

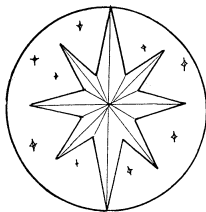
Hospitality at Christmas

Isaiah says, 'Go to the house of the Lord and learn his ways'... learn to plant, not destroy.

The psalmist says, 'Pray for peace within your walls...'

How can you make your place of worship welcoming and conducive to the promotion of peace?

- Greet people with a symbol of peace – a paper dove, an olive branch (or twig!) – or a symbol of light: a tea-light candle, a star or angel for their tree with "Prince of Peace" on it. Children can help prepare these.



[These crafts are available on the KUCA News website.]

- Serve morning tea in the sanctuary, as part of the worship. Intentionally listen to each other. Include children in the preparation and serving (they love to help) and in the conversation.



The instructions for this "Cuppaccino Biscuit" is in **KUCA News Autumn 2004** or on the KN Crafts website.

- Look after for those people for whom Christmas is not a happy time. How can you help people deal with grief or family conflict at this time of year?
- If you have communion, ask people to help dress the table at the beginning of or during worship, with flowers, candles, bread and wine, glasses etc. Invite people to serve each other in pairs or



family groups. (Thanks to Rev Leanne Jenksi for this idea, which provided a very moving celebration of communion and community at Blackwood UC.)

- Create "Wow!" moments with your use of decorations, lighting, music and the power of the unexpected. It is part of a child's social and spiritual learning to experience these "Wow!" factor moments.



- At Christmas, candles and fairy lights can be used effectively to create the "Wow!" factor.
- Jesus did some of his most effective ministry around meal tables. Find an occasion to provide an opportunity for people to chat over a cuppa e.g. for parents waiting to pick children up from an Advent activity session.
- Encourage families to invite friends/ grandparents to share their faith stories or their Christmas traditions over a meal. This can be done in individual homes or over a church meal.



- At this over-busy time of year, 'time out' for quiet reflection can be appreciated: set up a quiet room with Christmas 'stations', e.g. a crib, a flower arrangement, water, a cross with baby clothes, candles, a nativity scene, gifts, someone giving hand or foot massages, candy canes...

Print short pieces of poetry, prose, Scripture and colouring-in pictures, that can be left for contemplation at each station.

Play some quiet contemplative music.

Allow children to experience quiet reflection too.



Peace resources

FROM THE WEB:

1. Uniting International Mission's YAP Take Off! Booklet (Take Off! Sunday School Project for 2006):

- activities, stories and reflections on peace-making
- the **Kids Pledge of Nonviolence**



YAP
or **Young Ambassadors for Peace**

To download resources or order hard-copies, visit the website:

http://uim.uca.org.au/international_human_rights/yap/yap_resources

http://uim.uca.org.au/uim/uim_resources/general/sunday_school

2. United Church of Canada:

- *Celebrating Peace Sunday:* www.united-church.ca/allages/children/worship/2005_peace
- www.united-church.ca/exploring/play: a peace website for children

3. UCA Vic/Tas Synod: CECM:

- <http://cecm.victas.uca.org.au> → Children & Families → seasonal resources → Advent: Unwrapping Peace; Peace Skit and Prayer; 10 Tips for Families to Enjoy a Simpler Christmas
- → General Resources → Peace

4. The website for the Institute for Peace and Justice:

<http://www.ipj-ppj.org/families.htm>

It's American and much of the content is for purchase, but worth exploring.

5. <http://anacleta.homestead.com/peace.html>

SONGS:

- What does Peace look like to you? (Mandy Dyson) *God Gives ... Songs for Kids* 2 no 14
- Advent Peace Song (Marnie Agnew) see *KN Spring 07* page 30
- I can be a peacemaker: *Whispers of Peace* CD – produced by Emily Ninnes for World Council of Churches: Disc 1 track 3
- Beauty for Brokenness (*Together in Song* 690)
- Prayer of Peace: (Leigh Newton) *All Together Everybody* 301

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