

# 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 3: With Jesus I belong***

For this message you will need:

- Optional: The music for 'One of these things (is not like the others)' by Sesame Street. This can be downloaded from iTunes and is on the album *Sesame Street: Somebody Come and Play With Me On Sesame Street*.
- Three boxes or gift bags with objects in them for three rounds of 'One of these things', e.g. one bag might have three kitchen utensils and one tool from the garage or you might have a range of three types of children's books and one appropriate adult book/magazine or newspaper or you might have photos (either in the bag or on the screen) of three people from your church and a stranger or three characters from one movie and one character from a different one e.g. Shrek, Donkey, Princess Fiona and Mr Incredible.

Play three rounds of 'One of these things' using some volunteers from the congregation to see if they can pick which of the items is the one that doesn't belong in the group.

'I wonder if you have ever felt like you were the odd one out—like you were the one that didn't belong just like in the game that we have played today. I think pretty much everyone will have felt like that at some stage or other. How do you feel when you are the one that doesn't belong?' (*Ask for suggestions from the congregation.*)

'When Jesus was with us on Earth, he felt like this many times. He wasn't even welcome in his own hometown. In Luke chapter four we can read (verses 14 – 30) that when Jesus preached in Nazareth—where he'd grown up—he was chased out of town and they were going to throw him off a cliff!

'And while the Jews were expecting a promised Messiah to come and save them, they were expecting a brave soldier or leader who would save them from the Romans, not a mild-mannered carpenter from Nazareth who would talk about saving them from their own sins.

'So Jesus knows what it was like to be the one that doesn't belong or isn't accepted. And because of that, he understands us perfectly when we feel as if we don't quite fit in.

'You know: we will always belong to Jesus. He will always accept us, always value us, always respect us and always love us. In Jesus, we have someone who is always glad to be with us and to make us feel that we belong.'

(*Optional: read Romans 8:35–39 from 'The Message' or a contemporary translation.*)

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## Christmas Resources for Children and Families 2012

### **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.

### **4 Corners: Advent 3**

For this game you will need:

- Something displayed in each of the four corners of your space, e.g. because it is Christmas it might be good to use some Christmas items, e.g. Christmas tree, an angel, a star etc.

Play some Christmas music and encourage everyone to dance or move around the room/space. When the music stops, each person needs to choose a corner that they are going to stand in. After each round you need to choose if it is the largest group or the second largest group that is going to be 'out' (*alternate or choose randomly so that the pattern cannot be guessed*). You might need to stop when you get to just four players and they choose their own corners.

**Link:** 'Today we have been playing a game where we had to choose a corner. You might have decided to stand in one particular corner because a friend did or because there were more people heading there. How do you think the groups that were called 'out' were chosen? (*Wait for some responses.*) You might have noticed that the larger groups were chosen and the groups with less in them or people on their own were left to play the game.

'I wonder if you have ever felt like you were the odd one out—like you were in a smaller group and didn't fit into the popular crowd. I think there have probably been times like this for each one of us. We chose the large groups to go out today and left the small groups because Jesus connects with those who feel left out: He knows what it is like to be the one that is not accepted into the popular crowd. Jesus wants each of us to feel like we belong with Him, always.'

### **Shoe Matching relay: Advent 3**

For this game you will need:

- Everyone to take off their shoes, divide into relay groups, keep one shoe with the group and place the other shoe out the front in a big pile.

To play this game the children need to take turns at running to the front to find one of the shoes that matches to one you have displayed in your group. When one shoe is found (it does not have to be your own) run back to the group, place the shoe together with the other one and tag the next person.

**Link:** 'Today we have been playing a fun shoe matching game—looking for an item that belongs to one you already have. I wonder if you always feel like you belong or if there have been times when you have felt left out. I think that most of us will have had a time when we have felt left out from the group and didn't fit in. Jesus connects with those people who feel left out—He knows what it is like to be the one that is not accepted into the popular crowd. Jesus wants each of us to feel like we belong with Him, always.'

### **Pencil – Odd one out: Advent 3**

For this activity you will need:

- A cup of bright-coloured textas and one plain grey lead pencil—make sure that there is only enough for your group.
- Some plain sheets of paper.

Explain to the group that you are going to do an activity together. Hand out the sheets of paper, one per person, and then begin to go around and get the children to choose a drawing implement. *(You will need to be prepared for the response to the child who takes the pencil out—they may want to put it back and get another one or they may even be happy with their choice: the point is that it is different from the textas: the odd one out.)* Bring the child with the pencil out the front as you explore what has happened with the group.

**Link:** 'How did it feel to pick out the pencil that was not the same as everyone else's texta? It doesn't feel that great to be the odd one out, the one that doesn't belong, I am sure that we have all had a time when we have felt like this.'

Get the children to draw, write a prayer or letter to Jesus about how it felt to be left out. When finished remind the children: 'Jesus connects with people who feel left out—He knows what it is like to be the one that is not accepted into the popular crowd. Jesus wants each of us to feel like we belong with Him, always.' *(Pray together.)*