



Children's Christmas Resources 2017

Week Three – Trusting God

Children's Message – Trusting God

For this message you will need:

- * Pre-arranged volunteers (non-musicians)

The key word in this message is '**UNEXPECTED CHANGE.**'

The aim of this message is to show that we can trust God through unexpected change and challenges.

During this message you will suggest that you start off by singing a Christmas carol or song. Arrange for three or four children or adults to do a quick role play with you. If you choose the children ensure that they are confident and outgoing who can play along with you. You will need someone **who can't play the piano** to come up and start playing for the song when the musicians are invited to take their place. Also arrange for someone **who can't play the drums** to come up and play the drums and someone to play a cornet or other instrument **that they can't play**. You will need to meet with them for five minutes before the message to explain what to do and how to respond to some of the questions. You will also need to meet with the regular musicians and let them know what it is about so that they don't get mixed up and wonder is going on!!

[SAY] 'Well I thought because Christmas is just around the corner that we could sing a quick Christmas song. How about we sing Rocking around the Christmas Tree? If the musicians can please come and take their places and on the count of three let's start.' (Allow time for the musicians to get ready then count to three and start. Of course there will be just a terrible loud musical noise.)

'Whoa hold on a second, what's going on, I'm sorry to break this news to you but you people can't play. Single out one of the musicians and ask, since when have you played the (piano, drums or whatever!)

*Ask them to respond with, 'Since this morning, I thought I would have a crack so I asked the Corps Officer and they said "why not, an unexpected **CHANGE** would be great. So here I am.'* Am I great or what!'"

*Ask one of the other players that same thing. Get them to respond with, "'Well I thought we could do with a bit of a **CHANGE** here today so why not give it a go. I didn't bother asking the Officer first because he was so busy before the service started. I thought I could just surprise you all. Are you all surprised?'"*

*'Well this is an **UNEXPECTED CHANGE** this morning, I don't know how I feel about this. But they say that **CHANGE** is as good as a holiday. AND now we have run out of time to sing our song so if you people would like to return to your seats that would be great. Maybe we will get you to play another time after you have practiced for a year or ten!' (Turn to congregation) Whew! That was a close call.*



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*'You know, because Christmas is just around the corner it has got me thinking about how Joseph and Mary would have gone through lots of **UNEXPECTED CHANGES** in their lives. First they find out that Mary is having a baby- that's a huge **CHANGE**, then they find out that they have to travel to Bethlehem just when the baby is about to arrive – that's a big **CHANGE**. Then they had to stay in a stable when Jesus was born – that's another big **CHANGE**. There was no comfortable hospital for Mary to deliver the baby in. Through all this they chose to trust God. That God would look after them.'*

➤ *I wonder if were in Mary and Joseph's shoes whether you would choose to trust God.*

'It says in the Bible in Proverbs 3: 5-6, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.'

*'Today we are going to explore how we can trust God during **UNEXPECTED CHANGES** in life. So stay tuned for more coming up soon.'*



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Children's Activity

For this activity you will need:

- * A table
- * Several glasses of water
- * Food colouring
- * A piece of card stock and glue five envelopes on it. Number the envelopes 1 – 5 and inside each envelope place the following prompts with the explanations below.
- * Envelope 1 - An unexpected pregnancy
- * Envelope 2 - An unexpected hospital visit
- * Envelope 3 - An unexpected escape
- * Envelope 4 - An unexpected warning
- * Envelope 5 - An unexpected surprise

Decorate the card stock with Christmas stickers etc. and place on a wall.

Let's Get Started

Place all your glasses of water on the table. Place a couple of drops of food colouring in each glass so that each glass has its own colour. Go through the process with the children of adding different colours into different glasses and watch the unexpected change to the colour of the water in each glass.

God's Big Idea

Tell the kids that today we are going to look at the Christmas story a little bit differently. We are going to take a close look at Mary and Joseph and all the unexpected changes they went through.

To do this we are going to play a game. When the music stops, we will take a new envelope and read what it says. Play some cool Christmas music and encourage the kids to dance and sing along. When the music stops start with the first envelope. Settle the kids down sitting on the floor and start to read.

