

# God chose to live as **One of Us**

## Christmas Resources for Children and Families 2012

### **Interactive messages:**

Below you will find interactive messages that can be used with children and families during your service, family service or other events throughout the Advent season.

### **Advent 4: We are not alone**

For this message you will need:

- An empty plastic soft-drink bottle, filled with water to about half-way or a container that has some items in it that spill out when knocked over, e.g. tall plastic kitchen container filled with buttons or Smarties, etc.
- A bucket of soft balls or the balls that are used in a ball pit with toddlers.
- Some bats, racquets or plastic shovels, etc. (about four would be good).
- A plastic drop sheet, towel and paper towel to protect the floor and clean up after a water spill.
- Some masking tape or gaffa tape to mark out a square that is about 50/60cm on each side.
- About eight volunteers.

#1 – Choose one of your volunteers to come and stand in the middle of taped area. Place the bottle or container in the middle of this space too. It is their job to protect the bottle from being knocked over; they need to do this while not touching the bottle/container. The rest of the volunteers have the bucket of soft balls that they are going to use them to try and knock the target over. *(This will happen fairly easily so you might like to do it a couple of times and even change the person that is in the middle protecting the bottle/container.)*

#2 – This time, the last volunteer that was protecting the object gets to choose three other people to help them and they can each choose a racquet or tool to help in their job of defending. The rest of the volunteers will again have the bucket of soft balls and will be trying to knock over the bottle.

→ How did you feel trying to protect the object on your own? Was it easy or difficult? Why?

→ How did you feel when you had others to help defend the target? Was it easy or difficult? How was it different?

'It is certainly a lot easier when we have other people to help us to achieve a goal or specific task. In this case, it was protecting an object from being knocked over and spilling the contents. There are times when we think we will be able to do it all by ourselves but it really does take the pressure off when there are others around to help encourage us, support us and give us a hand. It is so good when we know that we are not alone and that we have others that are around us to help us and support us as we go through experiences in our life.

'Imagine if you had to navigate your way through an obstacle course, on your own, blindfolded and in a place that you have never been before. Not an easy task. It's so much easier if you have someone there to hold your hand or help by giving support or instructions, especially if it is something that they have done before or it's someone you are familiar with.

'It is great to know that others are with us; that we are not alone; that others have been through what we are experiencing or similar situations and understand. But it is not only those around us that can help us to feel we are not alone but Jesus, also, lived on Earth and experienced things that we do.

'Jesus understands what it is like to be human and is with us always—we are not alone because we can be connected to Jesus and we know that he understands what it is like to be human. Salvation Army doctrines say that Jesus was truly and properly God *and also* truly and properly a man.

'So if you ever feel like you're doing life alone, just remember that Jesus understands you and his Spirit is with you at all times.'

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### **Games and activities:**

Below is a collection of games and activities that link to the topics that flow through the Advent season. You might like to use some of these in your Kids Church/Kids Club or perhaps you could use some after one of your services to engage children and their families. You may even like to use some of these while you are doing a special event in a park or at your church hall at some point during the Advent period. Each game or activity will have an outline and a link that helps connect the children and families to the key message.

The games and activities are listed in the order of the above advent themes but they can be used all together or you can pick and choose—they all link together into the overall theme of the Advent series.

### **Three-Legged race: Advent 4**

For this game you will need:

- Some pieces of stocking to tie legs together for a three-legged race.

Choose a partner, tie the middle legs together around the ankle area and take it in turns for groups of children to race against each other. Warn them to be careful if they should fall.

**Link:** 'Today we have been joined together having some fun with three-legged races. We couldn't play this game on our own, we need to be connected with someone else in order to complete the race. For the race we were connected with a friend—every day we can be connected with a special friend who knows us and understands all about us: that special friend is Jesus. Jesus was born at Christmas and lived as a human so that we can be connected with Him—we are not alone.'

### **'We are not alone: Advent 4**

For this activity you will need:

- Either some bright-coloured wristbands, some bright-coloured shapes of paper or some letter beads and bracelet elastic.

You might like to choose one or all of the above options for the children to use to create a reminder that Jesus is with them always. There are a number of verses throughout the Bible that remind us that God is with us wherever we go, in all the things we do and experience (e.g. Matthew 28:20b). You might like to provide some verses for the children to read and then write this promise (*in their own words*) on a wristband or bright-coloured piece of paper (*to be stuck on the fridge, bathroom mirror or pin board in your bedroom*) or with beads for a bracelet.

**Link:** 'It is great to know that others are with us, that we are not alone, that others might have been through what we are experiencing or similar situations and understand us. Remember, too, that we can be connected with Jesus everyday—we are not alone.'

'Jesus was born at Christmas and lived life as a human and understands what it is like to be human. He is always with us—we are not alone because we can be connected to Jesus and we know that he understands what it is like to be human.'