

Nuts about Christmas II

An amended version of my '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 five whole walnuts. Place one aside. Using a junior hacksaw carefully cut the other four 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.

Fill one walnut with tinsel. Glue the shell back together with superglue and mark the nut in felt-tip pen with a small 'T' so you'll know which nut it is.

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 the second walnut and glue the two halves of the shell together. Place a small 'P' on the nut so you'll know which one contains the present.

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

Finally place a Cross in the fourth walnut. This may be a Palm Cross tightly folded or rolled. A printed paper cross would also suffice. Glue the walnut back together and mark a small '+'

You're ready, except for one more thing. Remember 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, for a school assembly or even an engaging Midnight Communion service.

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 five 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 four nuts are special nuts that are going to tell us all about Christmas.

Crack open the nut, marked with the 'T'. Reveal the tinsel and talk about Christmas decorations and Christmas lights. They are all good fun and help us celebrate. But do they get in the way of the true meaning.

Crack open the nut marked with a 'P'. Reveal 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. Let's explore how that was given.

Crack open the nut, marked with 'H', containing the hay. Ask where we hear about hay in the nativity accounts. The manger and stable will be mentioned immediately. God choose to give us a present 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. Born not to be rich and powerful but to live a live of love and service.

Crack open the nut marked with a '+'. Talk about how God's love was shown in it's fulness when Jesus died on the Cross. There are many ways of exploring it's meaning, but Christians believe that Jesus rose again. Even at Christmas, the Cross is the ultimate symbol of God's love. Some Christmas carols mention Jesus' death and resurrection. Quote some examples; We Three Kings (v.5), Hark the Herald! (v.3), First Nowell (v.6), Born in the Night.

Christmas is about God's gift of himself. God's indestructible love, poured out for all people; for you, for me for all humanity. Treasure the gift of Christmas.