



# Children's Ministry Update

Year of Matthew

YEAR C: Luke

Volume10 Edition5: 2015

## From the Team

Hello everyone and welcome to this final edition of our 'Children's Ministry Update' newsletter for this year. With the current restructuring of Catholic Education services, our office has been affected by a 20% reduction in time from 2016. This means our office will be closed on Wednesdays and Fridays next year. Both Jenny and myself applied for the position of consultant and were successful. Sr Jenny Seal fdnsc will work 1.5 days and Carmen Balales will work 2.5 days each week. We are delighted to continue in our current positions and further develop our services for another 4 years.

We extend a deep sense of gratitude to each of you for the wonderful gifts you have brought to your ministry to the children and their families. To those catechists who are ending their ministry we sincerely thank you and wish you every blessing. To those who are continuing next year we wish you a well deserved time of renewal and look forward to supporting you again. **May God's Blessings fill your days, Carmen Balales + Sr Jenny Seal fdnsc**

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### INDUCTION + REFRESHER WORKSHOP FOR ALL CATECHISTS

WHEN: Monday 15th February 9:30am-12noon  
 WHERE: Catholic Information + Resource Service,  
 112 Kintore Street, Thebarton  
 RSVP: 9th February: carmen.balales@cesa.catholic.edu.au

### BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

WHEN: Thursday 25th February 1:30pm- 4:30pm  
 WHERE: Adelaide College of Divinity' room S1  
 34 Lipsett Tce, Brooklyn Park  
 RSVP: 15th February: worship@ow.adelaide.catholic.org.au

### CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD LEADER TRAINING

(essential for those who have not been trained since 2013)

WHEN: Saturday 27th February 10am- 12:30pm  
 WHERE: Catholic Education Conference Centre,  
 116 George Street, Thebarton  
 RSVP: 16th February: carmen.balales@cesa.catholic.edu.au

### DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL + COMMISSIONING MASS

WHEN: Sunday 6th March at 11am Mass  
 WHERE: St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wakefield St, Adelaide

The Annual Diocesan Catechetical Mass, is a time to formally acknowledge and commission all catechists who volunteer their time in various children's ministries within our parishes.

### Diary Dates

- **INDUCTION/ REFRESHER WORKSHOP**  
15th February
- **BAPTISM for CHILDREN of CATECHETICAL AGE WORKSHOP**  
25th February
- **CHILDREN'S LITURGY of the WORD LEADER TRAINING**  
27th February
- **DIOCESAN COMMISSIONING MASS**  
6th March

# The meaning of Christmas

## *What is the true meaning of Christmas?*

Every year as the Christmas season comes around, we hear a great deal about the real meaning of Christmas. But it is not always clear just what that real meaning is. For some, the true meaning of Christmas is the warmth and love of families, a celebration of the home. For others, the real meaning of Christmas is love for other people – “Peace on earth, good will towards others.” And of course, Christians believe the true meaning of Christmas is the birth of Jesus.



All these things, and especially the celebration of Jesus' birth, have something to do with Christmas. But the full meaning of Christmas is something bigger – bigger than the love of our families or good will towards others, even bigger than remembering the birth of Jesus. For when we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating one of the greatest truths of our faith – **the incarnation**. We are not just celebrating the fact that some 2,000 years ago Jesus of Nazareth was born; we are celebrating the greater fact that in Jesus of Nazareth, God became human!

## *Nurturing Yourself during the Festive Season*

Self Nurture, we all need it but especially in the busy-ness of the Festive Season, it can seem harder than ever, but no less important.

The definition of nurture is to *nourish, rear, foster, train, educate*. We do this daily in our ministry and in our family so why not do this for ourselves?! Self Nurture is learning to care for yourself as effectively as you care for everyone else. During this festive season take time to focus on showing loving acts directed toward yourself because you are worth it and everyone will benefit. Nurturing is a form of nourishment, and we all know how essential good nourishment is. Try the following:

### **Ways to Nurture: Physical**

- **Eat well:** Feed your body the nutrients it needs.
- **Exercise:** include others in your exercise routine, enjoy the good weather and walk.
- **Foot soaks:** Make a 10 minute foot soak a regular soothing ritual – morning or night. Foot soaks are known to reduce pain and relieve tension and will provide healing benefits to the whole body.

