READY TO USE MUSIC

# Christmas carols

Various

Suitable for all ages

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## Introduction

This is a special session for Christmas, suitable for all age groups, or for a mixed age group. This session explores some of the ideas in Christmas carols and how they celebrate the Christmas story, but also gives us the chance to probe a bit further and uncover more of the biblical Christmas story.

## The session

Welcome the group and begin the session with some seasonal refreshments. When the group is ready, begin the session with a Christmas carol-themed game. Arrange players in small groups and explain that each group, in turn, should sing the first line of a well-known Christmas carol or song. Play continues around the circle; teams cannot repeat a song which has been sung already. The final remaining team are the winners and can be awarded a small prize.

Explain that today we will be looking at Christmas carols and how they celebrate the Christmas story. Before the session, choose a few favourite carols to look at together, or if you prefer, invite the group to nominate their favourites.

Play some of the carols in turn (you can find numerous Christmas carol playlists available freely on YouTube or other streaming sites), providing copies of the lyrics for the group to follow. If you have asked members of the group to nominate their favourite carols, invite them to share a little about why they have chosen this one and why it matters to them. Alternatively, if you have chosen the carols to look at, ask the group to look at a carol together and to discuss: how does this carol celebrate the Christmas story? What does this story tell us about the Christmas story? You could do this in smaller groups and invite each group to share what they discuss. Ask the group: if this one carol was all that you had, what would you know about the Christmas story?

Distribute Bibles and invite the group to look at the Nativity narrative in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Ask them how these compare to the carol you have looked at. What differences are there? What inaccuracies may there be in the carol? Which carol most accurately retells the story and why? Are there any carols which hinder our understanding?

Explain to the group that carols are not simply there to retell the story, although often they do this at least in part. They celebrate the Christmas story too, praising God for what he did at Christmas. We can enjoy them, together with all the different things we include in our Christmas celebrations, including Nativity scenes and plays, knowing that they celebrate the story rather than simply retell it.

As you draw your session to a close, pray, thanking God for the truth of the Christmas story and all those things which help us to celebrate the birth of Jesus. You could close the session with a Christmas carol singalong.

**BECKY MAY**

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