

MINISTRY MINUTE



OCTOBER 2022

CHRISTMAS CONNECTIONS

Christmas is a wonderful time of year for building connections with your community and your ministry. It also presents great opportunities to introduce the birth of Jesus to families in your community. This month Canada Bermuda Youth invited your fellow ministry workers to share their ideas on how to build connections. If you have any ideas to add to this listing, please [drop us a note](#).



Renée McFadden, The Willows, BC

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

The greatest resource I use for kids Christmas ministry (aside from Orange's "Jingle Jam") are the downloads and printables available on illustratedministry.com. We use their Family Advent devotional series, their colouring sheets, large murals, posters, and their Nativity Sticker Sheets (with NO white baby Jesus; everyone is Middle Eastern looking). Order early, is the best tip I have. Some of the large murals come in mosaic form and can be handed out to different families, coloured in, and brought back to make a beautiful mosaic. This is great for intergenerational worship.

A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

The Willows has hosted these in the past, pre-covid. Most recently we have used: "A Rockin' Royal Christmas: A Higher Calling to a Higher King" arranged by: David T. Clydesdale, created by: Celeste Clydesdale, and available from llenas.com.

SANTA BREAKFAST

Host a **Santa Breakfast** (pancakes and sausages, yogurt, and oranges) and include some carnival games and activities for the kids. We invite families to our Christmas services through this initiative and use the Just for Kids December edition as our placemats. Photos with Santa are part of the event. This year we are launching a **Santa Shuffle** here in Langley to benefit our new Willows Family Life Centre and we are hoping to include a pancake breakfast during this event with up to 200 runners.

We also run our **Parent-Tot Willowbuds' Christmas Party** one morning before Christmas, and a Youth Group **Gingerbread House Decorating Contest**. We also try to have a **Kid's Night Out / Parent's Night Off** evening the week before Christmas (\$5 each kid for the 3-hour event) where we serve pizza dinner, do crafts, play games and then watch "The Star" movie.



Nicole Shaw, Chatham-Kent Ministries, ON

MESSY CHURCH

During Covid, we adapted our Messy Church program to Messy Church Kits to Go. We had prepackaged meals and kits (sports bags) with instruction booklets for parents with supplies and activity kits for kids. This year we hope to be able to go back to our Messy Church format and use the [Orange Jingle Jam](#) material. We will offer both a sit-down meal and a meal-to-go for those who prefer not to gather. We hope to combine our Jingle Jam Family Experience event with a toy drive and build a mountain of toys; and turn our van into Santa's sleigh in the parade.

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Pamela Nickell, Kitchener Community Church and Parent Care Resource Centre, ON

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Our Ministry, pre-covid, hosted a Christmas Dinner for all the families involved with the PCRC. Families would pre-register and the children usually practiced three songs during their weekly programming to “present” to the parents during this event at the end of the meal in the Church Sanctuary. (Away in a Manger, Jingle Bells - with bells, We Wish You a Merry Christmas). We read Christmas stories about the celebration of Jesus’ Birthday, and had a nativity craft (see www.openaparty.com for ideas). We explained the words of “Away in a Manger” to help create a greater understanding. This was then followed by a visit from Santa, and as families leave they can get their picture taken with Santa. The staff usually passed out a small gift (Christmas rubber ducks/nativity flashlights, information about church, and Christmas Eve Services, Christmas Sunday, and New Years’ Service). During covid my team was redeployed to help the CFS team, and we delivered Christmas to the families - which was so rewarding!!



Cathy Simms, St. John’s Citadel, NL

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Last year in lieu of our annual Corps Christmas Dinner, we invited everyone to donate gift cards in the amount of dinner tickets for families in need at Christmas, and we held a multi-generational event called **The Spirit of Christmas** ([local document here](#)). It was an opportunity for all ages to come together and to celebrate the true spirit of the Christmas season. During the prayer activity, we invited attendees to write out prayer requests on tags and place them on the Christmas Tree at the front of the sanctuary. We then shared the [Prayer Pause](#) activity together. The children’s book, “The Sparkle Box,” was a wonderful way to reinforce the spirit of giving, as we were doing with the gift cards. We created PowerPoint slides for the book so the kids could see the visuals. Following our time in the sanctuary, we had everyone gather in the foyer where we had tables set up for the craft activities: Hot Chocolate Gifts in a Jar and created Christmas cards with personal greetings for the donated gift cards. The gift cards were given to families in need, and participants were encouraged to deliver Gifts in a Jar to people they knew who needed a little encouragement (i.e., seniors/shut ins/neighbors). This was a great family event that was so meaningful for all ages. It was so well received; we may do some version of this again this year!

ADVENT CHALLENGE

We posted the Orange Advent Challenge daily on our social media sites and encouraged parents to share pictures of their family participating. We invited all ages to participate. Its a fun way to connect to the true meaning of Christmas, and to encourage family participation. It was also an opportunity to use social media to promote the true meaning of Christmas.