

CHRISTMAS SERVICE KIT

At Christmas, we know that planning a service and all the components can be exhausting. Our hope with this Christmas Church Pack is that it helps you with that, and in particular that it helps you welcome any non-Christian men, for whom Christmas may be the only time they ever come into the building! Christmas is, of course, an epic time for men, women and children, and we hope that some of these ideas might help you connect with these men and start to build some solid relationships for them within your church community.

Why did Santa have to go to the hospital?*

Pre-Service Atmosphere:

Creating a chilled atmosphere will help men, who have never been to church before, to let some of their initial guard down.

Familiarity will often help to do that. In contrast, church songs, visuals and stuff we (as regular church community) think of as 'normal' can often seem a bit odd to non-Christian men – we can end up creating an atmosphere that is unfamiliar, uncomfortable and definitely not somewhere they feel they fit in. Let's change that.

Music:

Could you have a playlist running with a mix of traditional Christmas carols and contemporary Christmas songs? You could include some instrumental versions to keep things super chilled.

Visuals:

Tapestry and sown banners look great, but they're a very strange thing in 'normal non-church life'. Instead, could you get a projector to cast up a big snowman or fake snow on the wall? Bit of fun. Maybe project images of Christmas scenes, winter landscapes or have some sort of 'normal' Christmas graphic running on the screens?

Welcome:

Be precise with this one, it doesn't need overload, but it needs something.

Rushing at the new bloke or the husband or partner of a regular church attendee and overdoing it can feel overwhelming. Keep it casual: 'Good to see you', handshake, eye contact, 'Can we get you a cuppa?'

Refreshments:

Stick a decent mug of tea or coffee in a bloke's hand. Create an environment that doesn't 'spotlight' these men. Maybe have a Christmas top ten projected, something a man can just look at whilst he's got his cuppa, without feeling bombarded. He will be checking you out for sure!

Engaging:

To help avoid that awkward bit of mingling time at the start.

Stick on the wall or big screen a fun Christmas quiz, just something for them to engage with so they don't look lost and wishing they had stayed in bed already!

It can take 5 years to win a man to faith and he needs to hear the gospel about 30 times, so having a long term plan and an active men's ministry helps.

Try the quiz & Top Ten

Did you know, Christmas attendance for the CoE rose to 1.6 million in 2022 compared to 970,000 in 2021? Not as high as pre covid but on the up!**



*Because of his poor elf.
**www.churchofengland.org

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What kind of music do elves listen to?*

The Service:

Opening: It can be good to avoid welcoming 'newcomers' as it just shines a spotlight on them, hopefully by now they will feel welcome and won't need the words.

Guys will be looking around, reading the room and trying to see if they fit in: Are there other men here like me? What's about to happen? When will this end?

Tell them the plan for the service, be clear and concise. Tell them the time plan and STICK to it.

This is a subtle key but goes a long way in winning men and their belief in you and what you are saying. Such a small thing, but it matters.

Acknowledgment of men is important, but not in a weird, 'Oh I see lots of men here that never normally come, welcome to you, give us a wave!' A better option is to tell a story that is normal, your kids waking you up to open presents at 4am, 5am, 6am....whatever, just be relational and real. Some connection or story that will resonate with them, and just help them to know you might be a church person but actually, you sound normal, and like people they know.

Opening Prayer :

A simple, heartfelt prayer thanking God for the gift of Christmas, asking for a sense of peace, joy, and community. Can you get a man in the church to write one and read it? Not a wordy, 'religious sounding' prayer, you know the ones. But a normal one. Grateful, honest, real and from a guy who doesn't have a special prayer voice or tone, he's just getting up and talking to Jesus.

Worship:

Song Choices: Select a mix of traditional carols and more modern worship songs that are easy to sing along with. We always suggest going for songs that sing about God's characteristics, traits, his person or description from scripture. These sorts of songs help men to connect, even if it's just with some of the ideas and concepts about who God is.

We would suggest you avoid emotion-based songs that focus on romanticised lyrics about telling Jesus how much you need him, his embrace, to be held, touched or cared for.

If you do kids' songs, please don't ask or pressure men to do the actions.

In broadening the Christmas service plan a bit, consider what connects with the men at this stage. If they have kids there, they will be proud to see them get up, take part, speak or be seen in some way. They won't feel the need to be seen or involved but to see their kids valued can be significant to some men. Can they show their favourite Christmas present etc?

If you need a short, HD video with an interesting story to use to engage the men we have put one together based on the Christmas Truce of 1914, have a look!



Download our short video talk.

The name 'Christmas' comes from the old English phrase Cristes maesse, which means 'Christ's mass'.

*Wrap music



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How much does Santa pay for parking?*

The Bible Reading:

Our suggested readings are either a short passage from Luke 2:1-20 (The Birth of Jesus) or Matthew 1:18-25 or Isaiah 9:6.

Find a version that is easy to listen to when read, how about getting a clip of David Suchet reading it? How can you help a man experience the bible perhaps for the first time?

