

Nuts about Christmas

An All Age Address

by Mike Claridge



Use 'special' walnuts to talk about the Christmas message of the gift of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ.

Preparation

Take four whole walnuts. Place one aside. Using a junior hacksaw carefully cut the other three in half by sawing around the midline of the nut. Carefully open them up and remove the edible part of each nut and as much of the husk as possible.

Next make a 'pretend' present out of a cube of polystyrene (or similar) wrapped in sparkly paper and with wool as the 'ribbon'. It should be about 1cm square (but needs to fit inside a nutshell!).

Place the 'present' in one of the walnuts and glue the two halves of the shell together with superglue. Place a small 'x' in felt tip on the nut so you'll know which one contains the present.

Fill one of the other walnuts with tinsel, glue the shell back together and mark the nut with a small 'T'.

Fill the third of the cut walnuts with hay, glue the shell back together and mark with a small 'H'.

You're ready except one more thing. Just remember you'll need a nutcracker!

Address:

The exact words will need to suit the make-up of congregation. It could be used at a children's Crib Service, as an address at a Family Service or for a school assembly.

***N.B.** : Remember that some people are allergic to nuts. It's advisable to announce before you start that nuts will be used. Anyone with an allergy can then position themselves where they will be unaffected.*

Start by asking what food people will eat over Christmas. Eventually someone will mention nuts. Bring out a bowl with the four walnuts in. Ask what kind of nuts they are.

Crack open the first nut (the one that's an ordinary nut) and display the edible contents inside. Explain that the other three nuts are special nuts that are going to tell us all about Christmas.

Crack open the nut, marked with the x, with the 'present' inside. Talk about the importance of presents at Christmas, that they symbolise the love that exists in families and between friends. Christmas is all about a very special present - the gift of God's love. The other nuts will tell us more about that.

Crack open the nut, marked with a T, containing the tinsel. Ask what sparkles in the nativity accounts. The Star will be mentioned and, hopefully, the angels. Talks about how in the scriptures God's presence is often spoken of in terms of sparkle and light. Examples could include the Burning Bush, the Pillar of Fire and the Transfiguration. Develop this if you wish, depending on your congregation, about God being expected to act in a special way (Messiah) and maybe how the Magi expected that to involve a place.

Crack open the final nut, marked with an H, containing hay. Ask where we hear about hay in the nativity accounts. The manger and stable will be mentioned immediately. God choose to act in a very special way by being born as Jesus, not in a palace, but a humble manger. Born, not to a king and queen, but to a humble young woman and her carpenter husband.

Finish by speaking about how God's love, revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ, is a present for all of us (show the 'present' again). God loves everybody - ordinary and 'sparkling', rich and poor - that is the best of all the presents of Christmas!