

# Thoughts for Busy Parents

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FOR FAITH AT HOME



**IT'S CCHHRRRIISSTTMMMAASS!** OK well, not yet... but it will be soon. And you can't blame me for getting excited we've not had much else to look forward to this year.

In the first of these new quarterly Thoughts for Busy Parents e-newsletters I've put together ideas, resources, and encouragements to help you keep Jesus at the centre and foundation of your family this Christmas.

Now, I know Christmas is the busiest time of the year for us parents. Never fear! The ideas you'll find here are low prep, but max impact! Best of all you can make them part of your existing family time and Christmas Traditions. It's my gift to you. Enjoy! *Liam*

## WHEN GOD CAME NEAR

"The Word became a human and lived among us" - John 1:14

For most of 2020 we've lived with the life at arm's reach. Social distancing has been the watch word. And for good reason! Even so, it has been hard, and often lonely, without friends, family, and fellow believers around us.

Yet, at Christmas we remember that God did not keep his distance. He entered our messy lives and messed up world not to condemn it, but to save it, to save us... to save you (John 3:16-17)! At Christmas we remember that the baby in the manger is Jesus...



God come to earth as a human being. He came take away our sinful mistakes by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. God didn't keep his distance from you, so you wouldn't have to keep your distance from him!

### Nativity Service (24<sup>th</sup> Dec , 4pm)

We are hoping to hold our Annual Nativity service on Christmas Eve. Fun, interactive and perfect for ages 3-6. Why not invite a family? Precious memories guaranteed! See our [Facebook](#) or [website](#) for more info.



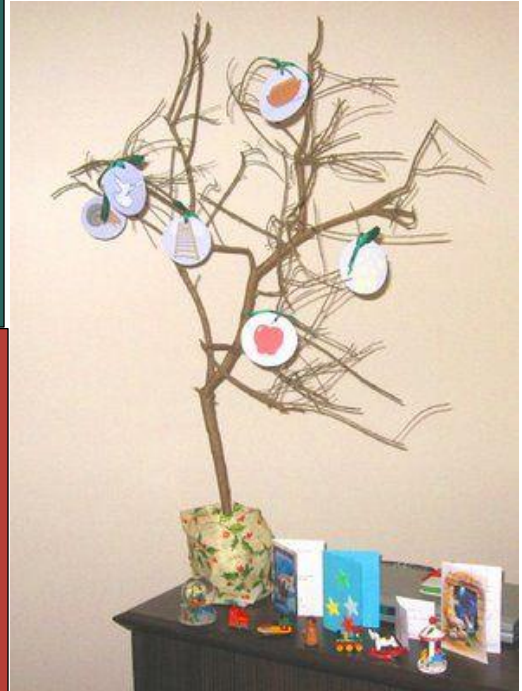
### Bake Through the Bible At Christmas - Susie Bentley-Taylor

A great way of exploring the Christmas story with your child(ren) while having lots of fun cooking. RRP £6 (Ages 2-7)

Check out Page 2 for some simple , fun ideas to help your family explore the meaning of Christmas.

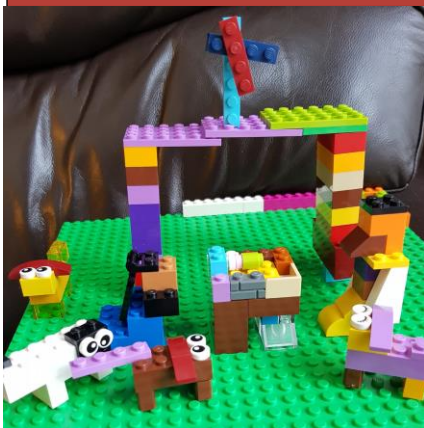
## IDEAS: Bringing Christmas Home

**CREATE A JESSE TREE:** a Jesse tree is a great way to prepare for Christmas during advent. Grab a branch from the garden, jam-jar, string, and a set of Jesse tree baubles ([I got mine free from the Bible Society!](#)). Everyday a child pops out a bauble and hangs it on the tree. Chat about the image, read the passage, and pray. Simple. Involve older children by getting them to read. For young children, focus on one or two verses. **Time Needed:** as little as 10mins a day.



### USE A CHILD-FRIENDLY NATIVITY SET

When my eldest son was about 18-months we got [a child friendly nativity set](#) for him to play with. It was a great way to introduce him to the Christmas characters, and in time the story. Even now he is 6, we still use it to re-tell the Christmas story in four parts over advent (Mary & Joseph, Jesus' Birth, Shepherds, Kings). For little ones, use your own words or use a bible story book. **Time Needed:** as little as 5-7 mins a week.



### BUILD A LEGO CHRISTMAS SCENE

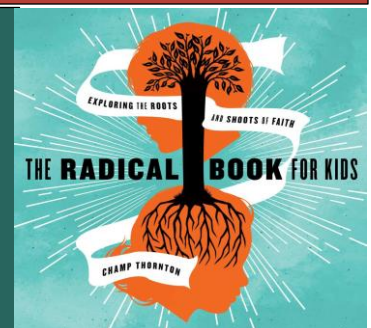
I love Lego! If like us you have a box of bits, why not put it to good use and build a Lego Christmas scene with your family. A great weekend afternoon activity. It could be a nativity scene (left), scene from the Christmas story (e.g. Angels and Shepherds), or even a church service. Whatever! Remember, the goal is not accurate reconstruction. The Lego is a means to a conversation so remember to ask questions (Who, what, when, where, why, how?). It is also supposed to be fun, so don't push you child(ren) to finish it in one go. When they get bored, tidy up, and come back to it later.

## Resources: Books and Bits

Christmas is a great time to invest in some books as presents for your children or even make a [Book Advent Calendar](#). Here are my top picks:

- **The Radical Book for Kids** - Champ Thornton. I love this book. A vibrant guidebook to the bible, church history and life. Perfect for ages 8+. RRP £15
- **Everything a Child Should Know About God** - Ken Taylor. A great introduction to key Christian concepts (Who is Jesus? Why did he come? etc). Aimed at 3+. For older ones (5+), talk about included bible verse and follow up with questions RRP: £5 (Ages 3-6)
- **The Jesus Storybook Bible**. Should be on every family bookshelf. JSB is a Jesus centered, gospel-saturated adventure through the bible. Never read the Bible as a family? Start here! (Ages 4+)

Looking for something specific? Found a great resource? Let me know! ->



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