### **Ways to Nurture: Mental**

- **Read:** get books for yourself from the library and set aside time to actually read them!
- **Listen:** grab your favourite music and play it in the car or on an iPod whilst going about your chores or your walk.
- **Journal writing:** write anything that calls you: ideas, thoughts, worries, experiences, frustrations

### **Ways to Nurture: Spiritual**

- **Meditate:** if you think you don't have time have a look at the 8 Minute Meditation by Victor Davich.
- **Spend time:** sit amongst the beauty of nature alone or with the family.
- **Coffee ritual:** Catch up with friends.
- **Show gratitude:** and be open to receiving it. Count your blessings!

# REACHING OUT AT CHRISTMAS

**Christmas** is a happy and joyful time but it can be a stressful and challenging time for many people who find that the Christmas spirit can be undermined in various ways. Christmas provides special opportunities to reach out to others. One of the ways we are made in God's image is to love others and when we do, we have a sense of well being and significance.

The Magic of  
Christmas  
is not in the presents,  
but in His  
presence

## Step-families

*Try to:*

- \*Gather as a family and decide what you would all like to do for Christmas. Make sure the children have their say.
- \*Stagger the celebrations so that each child gets to spend time with both their natural parents and their step-parents.
- \*Not take arrangements too personally.



## Financial and time pressures

*Try to:*

- \*Budget for Christmas ahead of time by putting money away each week throughout the year.
- \*Do your Christmas shopping early and stick to the shopping list.
- \*Consider a simpler version of Christmas lunch.

## Bereavement *Try to:*

- \*Expect and appreciate that people show their grief in different ways.
- \*Talk together about your loved one. Sharing memories that bring a smile or tears can help you come to terms with Christmas without them.
- \*Not feel guilty if you find yourself having a good time – sharing a few laughs with family or friends doesn't mean you don't love or miss that special person.

## Separation or divorce

*Try to:*

- \*Allow yourself to feel your emotions. If you prefer to put on a brave face for others, give yourself enough time alone to help deal with your feelings.
- \*Talk about it as a family. Sharing your thoughts and feelings can help you feel closer.
- \*Arrange to stagger the Christmas celebrations so that the children can spend time with both parents.



## Isolation

*Try to:*

- \*keep in constant touch by phone, mail and email.
- \*shop for loved ones to help you feel connected, despite the distance.
- \*Volunteer for charity work or attend community celebrations.
- \*Reconcile with relatives and old friends

## Family tensions

*Try to:*

- \*Appreciate that everyone is under stress to some degree so be as understanding as you can of people's particular situations.
- \*Be involved in after-lunch activities (cricket on the back lawn) to feel the joy and to relax with each other.

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## The Manger

- Consider starting with the figures of Mary and Joseph at some distance from the manger. Move them a bit nearer each day reflecting on their journey to Bethlehem. Add the remaining figures as the Christmas season progresses with the Wise Men finally arriving on Epiphany in January
- Begin with an empty manger with a supply of straw or shredded paper. Allow the children to add a single piece of bedding to the manger whenever they do a kind deed
- Allow children to play-act the story of Jesus' birth. This can provide hours of creative fun and helps children to learn the Christmas story and relate to it
- Pray together before the manger at Christmas eg spontaneous prayers for the needs of the family or others, or in thanksgiving for the gifts given to us in our lives.

*(‘Celebrating Faith: Year–Round Activities for Catholic Families’ by Mary Cronk Farrell, St Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio)*



(picture: [www.westword.com](http://www.westword.com))

## Christmas—Using Multiple Intelligences

### Interpersonal

- Interview family members on their understandings of Christmas
- Explore what life in Bethlehem was like

### Intrapersonal

- Write the Christmas story as if you were a shepherd in Bethlehem
- Make a list or draw pictures of favourite Christmas celebrations you have experienced

### Verbal

- Tell the story of Jesus' birth from the view of the Magi or Wise men
- Debate- 'Christmas is more important than Easter'

### Logical

- Compare what is different and what is the same between the birth of Jesus in Luke's and Matthew's gospel
- Make a story map of the events of Jesus' birth from Luke's gospel

### Naturalistic

- Investigate the flora and fauna of Galilee in Jesus' time
- What were the seasons like when Jesus was a child in Galilee?

