

REFLECTION (Accompanying scripture: Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11)

Begin this time of reflection by creating a calm and quiet atmosphere. You might want to light the fourth candle on your Advent wreath and/or play or sing the Christmas carol *Little Drummer Boy*. After reading the scripture, tell the children that today you will be thinking about the special gift God gave the world at Christmas. Ask them what they think this is? At Christmas God gave the world the gift of His Son, Jesus. This was a gift worth far more than hundreds of expensive presents.

The birth of Jesus was a very special gift. All babies are special gifts, that's why we show them great love and care. Jesus came to tell us that we should continue to see all people as gifts, whatever age they are and whatever their background. He taught us that God made all people precious. That's why God invited poor shepherds from Bethlehem and rich kings from foreign lands, to share the joy of His Son's birth. It is why, when Jesus became an adult, He welcomed everybody.

The birth of Jesus also teaches that you are special. Every part of you. Your hands, your eyes, your feet. Jesus helped us to see that our bodies are gifts that bring much joy. Think of the happiness we gain by dancing, running, playing. And just as we care for a baby's body, we are to care for ours and other people's too. How might we do this? By eating well, exercising, being gentle with one another.

There was another very important lesson Jesus taught. The greatest lesson of all. What do you think it is? To love one another. When we do this it is like we are giving God a special gift too. Because Jesus said that when we love others we love God. Sadly there are many children throughout the world who will receive few gifts this Christmas. Even worse, some of them will not have families to make them feel loved, or food with which to look after their bodies. The charity Missio Scotland helps children like this and by helping us you can help these children too. Let's think about how we can share the gift of God's love through our prayers and actions today.



ACTIVITY

Print off the gift box template, preferably on thin card, one for each child. Ask the children to cut out their box shape and write on the blank side something they could do to make the world happier. If you used the song *Little Drummer Boy*, remind the children that by sharing his musical talent, the boy brought joy to Jesus. Maybe the children can also make a gift of their talents by organising a charity show for Missio Scotland? Remind the children that little acts of kindness are special gifts too, for example visiting an elderly neighbour or relative.

Once they have finished writing, have the children decorate their gift boxes, then make an offering of them at your school crib. They are a prayer promise to do something to share God's love with others. Finish by saying the Missionary Children Prayer.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Carefully cut around the thick black lines only. This will leave you with a strange shape. Fold this shape along the middle, where the dotted line is. This will leave you with a box shape.

On the blank side, without a pattern, write a prayer promise: something you can do to make the life of somebody else better, a special gift to share God's love. This could be a prayer that God keeps safe all children who will struggle without a home, or food, or family this Christmas, and a promise to help them as best as you can by raising money for Missio Scotland, a charity that helps children help children.

When you have written your prayer promise, decorate the patterned side of your special gift box. When you have finished, fold your box along the dotted line, so your prayer is hidden.

