Leader’s guide

1. Pause to receive

Before we tell you more about everything Embrace has prepared for you this Christmas, we’d love you to receive our prayer for you as you explore these resources and your wider plans:

Prince of Peace, please be Restorer of Wholeness with all of us preparing or leading special services or outreach events; Strengthen us as we care for those for whom Christmas is a difficult time. And guide us as we pray and give to help Embrace’s partners. Help us Lord, to bring your wholeness to fragmented lives. Show us what to do and what to let go of and help us slow down enough to do everything with, in, and through your Spirit of love. Please, Lord Jesus, minister your deep shalom to us too, for we know we need your rest as much as those we seek to serve. Amen.

2. Consider your church’s context

During Advent and Christmas, our hearts and minds naturally, and poignantly, turn to praying for peace. We think of the many people who have missing pieces of their lives, due to conflict or hardship. And we seek ways to bring more of God’s wholeness to a fractured world.

But everyone’s context is different, so we want to make it as easy as possible for you to join us in this focus, by laying out a range of approaches which could serve your other priorities this Christmas very helpfully too.

3. Choose how you’ll pray

Browse and choose what will help your church from:

- our Advent candle-lighting liturgy which expresses our longing for the Prince of Peace
- our fuller Worship resources booklet with prayers, sermon notes, and an all-age talk idea. All of these have been written to link to the amazing work one of our partners is doing with refugees in Lebanon. And you’ll find pictures to illustrate the inspiring story from them (alongside projectable versions of the prayers) in our downloadable PowerPoint at embraceme.org/christmas
- our Children’s activity sheet which you can photocopy to give to seven to eleven year olds, also ties in to our focus of peace.
- our NEW Christmas peace star and tree decoration with a prayer on the reverse. Order this FREE gift for every person coming to a special service or event by emailing resources@embraceme.org or calling 01494 897950.

The stars are FREE, but if you’re not also exploring ways to support Embrace financially this Christmas, a donation in return would be much appreciated.

embraceme.org
4. Choose how you’ll give

- **Hold a collection**
  Take up a special collection for our work this Christmas.

  Email `resources@embraceme.org` or call 01494 897950 to request additional Gift Aid envelopes.

- **Sing carols in your community**
  Take our famous Bethlehem Carol Sheets into the streets, shops and care centres in your community to sing about the hope - and peace - we have because of the King’s birth at Christmas.

  And BRAND NEW for 2019, we have created the 58th edition of the Bethlehem Carol Sheet with four extra carols!

  You can buy them via our webshop `shop.embraceme.org` or call 01227 811646.

- **Encourage your church to do their Christmas shopping differently**
  Could you encourage your congregation to support our Christian partners by committing to do some of their Christmas shopping with Embrace? We have a great range of Alternative Gifts, Middle-Eastern handcrafted gifts to inspire and our beautiful Christmas cards have Bible verses and meaningful messages.

  It’s a great way to bring the Prince of Peace more into central focus, as well as raising vital funds to help those affected by conflict and injustice in the Middle East today.

  Visit `shop.embraceme.org` or call 01227 811646 to order multiple catalogues and/or publicise this same link and phone number for our shop widely.

5. **Invite your congregation to sign up for our Daily Email Advent Reflections**

   Alongside our inspirational congregational resources, we’re preparing Advent email reflections for personal devotions. Sign up now to receive daily emails from 1 December till Christmas Day and let us lead you through 25 moments of stillness this December with reflective emails straight to your inbox.

   They’re perfect for personal use, or great for small groups, with prayers, activities, scriptural study and stories from the Middle East.

   ‘Your Advent reflections are very thought-provoking and heart-warming. I thought they combined the spiritual, practical and inspirational in a unique way. I really looked forward to seeing them each day.’ Esther.

   Share the link to sign up – `embraceme.org/advent-reflections` – in your services, notice sheet, magazine or email circular.

6. **Spread the word and return what you raise**

   In your pack you’ll find a double-sided poster to advertise your event and inspire support, and a donation form to make returning your gifts as easy as possible.

   However you choose to engage with Embrace this Christmas... we’re praying it will be deeply meaningful for you, your congregation and those you are reaching out to as well as supporting our partners in the Middle East. Thank you for everything you are doing to pray for peace, and bring more help and hope to refugees and others affected by conflict and injustice.

   **Thank you**

   `embraceme.org`