An unexpected pregnancy – Mary and Joseph did not expect to have a baby. They got quite a shock when an angel appeared telling them that Mary was pregnant. Mary went and stayed with her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth was having a baby as well. Elizabeth was able to help Mary. Sometimes when an unexpected change comes into our lives other people can help and support us just like Elizabeth was able to help Mary.

(Start the music again. When it stops, read envelope number 2.)



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An unexpected hospital visit – Did Mary have Jesus in a hospital? No she didn't. Explain where and why Jesus was born in a stable surrounded by animals. Mary and Joseph did not expect that Jesus would be born in a stable. God sent a kind inn keeper to provide a stable for Mary to have the baby. God sent more angels to tell the shepherds to visit Jesus. God also sent the wise men to visit. Mary and Joseph trusted that God was with them and God sent visitors to them to not only visit and worship the new baby King Jesus but to show Mary and Joseph that they were not alone. That this baby was very special and that God was with them.

(Start the music again. When it stops, read envelope number 3.)

An unexpected escape – What's this about? Is this part of the Christmas story? Yes it is but it's a part we don't often hear about. Well during the time that Jesus was born there was a King named King Herod. He was very jealous of Jesus (a new king on the scene) so he ordered that all male children under the age of two should die. He really wanted to find Jesus and destroy him. So Mary and Joseph had to escape to Egypt to avoid Jesus being harmed. Again Mary and Joseph trusted that God was with them and He was.

(Start the music again. When it stops, read envelope number 4.)

An unexpected warning – After King Herod died, Mary, Joseph and Jesus was about to travel back home but God speaks to Joseph through a dream – two times. You see, Herod's son was just as bad as King Herod. The threat of danger to little Jesus was still there. So they didn't return. Joseph trusted God so much that when he had the dream Joseph knew it was a special message from God. He listened to God. He kept his ears open.

'Well Mary and Joseph had many unexpected changes in their lives but they trusted that God was with them - and He was. They listened to God, kept their ears open and listened for the warnings. God was with them all the time. He sent people along the way to help them, He sent angels to give them warnings in dreams. He was with them all the time.'

- *I wonder if you have had any unexpected changes in your life. Discuss with the kids some unexpected changes that they may face.
(Change of school, change of house, parents separating, change of teacher, a pet has died etc.)*

'Sometimes it's really tough to go through change. But our friends and family can help us and support us along the way.'

'Sometimes we don't understand why we have to go through change. We need to trust God that He has a plan for us and that everything that we go through is for a reason. Sometimes we don't understand the reason and why we have to go through the changes. But this is when we need to trust God to always be with us.'



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What's the point?

'There is one more unexpected event on the wall. Let's take a look.'

An unexpected surprise – Jesus grew up into a man who would lead all the people in the world to God. He offers us a new beginning. What a great surprise. We have the chance to have a friendship with Jesus through his showing us what God's love is like. When we go through unexpected changes there is always hope because God loves us and will be with us. All we need to do is trust Jesus.

- What does it mean to trust someone? (To believe that they are reliable and truthful. That that person is good and honest and will not harm you.)

Remember this!

In the Bible there is a great verse that says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.'
Proverbs 3:5-6

- What do you think it means when it says 'and lean not on your own understanding'? (Sometimes we think we have the answers to the things in our lives – or that we know better than God knows. Of course we don't! And there are times when we have no answers at all. So it's best to trust in God and wait for God to give us His understanding and guidance).

Chat with God

Sit in a circle on the floor. Encourage the children to sit quietly and pray within themselves. Explain that sometimes we don't know what to pray so just saying 'Thank you God, I will trust you' can be enough.

Ask a leader to finish off praying.



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Home and Beyond

Print out the following 'Home and Beyond' cards for each child to take home and do with their family.

Home and Beyond Cards

This week chat to your parents or Grandparents about any unexpected changes that they have had in their lives. Ask them who helped them through the changes. Who did they trust?

Sometimes unexpected changes can be fun. Change your movie every night. Wrap up all your Christmas movies that you have at home in Christmas paper. The take turns unwrapping one every night and that is your family movie for the evening. What a fun unexpected change!

Do you do the same thing every year for Christmas? Talk to your family about a change that you could make this year. For example, instead of eating the same food on Christmas Day, try a new recipe.



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