### Musical

- Compose a rap, rhyme, dance or song on the birth of Jesus
- Have a look at Christmas carols and check if you can see the Bible story in them

### Bodily/Kinaesthetic

- Create a drama on the visit of the magi
- Prepare food eaten by Jewish people in Jesus' time

### Visual/Spatial

- Label a map showing the places important to the birth of Jesus
- Create a photo collage of Christmas traditions around the world

*(Adapted from 'Learning Links to Christmas' by Maurice Ryan, 2010, Lumino Press, Brisbane)*

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## The Call of Christmas

The birth of Jesus calls us to celebrate Christmas with the giving of gifts and the joy of family life.



- How do we contribute to the joy of family life?
- Is there anything that stands in our way of this?
- How can my heart be transformed so that I can be a positive presence in my family?
- Can I share with my children stories from my life and possibly even lessons I have learnt?
- How does my family and I reach out to others at Christmas? Can we discuss together and find ways to make Jesus' presence real in the lives of others too.

## Birth and New Beginnings

Christmas and New Year is usually a time of rest and recreation for most families. This time offers numerous opportunities to celebrate faith and nurture the joy of Christmas in the family.

- How can I enjoy the simple things of life with my family?
- Are new beginnings needed to be made with my extended family?
- Not all experiences are positive. Can I share with my children how I have turned around and lived with Christian values?



- Can we detect the voice of the God of Love in the consistent words and actions of love that we hear and experience from a wide variety of people who care for us? Can our children hear this too through our word and actions?

## Blessings

Create a *Family Blessings Book*. Each day, (possibly before going to bed), or each week, family members write down things they are thankful for from their day. As a family, you will have a growing record of God's blessings in your family life.



picture:

[www.seeds4the soul.com](http://www.seeds4the soul.com)

# CATECHIST PRAYER PAGE

## *Cause of Our Joy*

Dear God,  
thank you for  
our joyful sister Mary.

You called her name and  
made her a mother.

She said to the angel:  
"Let it be done to me!"  
She was filled with joy.

You sent her to Elizabeth.  
The two cousins exulted  
and their babies touched hearts.  
They were filled with joy.

The shepherds and the Magi  
drew close, summoned by  
angels and stars.  
And the child,  
near his mother,  
slept.

All creation was  
filled with joy.

Simeon and Anna  
greeted the family at last.  
With Joseph,  
Mary presented her child  
and fulfilled the law.  
Young and old alike  
were filled with joy.

Young Jesus taught the teachers,  
dazzled the wise,  
troubled his parents,  
wakened their wonder and awe.  
The world is filled with joy.

Dear God,  
thank you for our  
joyful sister Mary.  
Now we are filled  
with joy.

Amen.

*Take some time this Advent  
to reflect with Mary  
the mystery of her Son Jesus  
and the impact of God in her life.*

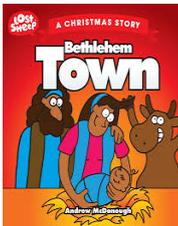
*Let us ask ourselves  
how God influences and impacts our life  
with family and friends especially over this Christmas Season.*



Prayer and painting from 'Blessed Art Thou: Mother Lady Mystic Queen'

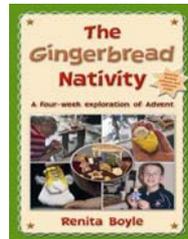
by Michael O'Neill McGrath with prayers by Richard N Fragomeni

# RESOURCES



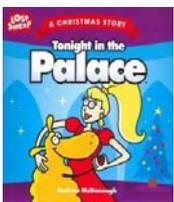
**Bethlehem Town : A Christmas story**  
[Picture book]

by Andrew McDonough  
Call No.: 232.921 MCD



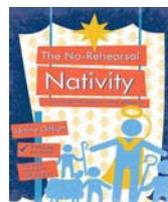
**The Gingerbread Nativity : a four-week exploration of Advent**

by Renita Boyle  
Call No.: 232.92 BOY



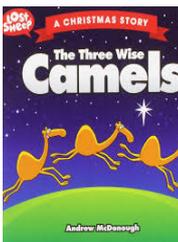
**Tonight in the Palace : A Christmas story**  
[Picture book]

by Andrew McDonough  
Call No.: 232.921 MCD



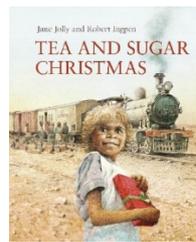
**No-rehearsal nativity : a church nativity resource with a difference**

by Janine Gillion  
Call No.: 246.7 GIL



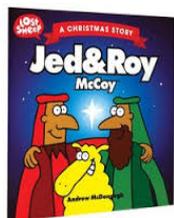
**The three wise camels : A Christmas story**  
[Picture book]

by Andrew McDonough  
Call No.: 232.921 THE



**Tea and sugar Christmas**  
[Picture book]

by Jane Jolly  
Call No.: 823.4 JOL



**Jed & Roy : A Christmas story**  
[Picture book]

by Andrew McDonough  
Call No.: 232.921 MCD



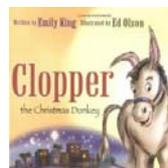
**On Angel Wings [DVD]**

by Dave Unwin  
Call No.: 823.92 UNW  
A stunning 30 minute Christmas special for all the family. Based on the book by Michael Morpurgo



