
4. Join the pieces of wool together and tie them in a knot.
5. Take another piece of string and tie it through the two handles to join them together. Then use that string to hang your *himmeli*.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.' The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; He will rule Jacob's house forever—no end, ever, to his kingdom."

LUKE 1:29-33

The baby which angel Gabriel told Mary about was to be a very special baby. He was going to be a sign that God is with us, He loves us, and He wants us to be with Him in His kingdom. Because he is God's Son, Jesus knows how much God loves us and he was prepared to come into the world and die to show us just how great God's love is.



DAY 3 CHRISTMAS IN CAMBODIA



Houl Pa moug
(Khmer traditional clothes)

Cambodia is a strong Buddhist country; therefore, most Cambodians do not really understand what Christmas truly means. They celebrate Christmas to show love by giving gifts to their loved ones.

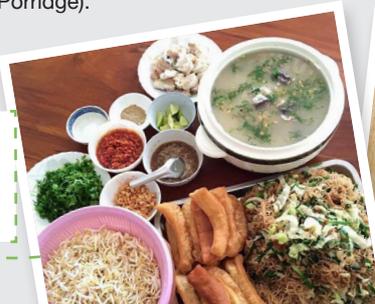
At Christmas, Cambodians wear the Khmer traditional clothing. The traditional clothing for women is named *Houl Pa Moug*. The traditional clothing for men is named *Kau Jaev*.

Some foods which are enjoyed to celebrate Christmas in Cambodia include:

- *Nombonjok Jea mouy Somlor Brohar* (Khmer noodle with Brohar).
- *Somlor Kari Jea mouy Nom pang* (Curry with bread).
- *Borbor Trey* (Porridge).



How many
different dishes
are in this photo?
Count them all.



When the Lutheran Church in Cambodia celebrates Christmas, they call the celebration *Ob oh Piti Preah Reach Komnert Preah Yesu Krist*. They use this program to invite their friends and to tell them about the Son of God coming to the earth to save the world (John 3:16) and to bring joy to the world. The people decorate their church buildings with flashing lights, flowers and balloons. They sing songs and perform a drama about Jesus' birth to show the audience. They also exchange gifts and share the story of Jesus. At the end of the Christmas program there is a time for Khmer dancing together.

Setting up for the *Ob oh Piti Preah Reach Komnert Preah Yesu Krist*



MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY



Cambodian people love to dance and often dance at their celebrations. The Cambodians use their hands when they are dancing - bending their hand backward from the wrist, pushing gently on their fingers with the opposite hand.

Just as the Cambodians dance with their friends at Christmas, ask one of your special friends if they would like to join you in dancing with your hands while listening to your favourite Christmas carols. Thank God for the special friends He has placed in your life to celebrate Christmas with.

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly, 'You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, the babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true!'

LUKE 1:39-40

Mary's special friend was her cousin Elizabeth. After Mary was told she was going to have a baby, she hurried to Elizabeth's house to tell her the news. Elizabeth was pregnant with John, who baptised Jesus. Elizabeth was so excited to hear that Mary trusted in God and she spoke words of encouragement to her friend.



DAY 4 CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY



This nativity photo was taken in Langenaltheim by Thomas Daeschler

The Advent season is an important time of preparation for Christians in Germany. All activities they do are connected with the Advent wreath, which was introduced in 1839 by the Evangelical Lutheran theologian, Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881). He built a wreath out of an old cartwheel to help the children in his mission school count the days until Christmas.

A lot of people in Germany celebrate Christmas the way they did when they were young. They begin to light and decorate the cities and villages for Christmas, and everyone hopes for fresh snow. Christmas brings families together and people like to meet during Advent at the many Advent markets. At the markets, regional brass bands and music groups play and sing Christmas carols, inviting listeners to sing along. Many kinds of Christmas ornaments are available to purchase, including the *Schwibbogen* (candle arch), the

Raeuchermaennchen (incense smoker), the Christmas pyramid, the nutcracker, mouth-blown Christmas tree balls and hand-carved nativity figures.

