



Christmas Special Edition

**A Brain and Soul Boosting
session for families, friends,
and church groups**

**PILGRIMS'
FRIEND
SOCIETY**



Introduction

Welcome to our special edition of Brain and Soul Boosting at Christmas.

The Brain and Soul Boosting for Seniors series was developed to stimulate mental and spiritual health in older people meeting in small groups. This one-off Christmas version is suitable for family, friends and church groups.

It is an activity that exercises our brains, warms our hearts and brings us into the Spirit of Christmas. Questions prompt thoughts and discussions about Christmas, and there are activities that everyone will enjoy. It can also be done over the telephone or via video call – something perhaps younger relatives and friends might enjoy being a part of!

It is in five parts:

- A short Scripture reading
- Exploring what Christmas means to us, with questions for discussion
- The biblical story of Christmas
- Activities, things to do together
- Reflections and a closing prayer

You will need:

- A table to sit around.
- A well-lit, warm room.
- Pens and paper
- Some Christmas cards to write to others.
- Time to be unhurried so you can enjoy the session!

Part 1 – the Scripture Verse

You may like to read the verse together or have one person speaking it out loud.

‘There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests.”

Luke 2: 8-14 (NIV)

Part 2 – What does Christmas mean to you?

There are no prizes for giving the correct answers to the questions below! They are to start you thinking, and making discoveries. Hopefully, some of those discoveries will bless you and deepen your appreciation of all that Christmas means.

- If you hold to certain family traditions at Christmas time, what are they?
- Is Christmas a time of sadness, reflecting on how Christmas used to be for you?
- What changes have you seen in the way Christmas is celebrated today, compared to when you were younger?
- What do you not like about Christmas?
- What do you feel is the best thing about Christmas?

- This is a line from the first verse of the Christmas Carol,
'O Holy Night:

'Long lay the world, in sin and error pining 'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.'

What does this line mean to you?

Part 3 – The first Christmas Day – the rest of the Bible story

“When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing Him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” Luke 2: 14 – 20.

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The famous evangelist Billy Graham wrote a book about angels. *How would you feel if you saw an angel?* The Bible says that they are heavenly spirits sent to the help those who are to inherit salvation; those whose lives on earth are a pilgrimage on their way to Heaven. (Hebrews 1:14).

Part 4 – Activities

1. R S H A M I T S C

How many words can you make from these letters? There is at least one word with nine letters. *(Answers on page 6.)*

2. Make a Christmas table decoration.
You can do this by putting a tall candle on a suitable plate, and putting colourful berries and leaves around the base of it. You can find more ideas on the internet by Googling How to Make a Christmas Table Decoration.



3. Plan a small gift to say thank you to someone who has been a blessing to you, or write them a personal note in a Christmas card.

Part 5 – Final Reflections

Perhaps you were one of the generations of schoolchildren who were taught the story of Christmas in your first school. You will have remembered the story even though it seems to have been buried by the way Christmas has become a commercial event. Nevertheless, it's an opportunity to tell others what it really means; how God sent His only Son to be born as a man and when He was grown, to die on a cross to save us from our sins. Because of Christmas there is Easter, and because of Easter we look can forward to eternal life with Him.

Closing prayer

Father,

Thank you for the best gift we have ever received, your Son the Lord Jesus, and the Gift of Eternal Life. We are truly humbled that He sacrificed Himself in our place.

Lord Jesus, thank you for coming from heaven to offer us the way to heaven.

Father, for all those who are sad and lonely, those in need and suffering throughout the world, would you be merciful to them this Christmas time and bring them closer to the living Jesus Christ. Let them know the joy and peace that comes from knowing Him as Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

Answers to the Word Puzzle:

Words you can make from: R S H A M I T S C

*Christmas, charms, mirths, amiss, match, car,
miscast, smart, scars, trams, trash, aim ...
racist, smith, sacred, carts, charm,
chasms, mastic, crash, maths, itch,*

There are many more words at:

<https://wordmaker.info/how-many/christmas.html>

Information about the Pilgrims' Friend Society.

Rooted in our Christian faith, at Pilgrims' Friend Society we help older people live fulfilled lives in later life. We believe that as well as providing secure, comfortable homes and professional care, older people can be supported and encouraged to spend the latter part of their lives contributing to the world around them, growing and enjoying fulfilling lives.

We have been helping older people flourish for 214 years, since a group of Christians concerned about the aged and infirm Christian poor established the Aged Pilgrim's Friend Society in 1807. We began by providing pensions and support through volunteer visits before developing housing and care homes for older Christians.

Today we continue that legacy with our residential care homes and retirement housing around the UK, providing environments in which older people are comfortable and secure whether they need care or are living independently. We also use our experience as a springboard for inspiring and equipping churches, and other people who work in the community with older people.

Read more about us on:

www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



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