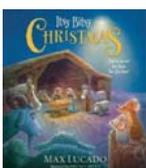
**The Wonder of Christmas** [Picture book]

by: Mackall, Dandi Daley  
Call No.: 232.921 MAC



**Clopper the Christmas donkey**  
[Picture book]

by: King, Emily  
Call No.: 232.921 KIN



**Itsy bitsy Christmas**  
[picture book]

by: Lucado, Max  
Call No.: 232.921 LUC



**Listen to the silent night**  
[Picture book]

by: Mackall, Dandi Daley  
Call No.: 232.921 MAC

**Available to borrow from:**  
**Catholic Resource & Information Service**

**112 Kintore Street Thebarton SA**  
**T:83016869**  
**E: [cris@cesa.catholic.edu.au](mailto:cris@cesa.catholic.edu.au)**

# Your Parish Story

**BLESSING OF THE CRIBS MASS** This year the annual Blessing of the Cribs Mass especially focussed on families from all parishes with a newborn baby who had been baptised in 2015. They were invited to bring their family and their cribs (home made by the children of the family or otherwise) These families were part of the Entrance Procession and part of the Blessing Ceremony. The Mass was a wonderful celebration to begin the Advent Season and included the reception students from St Michael's College decorating the Jesse Tree. Father Philip Marshall explained the significance of the Jesse Tree as the students placed all of the decorations on the tree. The individual cribs that were brought to the Mass were blessed and then each family was given a small bundle of hay to place in their family crib at home.



## **CATECHISTS' COMMISSIONING SUNDAY**

**Sunday 6th February** This date has been set across the Adelaide Archdiocese as an opportunity to formally acknowledge and commission those involved in any children and family ministries within your local parish. Those involved in Sacraments of Initiation preparation, those who teach in the local parish school, those who lead Children's Liturgy of the Word sessions, those who teach RE to the state school children and those who are involved in any other children and family ministries. *Attached is a copy of the commissioning rite.*

To each and everyone of our wonderful Catechists and to the families who support those in this wonderful ministry of our precious children:

We wish you every thanks for your generosity throughout the year.

May you receive a hundredfold from our God of love and abundance this Christmas Season .

We look forward to working together again in 2016.

With every blessing,

Carmen Balales and Sr Jenny Seal fdnsc



Children's Ministry Update

## Family & Parish Catechesis

Catholic Education Office  
112 Kintore Street Thebarton

PO Box 179  
Torrensville Plaza SA 5031

Carmen Balales Ph: 08 8301 6110  
carmen.balales@cesa.catholic.edu.au

Sr Jenny Seal fdnsc Ph: 08 8301 6195  
jenny.seal@cesa.catholic.edu.au

Office Fax: 08 8301 6842

We're on the web



[www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/ParishandFamilyBasedCatechesis](http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/ParishandFamilyBasedCatechesis)

## **Detailed Diary Dates 2016**

- **CATECHIST SUNDAY**  
WHEN: Sunday 7th February  
VENUE: your local parish
- **CATECHISTS INDUCTION + REFRESHER workshop**  
WHEN: Monday 15th February  
9.30am-12noon  
VENUE: CRIS: 112 Kintore St, Thebarton
- **BAPTISM of CHILDREN of CATECHETICAL AGE workshop**  
WHEN: Thursday 25th February  
1:30– 4:30pm  
VENUE: ACD: 34 Lipsett Tce, Brooklyn Pk
- **LEADING CHILDREN'S LITURGY of the WORD TRAINING**  
WHEN: Saturday 27th February  
10am– 12:30pm  
VENUE: Catholic Education Centre  
116 George St, Thebarton
- **DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL/ COMMISSIONING MASS**  
WHEN: Sunday 6th March, 11am  
VENUE: St Francis Xavier Cathedral,  
Wakefield St, City