In Germany, December 24 is generally considered Christmas. People greet each other with the German words **Frohe Weihnachten** (greet someone with these words and see if they recognise the language). There is lavish cooking, baking and celebrating at Christmas and on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria churches offer two or three services on December 24. The 3pm service is for families with younger children to enjoy a nativity play, the 5pm service is often the main service and the 11pm service is the midnight mass. All services celebrate the full richness of Christmas chorales and music.

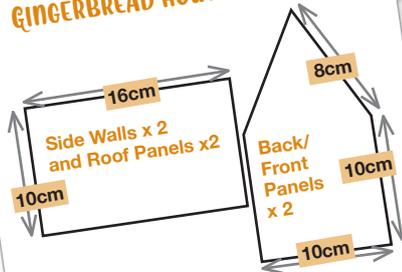
MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Bethlehem literary means 'house of bread'. Made from gingerbread and lavishly decorated with coloured icing and a variety of other *Süßigkeiten* (sweets), making and decorating gingerbread houses is a beloved Christmas tradition for many families in Germany.

With the help of an adult, bake and decorate a gingerbread house as you remember God's Holy Spirit is with you as you journey.



GINGERBREAD HOUSE TEMPLATE.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THE GINGERBREAD DOUGH

- 125 g unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (90 g) brown sugar
- ½ cup (125 ml) golden syrup
- 1 egg
- 3 cups (450 g) plain (all-purpose) flour
- 3 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THE MORTAR AND DECORATION

- White or milk melted chocolate
- Your favourite lollies/chocolates

HOW TO MAKE A GINGERBREAD HOUSE, MORTAR AND DECORATION

Got to <https://yourica.com/12-days-gingerbread> to download instructions.

Using these measurements and a ruler, draw the shapes onto cardboard, then cut them out ready for tracing around.

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

LUKE 2:1-5

Joseph and Mary had to travel all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem while Mary was pregnant with Jesus. The road took days of travelling and was sometimes dangerous, but God was with them each step and protected them on their long journey.



DAY 5 CHRISTMAS IN MALAYSIA



Christmas in a Sabahan home

Dancing at an Orang Asli Christmas service



Even though it is a mostly Muslim country, Christmas is an important celebration in Malaysia. In Malay (one of the languages spoken by people in Malaysia), 'merry Christmas' is **Selamat Hari Natal** or **Selamat Hari Kristmas**. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Malay.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services are often a special time for new Christians to be baptised. Some Lutheran congregations will have a nativity play or present a musical about Jesus' birth.

Malaysia has many different ethnic groups who live together. Family members have meals with a mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Western food. Favourite foods include *nasi lemak* (a dish with rice cooked in coconut milk) and *satay* (skewered meat served with peanut sauce).

The shopping centres are decorated with beautiful Christmas colours and some even have competitions to win the 'best display'. Shopping centres are also filled with activities, such as caroling and games for children.



Satay – skewered meat with peanut sauce

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Just like the shopping centres in Malaysia, have a competition for the best Christmas display. Allocate a room in your house to everyone in your family and this is the room they will decorate. You could even create homemade decorations out of pop sticks.

Sometimes we can forget those who do not live as comfortably as we do. Christmas may be an especially lonely time for them. At the end of your decorating, pray for those who are homeless or are struggling in their home.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Paper
Serrated scissors
Popsicle Sticks
White glue or a hot glue gun
Raffia



HOW TO MAKE A POPSICLE STICK MANGER AND BABY JESUS

1. From the paper, cut out a triangle shape in the size you want for the body of the manger.
2. Glue the popsicle sticks onto the triangle so they completely cover the paper.
3. Using the triangle shape as a guide, cut the popsicle sticks so they also form a triangle.
4. Glue two popsicle sticks onto the top of the others, so they form the shape of an 'x'.
5. From the paper, cut out a circle shape and draw a face on the circle.
6. Glue the face to the top of the manger.
7. To represent straw, glue a few snippets of raffia on top of the manger next to the face.

While they were there,
the time came for
Mary to give birth.
She gave birth to a
son, her firstborn.
She wrapped him in a
blanket and laid him in a
manger, because there
was no room in the inn.

