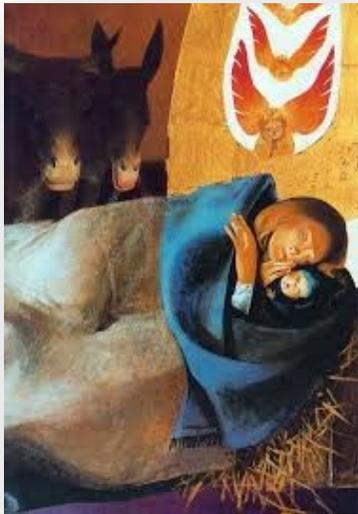


FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Give special recognition to where you place Mary, Jesus and Joseph. Surround them with images of families from all over the world.

FOR THE FEAST OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

Place all of the figures in the background and give Mary the prominent place.



FOR THE EPIPHANY

Emphasise that the three wisdom figures were from different cultures. Encourage families to place gifts in the crib from their different cultures.

ENLARGE THE SPACE OF YOUR TENT

Isaiah 15:4

This year's suggestion for the Christmas Crib is inspired by the Continental phase of the Synodal journey and the voice of the prophet Isaiah who heard a call from God to enlarge the space of welcome in the image of a tent.

- The image of a tent reminds us of God's protecting presence.
- The tent is a place of gathering and meeting, like the gathering of God's people in the Church.
- The tent is a place of safety and welcome.
- This is the call of the synod for this Advent and Christmas, to provide this place of protecting presence, gathering and welcome.
- You can symbolise this by using a tent as the basis of the crib. Here are two examples



SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING UP A TENT CRIB

You can gradually build up the journey to the crib from the 1st Sunday of Advent beginning with an empty tent, then adding figures at each of the Sunday Masses.

1st SUNDAY of ADVENT— A PATH OF LIGHT

The prophet Isaiah calls us to walk in God's paths, this can symbolise our synodal journey this Advent. In front of the crib you can trace out footsteps leading towards the tent.

The first reading ends by inviting us to walk in the light of the Lord. As well as the footsteps, trace out a path of light or place a large lantern at the opening of the tent.

2nd SUNDAY ADVENT— FIGURES ON THE EDGE

In the first reading there is mention of a calf and an ox, these animals symbolise beasts of burden and the burdens many people carry in our world today. Place the animals from the crib outside of the tent, perhaps on the edge, connecting with all of those who feel excluded or marginalised in our world today.

3rd SUNDAY ADVENT—THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED

The psalm reminds us that it is the Lord who keeps faith forever, who is just to those who are oppressed. In the time of Jesus shepherds were amongst those most oppressed. Place the shepherds around the tent remembering all those who are crying out for justice today.

4th SUNDAY of ADVENT

—MARY and JOSEPH AS EXCLUDED PERSONS

We don't often think of Mary and Joseph as excluded persons but that is what they were. Mary would have been shunned by her people. Joseph made a choice to be on Mary's side and trusted in God's dream for them. On this final Sunday of Advent you can place the figures of Mary and Joseph, remembering that Joseph took Mary home.

FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

On Christmas night the figures will all be together inside the tent. You could also find pictures of today's marginalised people and place them within the tent. You can take away the lantern, as Jesus himself is the light of the world.



An Iraqi Christian refugee prays in front of the tent