

Dear BSC Friends

We hope you are well and coping in this tricky season. Thank you for your continued interest in BSC. It's been a dramatic year for all of us and knowing we have your support and prayers means a lot! At the end of this tumultuous year, we're celebrating the launch of...

CHRISTMAS IN A BOX



We've given most of our time since August to developing this new resource. The aim is to help churches share the Christmas story with their local primary school. We wanted to create something simple, tactile, spiritual, fun, flexible and full of wonder! Not many churches can host a full-on Christmas Trail. We wanted to develop a resource with a wow factor that even smaller churches could take into schools to share the Christmas story. And, this year, it needed to be something that could be delivered to schools for staff to facilitate, where volunteers have been unable to visit.

Christmas in a Box provides a creative space for spiritual development where children explore two key questions:

What do Christians believe ABOUT the characters in the Christmas story?

What can I learn FROM the stories of these characters and apply to my life?

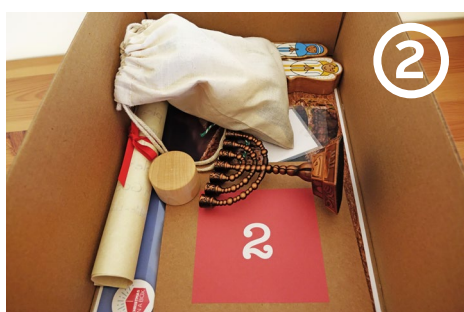
It is made up of six boxes which each tell a part of the Christmas story.

The boxes are unpacked one at a time – with space to pause, wonder, ask questions and discuss the stories represented in each one. In each box, there's an activity for the children which produces a memento for them to take home in their own mini Christmas in a Box.

- Box 1: God's Big Story** – this sets the scene
- Box 2: Mary's Story**
- Box 3: Joseph's Story**
- Box 4: Shepherds' Story**
- Box 5: Wise Men's Story**
- Box 6: The Story Ends and Begins** – this draws the stories of all the boxes together



The resource consists of a User Guide, a Resource List and some downloadable resources. You can see it all [here](#).



Publicity and Distribution

We made up 8 pilot Christmas in a Box sets and delivered them to 8 churches in Easton, Lockleaze, Bedminster, Wick, Soundwell, Winford and Avonmouth. We've publicised the resource widely across the Bristol area and the rest of the country via email networks and social media.



Training and Support



We hosted four training sessions online - approx. 70 people attended from Bristol and all over the UK. You can see the training session [here](#) and a 3-minute promotional video [here](#). We're receiving wonderful feedback from schools and churches who are piloting the resource this month:

- "The objects were intriguing and interactive for the children and they were truly delighted to have their own box." (Teacher)*
- "I feel it allowed the children time to really ponder the story, in a way they haven't before. There were some profound statements about God's love for all." (Vicar)*
- "The best Christmas thing we've done in school" (Pupil)*
- "A parent, rang me to say 'thank you' as their child couldn't stop talking about it on the way home and, as a family, he was going to take them through 'Christmas in a Box' at home." (Vicar)*

We are still waiting for feedback so that we can make any adjustments ready for Christmas 2021, but at this stage we estimate that CIAB reached over 1,400 children this term.

We've experienced amazing provision from God to make Christmas in a Box possible and lots of people are excited to use it this year and next. We also know of one local Children and Families worker who needed to get three sets of boxes together for her local schools. After praying, she quickly received unsolicited gifts which enabled her to pay for the items that were needed! Please pray that Christmas in a Box will be used to remind children of the wonder of the Christmas story this year and in years to come.

We've continued to see God's provision in wonderful ways for the finances of Bristol Schools Connection, through the giving of individuals and Trust Funds. This year we still face a deficit of £4000, so please pray that sufficient funds will come in. Prayerfully consider if you would like to give to cover the cost of Christmas in a Box and the other work that we've been involved in this year.

We pray you'll have a blessed and peaceful Christmas – full of joy and wonder at the coming King Jesus. With our love, Jane, Liz and the BSC Trustees xx