LUKE 2:6-7

When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem they were both very tired. There were so many people there because of the census and the inn where Mary and Joseph had hoped to stay in was full. There was nowhere for them to go, no special room, no special cradle or blanket for this baby when he came into our world.



DAY 6 CHRISTMAS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Christmas at Kairuku



Christmas at St. Andrew's
Lutheran Church in Lae

Celebrating Christmas was brought to Papua New Guinea (PNG) by missionaries about 200 years ago. As PNG is known as the most diverse country in the world, the celebration of Christmas differs from place to place. Coastal Papua New Guineans follow traditions that are different from people who live in the Highlands.

Similar to many other countries, the Christmas season is the time for family reunions. Beginning in mid-December, people travel mainly from the larger cities to the small villages to see their beloved ones and stay with them until the beginning of the new year. Gift giving is not as common in Papua New Guinea and they do not place a lot (if any) emphasis on Father Christmas. Instead, the focus is on celebrating with family and with the church.

Flowers, such as hibiscus, poinciana and frangipanis, are used to adorn houses and church buildings and add some sweet aromas. Church buildings are colourfully decorated and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea congregations put on festive services, extraordinary Christmas plays and carols sung by candlelight. Often church buildings are full of people gathered together for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

Papua New Guineans enjoy eating traditional dishes at Christmas, such as pork roasted in a mumu (cooked in a hole in the ground with hot stones, covered by banana leaves) which is served with vegetables like sweet potato. Freshly smoked fish with rice is a yummy alternative.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

'Silent Night' is one of the most well-known carols for English speakers. This carol is so loved that it has been translated into other languages, including Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin), which is the language spoken in Papua New Guinea.

Try singing 'Silent Night' in Tok Pisin (the English translation is also included) and as you do, ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with reminders of Jesus' love for you.



Gutpela nait, holi nait, (Wonderful night, holy night),
lukim nau bikp'la lait (look now at the great light)
raunim nupela pikinini. (around the new child).
Em i King bilong glori. (He is the King of Glory).
Lukim em i slip (Look at Him sleep),
lukim em i slip. (look at Him sleep).

Gutpela nait, holi nait, (Wonderful night, holy night),
wasman nau lukim lait (shepherds saw the light)
i stap klostu long Betlehem. (that was near Bethlehem).
Ensel litimapim nem (Angels lift up the name)
bilong Jisas i kam, (of Jesus who has come),
bilong Jisas i kam. (of Jesus who has come).

Gutpela nait, holi nait, (Wonderful night, holy night)
God i no moa stap hait. (God is no more only up in heaven).
Kamap klia long Pikinini. (He came to us in a child)
em i bringim marimari. (who brings us mercy).
Krais Bikpela i kam, (Christ, the Lord is here),
Krais Bikpela i kam. (Christ, the Lord is here).

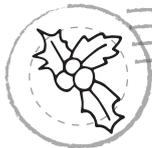


Christmas at Braun Memorial Hospital, Finshhafen

The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David's town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

LUKE 2:10-12

It was nighttime when the shepherds were watching their flocks in the fields. They had a visit, first from one angel, and then from a whole host of God's heavenly angels. God's messengers came to bring them good news of the birth of the baby Jesus.



DAY 7 CHRISTMAS IN SINGAPORE



Bedok Lutheran Church stained glass window

Singapore celebrates Christmas like many Western countries. They eat turkeys and log cakes, have plastic hollies and plastic evergreen wreaths, and shopping malls even play some Christmas pop songs and have fake snow.

A simple plastic Christmas tree will be set up in the home, and those who can afford it, will buy a real tree. Presents are placed below the tree and children must wait until Christmas Eve to open them.

Christmas is also when the churches of the Lutheran Church in Singapore plan gospel outreach for their friends and neighbours. They show nativity musicals and choral concerts and have fun fairs. They also send church carol singers to

visit homes of church members who are hosting Christmas parties for their non-Christian friends and relatives. Pastors prepare a short gospel message, which is spoken when the carolers sing at the houses. Some people are baptised at Christmas because they believe it is a very special time of year.

