want more? connect with us.

# christmas.

## creating a family moment

family | fæməli | *n.* a group of people, each a unique masterpiece, sharing unconditional love, hugs and support • one of life's greatest taonga • treasure always

# get bakin'

"The greatest gift you can give someone is your time. Because when you give your time, you are giving a portion of your life that you will never get back."

## gingerbread

Baby Jesus was born in a stable - whaaaat?! That's a surprising place for a baby to be born, let alone a baby who was said to be a king!

Grab your whanau together and have fun baking this delicious gingerbread. Make it into a gingerbread stable, (or simply cut out animal shapes or circles) - you & your lovely ones are sure to create fun memories as you bake your way into the Christmas spirit!

Ingredients:

150g butter | 1 egg | 1 tsp baking soda | 2.5 tsp golden syrup
0.5 cup sugar | 2 cups flour | 2 tsp ginger | 1 tsp all spice

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees celcius.
2. Cream butter and sugar.
3. Add yolk of egg slowly.
3. Then add flour, baking soda, ginger, all spice and golden syrup.
4. Knead and roll out. Cut shapes (find gingerbread stable/house templates online).
5. Bake at 180 degrees for 10-15 minutes.

***Royal Icing***

*Using the egg whites leftover from the gingerbread, mix together egg whites, a small squeeze of lemon juice and icing sugar to form a stiff icing, perfect for assembling a gingerbread stable!*

# where did Christmas come from?

### THE SIGNIFICANCE

Christmas is one of the most significant events in the Christian calendar. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, believed to be God's own son. This event was prophesied hundreds of years earlier, but for the Son of God to arrive as a baby - well that was a surprise! Unbelievable even! Jesus would grow into a man, who would sacrifice His life to bear the punishment for all people and their sins. Why? Because God loves all people enough that He would sacrifice even His Son to be with us forever! What a gift!

### THE SYMBOLS

Stars are often associated with Christmas. At that time, there was an unfamiliar star that moved over Bethlehem. Just as the Maori people used the stars as guides when travelling across the ocean, this Christmas star guided wise men to Bethlehem where they met the baby Jesus!

This year, why don't you let the star point back to and be a reminder of the gift that can be yours - the love of God, proven in a baby who was sent to rescue all the world.

### HEAR THE STORY

Need to refresh your memory of the Christmas/Nativity story? Or maybe you've never heard it at all! Like all epic stories, it's one of overwhelming love, so we encourage you to hear it! So why not pop some popcorn, snuggle down and enjoy an amazing story...

YouTube:

- The Christmas Story | St Pauls Arts and Media
- The Greatest Journey | Bible Society
- He Came Down | Speak Life
- The Story of Christmas | Saddleback Kids

# get craftin'

## gratitude box

**At Christmas, we often have so much to be thankful for as we gather with family and friends, give sweet gifts and take holidays!**

**Often in the days before Christmas, we ask one another what presents we're hoping to get. Before doing that (again!), take some time as a family to write a grateful list - a list of things you're grateful to God and one another for this year. Then have a go together making a gratitude box (or maybe even a box each)!**

Materials: watercolour paper, painters tape, a brush, paint, and a gift (or recycled) box. *Optional: salt, sticks, glitter, glue, string.*

1. Cut watercolour paper into pieces a little smaller than the box you're using. Cut enough pieces so there is one for each person.
2. Tape a small border on each piece of paper with painters tape.
3. Each person paints their piece of paper to their liking - optional: use salt on top to add texture.
4. Remove painters tape from paper (if you used watercolour paper, this should peel off quite easily).
5. Once dry, have each person write on the back of their painting what they're grateful for. Pop the paintings in the box.
6. *Optional: package everything up with string and a small stick which has been painted with glue and glitter! Just like in the picture.*

And whenever you want to be reminded of how you have been blessed and what you're grateful for, take some time going through the box!

“traditions and celebrations have a very special way of keeping favourite memories forever in our hearts”

Think of some of the precious memories from your childhood… Chances are that some of them involved a special celebration, ritual or routine you or your family participated in. Rituals and traditions which engage our senses, and make us feel connected and warm inside, have a way of staying with us for a long time.

We want to help you create some traditions or routines that will become some of your family's favourite memories.
Let's make time this Christmas season. Let's create experiences and go on adventures. Let's take fun family selfies. Let's make a mess. Let's discover the beautiful love story of Christmas together. Let's create a family moment.

# get out & about

## selfie storytelling

**Let's discover the story of Christmas by going on an adventure and taking family selfies to remember it. Read each part of the poem together, then use the prompt to snap a selfie! Have fun!**

### The Story of Christmas

At Christmas we remember a big surprise
A surprising gift, in a little size
Selfie: with everyone looking surprised

Mary knew first, by an angel she was told
"You're having a baby, soon Him you'll hold!"
Selfie: someone dressed in a makeshift angel costume

Mary travelled to Bethlehem with Joseph, her hubby
She was super pregnant now, her tummy was chubby
Selfie: pretend to be travelling with suitcases etc.

Bethlehem was full, there was nowhere to stay
Except in a barn, with animals and hay
Selfie: with your or a neighbour's pet, or toy animals

Then the baby was born, our gift has arrived
For this baby is special, and that we can't hide!
This baby reminds us of pure, wonderful love
Love shared with all of us from God above
Selfie: everyone gathering around a baby or baby doll

That's why we have Christmas - it's really a party
For dear baby Jesus! Now you know, ya smarty!
And he's reaching out with a hug just for you
'Cause he wants you to come (I promise, that's true!)
Selfie: with balloons, looking like it's a party

Each December you're invited to celebrate his arrival
To remember this story that's true and in the Bible
We join with the shepherds and the men that were wise
To remember baby Jesus, a wonderful surprise
Selfie: everyone with a sign that says 'You're Invited'

Don't worry, don't fret, please don't bring a present
The surpise gift's for YOU, God's love that was sent
And you can have this love, whenever you remember
Jesus hugging you, all year AND in December
Selfie: with everyone gathered around hugging one another



“today's little moments become tomorrow's treasured memories”

## the season for love

**There is just nothing that compares to the joy found in giving!**

Why don't you join with us in being for our neighbourhood this December by using the next few days to be generous to your friends, neighbours, colleagues and school mates? Use the items below as a checklist - it has a bunch of simple, everyday ways to love and be generous. How many can you do??