

**Create a
Worship Space**

Thanks to Bec Wilson of
CECM, Synod of Victoria and
Tasmania, for this article



Have you contemplated a space that welcomes and engages parents or carers of the children involved in your Advent activities?

A welcoming space can be something quite simple yet can say a great deal about your church. It can be a space that shows the hospitality of the gospel and provides connection between the local community and the church.

When thinking about a welcoming space, think about what you want to provide people with and what they will take away with them.

Where to start?

Most importantly you need a Host. This person is someone who relates well to people, makes them feel at ease and has no other role on the day besides providing hospitality.

Secondly you need a space. Spend time preparing this space, make it inviting, someone where you would like to sit down and have a chat. Perhaps a few chairs, a table covered in cloth with freshly brewed coffee and homemade biscuits.

On the walls around the space, use artwork, poetry and prayers. [If you get *Seasons of the Spirit* you should find images and poetry in the 'Behold' Booklet.]

Depending on space you might like to have a separate table with a bowl of sand and some tapers, with a printed page that invites people to light a candle as a prayer for a person or situation this Christmas.

What else....

This space may also be an appropriate place to advertise some of the events your church community holds, such as family worship or picnics, tree planting days, markets, meditation or painting groups.

You could also provide some 'take home' bits and pieces for families. This could include:

- ◆ candles for an advent wreath or worship space in the home
- ◆ activities for families to do together over the Christmas break:
 - ◆ recipes to bake
 - ◆ crafts to make
 - ◆ suggested videos to watch
 - ◆ a blessing for the meal on Christmas day.

And...

Find some helpers to dream up what the space might be like: your children, your local artist, café waiter, an interior decorator from your congregation — all these people (and many others) know about hospitality and space creation.

There are many things you could include in this space, all you need to do is a little dreaming...



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**Advent Resources
On the Web**

Advent ideas and resources:

<http://cecm.victas.uca.org.au/>

The website of **CECM**, the Christian Education and Congregational Mission Unit of the **UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania** has many Advent resources:

- ◆ Activity sheets
- ◆ Worship ideas
- ◆ Lacuna in advent
- ◆ Unwrapping peace – all-age worship event, plus peace boxes
- ◆ Peace drama and prayer
- ◆ Mary and Zechariah call to worship
- ◆ Advent Training Day and Alter-Nativity resource booklets from 2002 onwards
- ◆ Links to other useful websites

NSW Board of Education:

<http://nsw.uca.org.au/>

Follow the links from **Education/Children/Resources/Worship with Children/Christmas** or go direct to:

<http://nsw.uca.org.au/boe/children/resources/christmas.htm>

A Christmas grace, 12 day Advent calendar, 4-week Advent play, Activity sheets, Crafts, worship and more...

ALTERNativity:

<http://www.alternativity.org.uk/index.shtml>

Faith at Home:

<http://www.faith-at-home.com/tips/advent.html>

Includes articles about preparing for Christmas, and creative ideas for play with children

Christmas in Cyberspace:

www.christmasincyberspace.com/

Calendars, meditations, history, traditions, music, links...

A non-commercial website:

<http://buynothingchristmas.org/>

Contains gift certificates, Bible studies for young people, and other goodies to encourage people to think about a non-commercial Christmas.

Activity sheets and crafts:

http://cybersleuth-kids.com/sleuth/Society_and_Culture/Holidays/Christmas/Activities/

A great site for kids to explore.

NB. Some of the above may now be out of date.