On Christmas Eve, churches have candlelight services. The Christmas celebrations usually end with a thanksgiving/watch-night service on December 31. Lutheran Church congregations meet to share stories of God's faithfulness throughout the year which He has shown to their family or to them individually. And they pray together for the new year ahead.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

The Bedok Lutheran Church building in Singapore has a large and beautiful stained-glass window which can be seen from the outside, as well as the inside. In this window are panels showing the angel appearing to the shepherds and the wise men visiting Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

Just like Christians living in Singapore who use Christmas to tell non-believers about Jesus, make your own stained-glass window, then display it somewhere prominent for people to see.

Nativity silhouette template



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Nativity silhouette template
Black card
Scissors
Sticky contact
Colourful tissue paper

HOW TO MAKE YOUR STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

1. Copy or print and then cut out the nativity template (<https://yourlca.com/12-days-stainedglass>) onto the black card.
2. Lay out the contact with the sticky side facing you.
3. Place the nativity silhouette onto the contact and press it down so that it sticks.
4. Cut the tissue paper into small shapes and then place them inside the nativity silhouette to create the look of stained glass.
5. Trim the excess contact around the nativity shape.



As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

LUKE 2:15-18

After the angels had appeared to the shepherds and told them that Jesus was born, the shepherds left their sheep and went quickly into Bethlehem to see the baby. Then they told everyone they met about the Christ child.



DAY 8 CHRISTMAS IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)



A nativity handcrafted
by Robert Demuth

Sharing the wonders
of Christmas with
family members

Christmas is one of the most popular times of the year in America and sights, sounds, decorations and shopping for Christmas begins in late October. There are lots of people who have come to live in the USA from other countries. These people often bring Christmas traditions with them.

Americans put their Christmas trees up in their homes early in December. They use a fir tree (either a natural or artificial one) for their Christmas tree. Even in tropical Hawaii, real fir trees are shipped in. They decorate their Christmas tree with lights and ornaments and put a star or an angel on the top. Traditionally, the Christmas tree is displayed until Epiphany (6 January) but some people take down their tree within days after Christmas before they go on their holiday vacation trip. The trees are then mulched.

Christian homes place an Advent wreath on a table, where families gather around for daily devotions. Many Evangelical Lutheran Church of America congregations will have mid-week Advent worship in preparation for Christmas. Churches may have several worship services on Christmas Eve and they are often by candlelight.

Some families have the tradition of opening gifts on Christmas Eve, while many do this first thing on Christmas Day. At Christmas time, some people like to give a gift or money to a charity who supports people in need.

Families gather around dinner, either on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day. A typical dinner may include turkey or a roast, potatoes, vegetables, cranberry sauce, and wild rice.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Christmas church services in America are often by candlelight.

Make your own lantern and when you light the candle, remember that Jesus came like a light shining brightly into a world where people had lost hope. Today, he brings us joy and his light continues to shine into our darkness.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Newspaper
- Tissue paper in white and whatever other colours you would like to have on your lantern
- White glue with a little water added to thin the glue (mix them together on a plate or lid)
- Paintbrush
- A wide mouth glass jar which is clean inside and out and dry
- Scissors
- Paper plate or plastic lid
- Tea light candle (or battery operated tea light candle)

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS LANTERN

1. Lay newspaper out on the table so that any spills are easy to clean.
2. Cut or tear the coloured tissue paper into small squares or strips. With a paintbrush, brush some glue onto the jar, then gently place your coloured paper onto the glue in the shape of a star.
3. Cut or tear the white tissue paper in small squares or strips. With a paintbrush, brush some glue onto the jar, then gently place your white tissue paper onto the glue around the stars. If there is a tear, cover it with more tissue paper. Continue until the outside of the jar is covered.
4. Allow to dry. Once dry, coat with another layer of glue (optional) and allow to dry.
5. Place a tea light candle in the bottom of the jar. If it isn't battery operated, ask an adult to help you light the candle.

