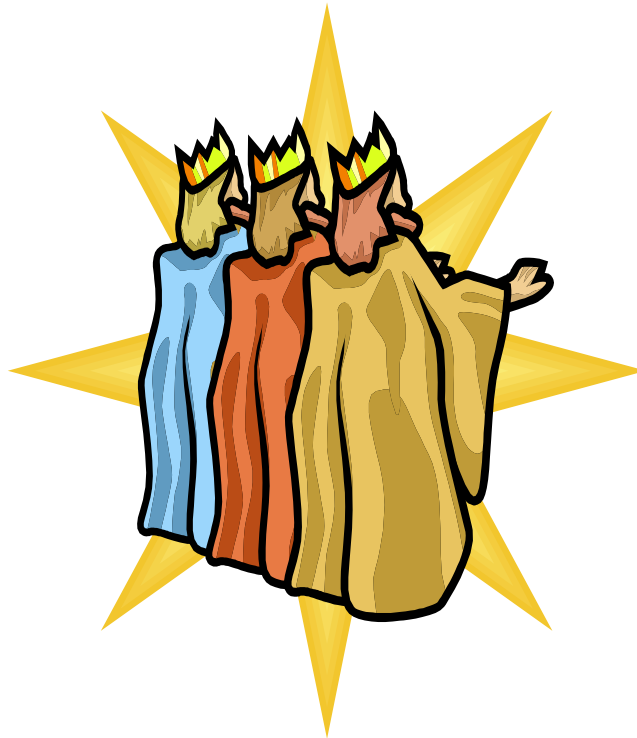


NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE PASTORAL AREA

ADVENT HOME GROUPS 2009

WHAT I CAN I GIVE HIM: GIVE MY HEART



COURSE OVERVIEW

**WHAT CAN I GIVE HIM, POOR AS I AM
IF I WERE A SHEPHERD, I WOULD GIVE A LAMB
IF I WERE A WISEMAN, I WOULD DO MY PART
YET WHAT CAN I GIVE HIM? GIVE MY HEART**

From In the Bleak Midwinter by Rosetti & Holst

OVERVIEW

It is said that there are three comings of Jesus. His first coming on earth, His second coming is in our heart and the third is at the end of time.

These sessions are given in the context of preparing oneself for Christmas. The sessions are about our response to the call to be disciples; about a way of life, being rather than doing.

This pamphlet gives an outline of series of six Advent prayer and scripture reflections in preparation for Christmas based on the Advent theme of the GIFT of oneself to the baby Jesus, God who became flesh for us and our salvation.

The word **GIFT** outlines the core sessions following each week in Advent as follows:

GRATITUDE

INTIMACY

FELLOWSHIP

TIME, **T**ALENTS AND **T**REASURES

Session 1 – Gratitude

Participants will be invited to reflect on the positive things that God has given them and to practice calling these to mind and recording them in prayer diaries, which will be provided. The participants will also be invited to lay straw in a small crib, which will also be made available to each Home Group.

Session 2 – Intimacy

This is the session to go deeper into ones individual and personal relationship with the baby Jesus. It is a chance to explore one's calling and one's gifts and talents. It is an opportunity for more reflection time and silence.

Session 3 – Fellowship

The emphasis of this session will be on exploring our place as disciples within our church community; that we have both right and the obligation to place our gifts at the discernment and use of that community as mature disciples.

Session 4 – Time, Talents and Treasures

It is nearly Christmas now and just a few shopping days to go! In this session will reflect on how we use the gift of time, culminating in discerning our own personal resolution to offer up to Jesus this Christmas symbolically placed in the same group crib.

Session 5 – Feedback and evaluation

This session will take place during the Christmas season, to reflect on the experience of sharing our faith in the home group setting and, it is hoped, encouraging the groups to continue to meet during the year and through the new diocesan Lent course and beyond! This can (ideally) be in the form of a social event.

Session 6 – House Mass

It is hoped that arrangements might be made with any available priests for an optional House Mass to be held at any time over Advent or the Christmas period to suit. This session could explore the reality of the gift of the Eucharist.

TYPICAL SESSION STRUCTURE

Session Length – 1 hour 30 minutes

Group Size – around 10 per group

Start times for the sessions will be settled by consensus of those expressing an interest in the course; some may prefer day time sessions , other evening sessions. Whatever start time, referred to as "T" below, the typical session will be structured as follows:

T-30 to T	Arrivals and general chat and settling down
T to T+15	Praise and Worship/advent hymns or other mechanism for "letting go" (to suit group dynamics and preference)
T +15 to T+30	Welcome by host/session leader – purpose and theme Introductions and reflections on the last session
T+30 to T+40	Prayer – Scripture passage
T+40 to T+50	INPUT
T+50 to T+60	Individual Reflection
T+60 to T+85	Group Discussion
T+85 to T+90	Closing Prayer and Hand outs – reflections for next week

ABOUT THE HOME GROUP CONCEPT

The intention is that sessions will bless participants with a deeper experience of being in closer communion with Jesus and with each other in the more intimate settings of someone's house and a chance to get away from the commercialisation of Christmas.

The sessions echo the words of Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor:

'It seems to me, and I do not think I exaggerate, that most Catholics in the future, apart from their Sunday Mass, will need to belong to some form of small community.... Increasingly there will be people who come together to listen to the Word of God in Scripture, to reflect on their own lives and to pray. I often think these small communities are the secret for the future of the Church'

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor - Keynote address at the national conference of priests 2001 'The State of the Church in England and Wales'.