



An invitation to the manger

Leader's guide

Aim of session:

- To allow space to explore the meaning behind the presence of the shepherds in the Nativity story
- To invite the Mini Vinnies to share the Good News with others
- To create a display of a manger to invite others to bring people to Christ in prayer
- To design a Christmas card for the Mini Vinnies Christmas Card Competition

What you will need for the meeting:

- 'An invitation to the manger' [presentation](#).
- The Mini Vinnies Christmas Card Competition [details](#).
- Yellow card or paper for handprints
- Pens and pencils
- Glue
- Large cut-out of a manger (use template in Appendix as guide)
- Mini Vinnies logo and title for display (see Appendix)

Procedure:

- **Slide 1:** Display slide as children come into assembly or meeting. You could have a manger on display too, at the front, as a focal point.
- **Slide 2:** Start the assembly/session with the opening prayer.
- **Slide 3:** Invite the children to answer the following question: *Who were the first people to be invited to see Baby Jesus in the manger?*
- **Slide 4:** The children then listen to the scripture reading to find out more about who was first invited to see Baby Jesus. You could ask some Mini Vinnies to read this, or you could lead on it.

The Shepherds and the Angels (Luke 2:8-15 ESVUK)

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"



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When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- **Slide 5:** Use this time to unpack the scripture a little by asking the following questions:

Why do you think God chose the shepherds to be the first to come and see Baby Jesus in the manger?

Why would people in those days have been surprised that the shepherd's got the first invitation?

Just like the shepherds, we are ALL invited to the manger, but why?

Notes for Leader: The first people who God invited to the manger to see Baby Jesus were the shepherds. In those days, shepherds were often seen as poor, uneducated and not accepted by others. People would have asked-why did they get the first invitation? But we know that Jesus Christ was born for all people, no matter who they are. Just like the shepherds, we are ALL invited to the manger to follow Christ and spread His Good News.

- **Slide 6:** Give the children a few minutes of silence to sit with the verse from 'In the Bleak midwinter'.
- **Slide 7:** As we can give Jesus our heart, we want to share that with others, so go through the call to action with the children and make a plan of how this will look in school. This display will be a lovely way to bring the whole school together through the season of Advent and Christmas.
- **Slide 8:** Share the exciting news with the Mini Vinnies about entering the SVP Mini Vinnies Christmas Card Competition.
- **Slide 9:** Close the meeting/assembly with a prayer. You may like to have 'In the Bleak Midwinter' instrumental music playing as they go back to class.



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Appendix

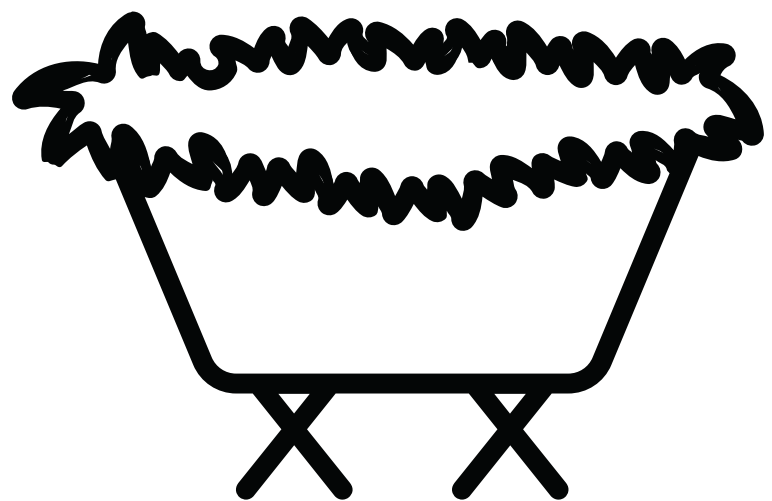


Print on A3

Title to display on your manger



Logo for your manger



Template to copy for your giant manger on large card or paper



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