In Jerusalem at the time, there was a man, Simeon by name, a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful expectancy of help for Israel. And the Holy Spirit was on him. The Holy Spirit had shown him that he would see the Messiah of God before he died. Led by the Spirit, he entered the Temple. As the parents of the child Jesus brought him in to carry out the rituals of the Law, Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God: God, you can now release your servant; release me in peace as you promised. With my own eyes I've seen your salvation; it's now out in the open for everyone to see: A God-revealing light to the non-Jewish nations, and of glory for your people Israel.

LUKE 2:25-32

After Jesus was born, a man named Simeon blessed him and said he was going to be the light for the world.



DAY 9 CHRISTMAS IN JAPAN!



← Bible dolls, made by Kinki Evangelical Lutheran church member Hiroko - Kings worship the new born Saviour.

In Japanese (the language spoken by people in Japan), 'merry Christmas' is ***Kurumasu-Omedetou-Gozaimasu***. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Japanese.

According to Japanese history records, Japan's first public Christmas celebration occurred in 1886 when a restaurant in Tokyo decorated a Christmas tree. Since then, the word 'Christmas' has been acknowledged as a symbolical term for the winter business season in Japan.

Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) chicken is often eaten on Christmas Day in Japan and people will place their KFC orders months before December.

Small shops, tiny restaurants and even colossal shopping malls start decorating with Christmas ornaments from the beginning of November. Most shop owners don't know the real meaning of Christmas. They decorate because they

believe many customers feel something special when they see those decorations. The shop owners can then expect to get more sales from the atmosphere.

Japanese people don't have a family gathering at Christmas and students still go to school because it is not a public holiday. Instead, the Japanese have parties with friends or special events with the ones they love. The Japanese New Year is a bigger holiday than Christmas. This is the time when families come together, have a special meal, pray and send cards.

Some Christian churches have music concerts or special Christmas services which they invite people to come along to and let them know the Saviour was born on that day. Because it is the last month of the year, many people are tired, so the church can be a place of rest and spiritual healing.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding.

Make an origami Christmas star bowl. Once you have folded the star, place Christmas lollies inside and put it somewhere to remind you that God the Father uses His creation to tell us about Him and His love for us.



Instructed by the king,
they set off. Then the
star appeared again,
the same star they had
seen in the eastern
skies. It led them on
until it hovered over
the place of the child.

MATTHEW 2:9

The wise men left their own
country to follow a new star
they had noticed in the sky.
They followed it all the way
until it led them to Jesus.



DAY 10 CHRISTMAS IN MYANMAR



Lutheran Church of Myanmar congregation worshipping at Christmas

This beautiful picture of the nativity was creatively drawn by Rev Moses Mang from the Myanmar Lutheran Church. Spend time now to draw your version of the nativity.

At Christmas time in Myanmar, colourful and beautiful decorations can be seen everywhere. Christmas songs are played at the Yangon International Airport and in hotels, restaurants, shopping malls and teashops. Christian youth and children go carol singing from house to house in every corner of the town on the first day of December.

In Myanmar language, 'merry Christmas' is ***Pyaw Chyin tau Christmas pyit bar ze***. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Myanmar language.

The Myanmar Lutheran Church looks forward to the Christmas season as one of the most important opportunities to tell the story of God's love through Jesus to their non-Christian friends and

neighbours. At Christmas time, non-Christians are more open to hearing the message of our gracious, merciful, forgiving and righteous God, who expressed His love to us by becoming one of us and fulfilling His plan of salvation through Jesus. It is also a special time for people to come together and restore broken relationships, to bring peace and reconciliation.

The church community prepares a Christmas fellowship meal and serves chicken or pork soup, prepared in the *Khumi* traditional way. They need to make enough soup for over one hundred people. Church members give gifts and share the gospel of Jesus with their guests.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Since most people living in Myanmar are Buddhists, they do not know the reason why Christmas is so important. Christians therefore give gifts to those who do not believe in Jesus as a way of expressing his love for them.

Make a Christmas gift and share the story of his birth with one of your friends who does not believe in Jesus.