The Talk:

At a Christmas day service, with men in the congregation who are not used to church and theology, keeping things light and practical is important. A relevant story themed into the bible verses that unpacks a gospel theme can be great. Simple, memorable and to the point.

Is there something you can give people to take home? Something relevant that fits the talk? Remember, the perception around church for lots of men is that church is irrelevant, boring and old fashioned. Can you shake that up a bit? Does the church have a bit of budget to get something half decent that will surprise a man with some unexpected generosity from the church?

Worship:

A Christmas prayer or a liturgy that captures something powerful about the birth and future of Jesus can be helpful. There are lots of declarations and liturgy from years ago that can help create a different dynamic of how we can worship God.

How do you land the service:

Is there a men's group at the church? What do they do? Who are they? Get them visible and seen. Invite a connection, provide a QR code on the screen, it's not intrusive and an easy way for men to find out more about what the men at the church do and if it is something they can plug into.

Have something ready. Men are drawn to stuff that is planned and in place, maybe they won't book in until last minute, but knowing there is something helps. Could you have a men's curry night planned for early in the new year? A firepit night for one evening in January?

Tell them at the end of the service, have it on the screen, just flash it up with a 'save the date,' and 'speak to _____' after the service to find out more.

If you do know the families or partners of these men present, get a few men from the church men's group to make an effort and go and speak to them. Have a business card for the men's group with the date of the next men's night. Connect it up. It works but it needs effort and planning.

Top Tip: Remember the time scale you gave, and keep to it. This is a little detail, but it will go a long way with the men, rather than saying, 'Just one more point...' and still going half an hour later!

Keep to the plan, Men respect that.

David Suchet spent over 200 hours in the recording studio to create the very first full-length audio version of the NIV Bible spoken by a single British actor.



*Nothing, it's on the house.

Last few bits...

Closing Song:

A powerful, uplifting song like "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" or "Angels We Have Heard on High."

Final prayer/blessing:

Our advice here is to just keep it normal: use normal everyday language and be real. A prayer for community, for families, for men and women who are distant from their families.

Pray for people who have lost loved ones and anyone for whom Christmas can be a really hard time. It is good for non-Christian men to see the vision of the church a bit and why you exist.

If you say the 'grace' or 'The Lords prayer, have it on screen as we can't assume everyone knows the words!

Post Service:

Keep this light and chilled - blokes on Christmas day who are not used to church will most likely want to get out of the building fast. Dinner, TV and a sleep is calling, and small talk with people they don't know will most likely not be that appealing. That won't be true for all men of course, but just keep the expectations here light.

Maybe, either in the gift, or on the chairs, or on a table on the way out, there could be a pack, some info, a flyer or something to help them plug in to what else the church is doing. (Be aware, this re-connection will most likely need some additional forward movement from the men's group, seeing new guys come back purely on their own initiative and showing up to a men's night with a group they don't know is rare.)

CVM's Approved Top Ten Christmas Films:

1. DIE HARD (1988)
2. DIE HARD 2 (1990)
3. Elf (2003)
4. Home Alone (1990)
5. A Christmas Story (1983)
6. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989)
7. Miracle on 34th Street (1947)
8. The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)
9. How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)
10. Love Actually (2003)

Christmas Quiz Ideas:

1. Which holiday drink is often served warm and made with milk, sugar, and eggs?

Answer: Eggnog

2. In Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol', what is the name of Ebenezer Scrooge's former business partner who visits him as a ghost?

Answer: Jacob Marley

3. What fruit is traditionally put inside Christmas stockings?

Answer: An orange

4. In the movie 'Home Alone', where are the McCallisters going on vacation when they leave Kevin behind?

Answer: Paris

5. What is the name of the Grinch's dog in 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'?

Answer: Max

6. What traditional Christmas decoration is made from evergreen branches and often hung on doors?

Answer: A wreath

7. Which country is credited with starting the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?

Answer: Germany

8. What is the name of the character who leads Santa's sleigh in the Christmas song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"?

Answer: Rudolph

9. In the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas", what gift is given on the 5th day?

Answer: Five gold rings

10. What beverage is traditionally left out for Santa on Christmas Eve in the United States?

Answer: Milk (often with cookies)



CHRISTMAS SERVICE KIT

Thank you for downloading this Christmas Service Resource Kit.

We know at CVM how exhausting it can be to plan and deliver a Christmas service each year, and we want to help.

We've put together a load of ideas, tips, and hints, as well as a short talk, quiz, and some fun stuff that might be useful to you and your church this year. Particularly in connecting with the men who might be stepping foot inside the building for the first time, and maybe only time!

If your church or you as an individual is able to support CVM this year we would really value your help.

As a Christian charity reaching men with the gospel, it can and often is an unseen and under-supported arm of the church. If you can help in prayer (www.cvm.org.uk/prayer) or in financial support that would be amazing! (www.cvm.org.uk/donate)

Thank you! Have a brilliant Christmas.

And if you find any really helpful ways of reaching men this year let us know too!

Nathan Blackaby
CEO | **Christian Vision for Men**



**SCAN TO
DONATE**

Why did the shepherds say "Hallelujah" on Christmas morning?
Because they were flocking to the good news!