Let's take a moment from the **TWIRL** of Christmas preparations, to reflect on the story of the birth of Jesus. Joseph and Mary needed a **BOOST** as they travelled the long journey to Bethlehem. When they arrived, the only place to stay was a stable full of **FURRY FRIENDS**. This is where Jesus was born. That night, sheep were **CHOMP**ing on grass. Suddenly, their shepherds were **KINDER SURPRISE** by angels who announced that Christ the Lord had been born. The shepherds went to find the baby and were full of **TURKISH DELIGHT** at his birth. Wise **SMARTIES** from the east were studying the **MILKY WAY** when they saw the star of the King of the Jews brighter than **MARS**. They followed the star to Jesus and worshipped him with gifts of **OLD GOLD**, Frankincense and Myrrh. And being warned in a **DREAM** that King Herod was up to his old **TWIX**, they returned home without telling Herod about Jesus. Christmas is more than snow **FLAKES** and **PICNICS**. It's about the love of God the Father who gave His Son to be born for you.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Card
Texta
Glue

The following chocolate-

Twirl
Boost
Furry Friend
Chomp
Kinder surprise
Turkish Delight
Smarties
Milky Way
Mars Bar
Old Gold
Dream
Twix
Flake
Picnic

HOW TO MAKE A CHOCOLATE CHRISTMAS STORY GIFT

On the card, write out the chocolate Christmas story, leaving spaces for the chocolates. Glue the chocolates onto the card whenever they are mentioned in the story.

The chocolate Christmas story

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

MATTHEW 2:11

The wise men gave interesting gifts to the baby Jesus. They did not give him a toy or a blanket. They gave him gold (which was a gift someone would give to a king. Jesus is the King of all kings), frankincense (which was used in the temple worship as an offering of thanksgiving and praise to God. Jesus is the High Priest, and his life was the ultimate offering to God) and myrrh (which was used when someone died. When he was an adult, Jesus died for us on the cross).



DAY 11 CHRISTMAS IN NORWAY



Photos taken in Sandnes, which is a city in the west of Norway, close to Stavanger

In Norwegian (the language people speak in Norway), 'merry Christmas' is **God Jul**. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Norwegian.

By the end of October, Norwegians start to decorate the streets and stores for Christmas. Christmas trees are lit and the city buzzes with people doing their Christmas shopping. During the weeks of Advent are plenty of opportunities to catch a Christmas concert or attend a Christmas market. It is also common for companies, organisations and groups of friends to have pre-Christmas parties, which are called *julebord*. The *julebord* crowd fill up the city's restaurants and clubs, making the weekend nightlife quite busy.

Many families have their own traditions on 23 December, named 'Little Christmas Eve', such as decorating the Christmas tree and making a gingerbread house.

Christmas Eve is the main event in the Norwegian Christmas celebration. *Risengrynsgrøt* (hot rice pudding) is eaten for lunch, with any remaining pudding enjoyed for dessert on the same day. In the afternoon most people have Christmas dinner at home or with relatives. After the shops close, people attend Christmas worship services. Christmas presents have been placed under the tree and are opened after dinner, or the presents are delivered by a family member or a friend dressed up as Santa Claus.

The days between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are typically spent going to brunches and dinners with family and friends. Many people go out in the evening, so there is more activity in the city centre. From 27 December the shops are open and some people rush to exchange the presents they have received which are not quite what they wanted.



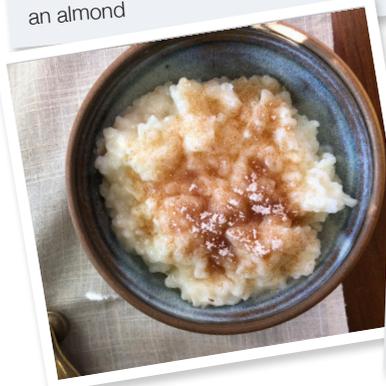
MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

The *risengrynsgrøt* (hot rice pudding) is a Norwegian traditional dish; this is what the barn gnome eats! In the countryside, many people put a bowl outside for the barn gnome. An almond is hidden in the pudding, and if the almond turns up in your portion, you win a marzipan pig! If there is pudding left, they make it into *riskrem* - cold rice pudding mixed with whipped cream. This is a common Christmas dessert served with a red sauce.

Who are the special people in your life who take care of you? Maybe they provide you with the food you need to grow strong and prepare delicious meals for you to enjoy. With the help of an adult, prepare *Risengrynsgrøt* and then enjoy eating it with someone special.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1 cup short-grain glutinous rice, such as Jasmine or pearl rice
1 ½ cups water
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
½ teaspoon salt
4 ½ cups milk
Cinnamon-sugar, to taste
Butter, to taste
an almond



HOW TO MAKE RISENGRYNSGRØT

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Rinse the rice well and drain.
3. In a heavy- bottomed saucepan, bring the water, butter, and salt to a rapid boil over high heat.
4. Pour in the rice, stirring constantly to prevent sticking.
5. Reduce the heat to low, stirring the rice until boiling is reduced to a simmer.
6. Cover the pot and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the rice has absorbed most of the water.
7. Stir the milk into the rice. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, then immediately reduce the heat to low.
8. Once boiling has reduced to a simmer, cover the pot and allow it to cook without stirring for 45 minutes. Be careful to avoid it scorching.
9. Serve warm with cinnamon/sugar, raisins or butter to taste.
10. Place the almond in one serving for someone to find.

After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him." Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death.

MATTHEW 2:13-14

King Herod was cross and jealous that Jesus had been born and he wanted to harm Jesus. After the wise men had visited the baby, God's angel told Joseph to leave with Mary and Jesus and go somewhere safe. God chose a special person to care for Jesus and Mary, and Joseph obeyed Him.



DAY 12 CHRISTMAS IN THAILAND



The agape meal as part of the Christmas celebrations in Banden, Northern Thailand



Giving of gifts as part of the Christmas celebrations in Ban Huai Tong, Northern Thailand



Christmas celebrated in Suanng Muang Nan Preaching Place

In Thai (one of the languages people speak in Thailand), 'merry Christmas' is *sukhsan wan Christmas*. Try saying 'merry Christmas' in Thai.

Now try and write it (this might not be as simple to do): สุขสันต์วันคริสต์มาส

The celebration of Christmas is a special and very important time for Christians in Thailand. Christmas is the time when non-Christians can listen to the word of God and learn about the Son of God becoming a human.

For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand, congregations in the Nan District of Northern Thailand (where many of the Christians are Lua people) celebrate Christmas at a time which is

agreed upon by the church members. This is sometime between 18 and 31 December (not necessarily on 24 or 25 December). The year is ended with all the people from the surrounding villages coming together.

The celebrations include sharing a message about Jesus' birth, the youth and children playing games, giving of gifts (because the people living in this area do not have a lot of money, some churches and schools in Bangkok send them gifts of used clothes or toys) and finishing with an agape meal. It is often attended by the local government leaders.

Usually, people want to be baptised after hearing the good news of God the Father's love through sending His Son Jesus.

MAKE A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Christmas in Thailand is very special for the church, not only because they celebrate the birth of Jesus, but also because it is an opportunity to share the gospel message with people who are not yet followers of Jesus.

Using hand and footprints, make a Christmas image of the nativity and give it to someone you want to share Jesus' love with this Christmas.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Piece of Card
- Paint
- Black pen
- A small person's hands and feet



HOW TO MAKE A NATIVITY HAND AND FOOTPRINT PICTURE

1. Put the small person's feet in the paint and then onto the piece of card to create Mary and Joseph. Leave a small gap between Mary and Joseph so there is room for baby Jesus to be painted in the middle.
2. Once the paint has dried, add detail to Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus using a texta or paint.
3. Paint a stable around Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus and add a footprint angel above the stable.
4. You can also add a handprint donkey and the words from Luke 2:12 'You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.'

When they finished everything required by God in the Law, they returned to Galilee and their own town, Nazareth. There the child grew strong in body and wise in spirit. And the grace of God was on him.

LUKE 2:39-40

Have you noticed that the story of Christmas is the story of God's love? Mary treasured God's love in her heart. The shepherds ran to Bethlehem when they heard the angel's message. The wise men travelled for a long time following a star so they could visit Jesus.

This tiny baby was talked about by the prophets, his birth was announced by angels, he was called Immanuel 'God with us'. He is the Son of the Most High God and his love for us has no beginning and no end.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!