

GET IN THE PICTURE

Every year in the run up to Christmas, churches across the UK look for ways to help people in their locality connect with the story of the most outrageously generous gift given by God to all people. Through Christmas services, Carols by Candlelight, nativity plays, community carol singing and mince pie giveaways, the story of the gift of Jesus is one that many of us seek to share with our community.

While most people who wouldn't consider themselves Christians are happy to hear and observe something of the story, they rarely connect with it and think about in a way that goes beyond a 'nice baby Jesus story'.

What is Get in the Picture?

Get in the Picture is an ecumenical, evangelistic project which seeks to involve all kinds of people in the Christmas story, encouraging them to participate and experience being part of the nativity in a fun way.



Shoppers in Lymington 'got in the picture' in 2014

Begun by *The Light Project* in 2008, it was developed by the Baptist Union Mission Department, and many churches across the UK took part in the following years.

This Faith and Society File explains more about what is involved in setting up Get in the Picture, and aims to help churches to prepare to share the Christmas story in this fun way. Different churches in different towns have used this initiative in their own way, but all have been able to engage with passers-by and share the real meaning of Christmas with them.

'The event went well, better than in previous years - I think because we put out a large sign saying it was free!'

From 2016, we have changed the way in which photos will be shared, in order to keep costs down and simplify your event.



The Vision

The vision is to offer a free gift of a picture to remind people of the Christmas story. This will be done by:

- 1 ... working together as churches in your locality to create a nativity scene, setting this up in your town or village and ...
- 2 ... inviting individuals and families to 'get into the picture' and have their photo taken as part of your nativity scene.
- 3 ... helping people to connect further with the Christmas story through your church's website - and inviting them to your Christmas services.

The Nativity Picture

The scene:

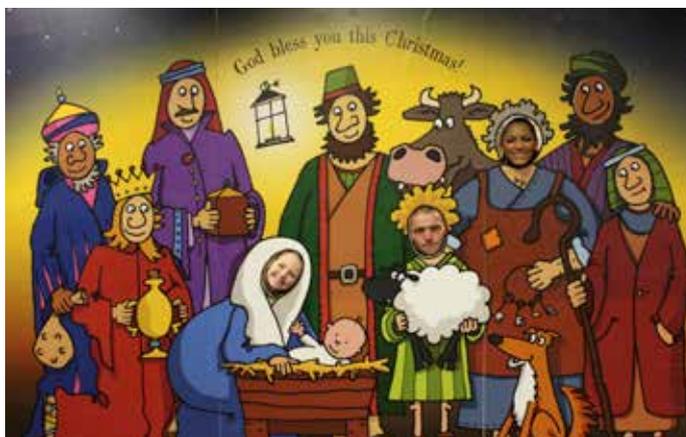
There is no one way that a nativity scene has to look. You can be as creative and adventurous as you like, safety permitting. Some of the best nativity scenes allow room for animals and plenty of straw bales, but a simple scene can also make a big impact.



Colchester Baptist Church's
Get in the Picture nativity scene in 2011.

In 2011 we held a competition to find the town with the best nativity scene, and Colchester Baptist Church won with an innovative, but simple idea. They created a Christmas nativity scene with holes cut out for people's faces. It looked attractive outside the church - and when the gaps were unfilled by people, they were replaced by cartoon faces!

If you are inviting people to dress up, you'll need a big box or basket of dressing up garments loose enough to go over clothes. This needs to include something for people being Kings, Shepherds or even Mary and Joseph! And don't forget a baby doll wrapped up in white cloth to be your baby Jesus!



Grantham Baptist Church's scene in 2012

The camera:

Here you have a couple of options:

- » The simplest option is to **take the photos on participants' phones or cameras.** This reduces the need for consent forms as the responsibility for the photos remains with the owner of the phone/camera.
- » Alternatively, you may have a photographer in your church who can use their own digital camera to take photos, and then **make them available via your church's website or Facebook page.** Or you may offer to email individual photos to someone in the picture. If you decide to use your own camera, please make sure that you obtain the necessary consents and follow the advice given on page 6.

The greeters:

You will need people from your team to engage with the public, encouraging them to come and be part of the picture. This will take some explanation and that the purpose of the project is about a free gift to remind people of the Christmas story. Before the event, use the template on page 9, adding a message from your church, details of your church's Christmas services and your church contact details. This can be printed out and given to each person who takes part in Get in the Picture.



Getting in the Picture at
Salisbury Christmas
Market 2014

10 Practical Steps

- 1 Pray:** If you would like to develop 'Get in the Picture' then spend some time praying about it, asking God for direction and where you could set up your nativity scene.
- 2 Plan:** Talk to other churches in your community about the vision of offering people a free gift to remind them of the Christmas story, and get as many people as possible involved.
- 3 Permission:** Talk to your local council to find a suitable place for you to set up your nativity scene. Guidance on this is available on the Get in the Picture website www.getinthepicture.org.uk.
- 4 Prepare:** Get your nativity scene ready through gathering together costumes, booking donkeys, buying straw. Local charity shops are a useful source of fabric and clothing which can be adapted to make costumes without spending a lot.
- 5 Paint:** Get creative and make your nativity scene. Remember that a simple scene can be very effective!
- 6 Persuade:** Allocate jobs and roles such for those who are volunteering to take part.
- 7 Publicise:** Let local newspapers and radio know that you will be setting up a free nativity scene for people to take part in and to get a free picture!
- 8 Print out a Flyer:** Use the template on page 9 to create a handout for participants, with a welcoming message from your church inviting them to your Christmas services, on the reverse.
- 9 Participate:** Get as many people as possible to take part! If you are using your own camera and will be putting the photos on your church website or church Facebook page, make sure that you use the sample Consent form and information for participants (see pages 7 and 8) to ensure that everyone knows what will happen to their photographs.



Birstall Methodist Church in Leicester set up their Get in the Picture 'studio' on eight occasions, based around existing events in the church's calendar.

'It went really well, with brilliant conversations and laughter. People loved the photos - 135 different people were photographed, about 100 of these were not 'Sunday church' people.'

'Wonderful!!

We had approximately 45 people get dressed up in 90 minutes of the event, and took about 30 different group shots. My fave shot was the mum, dad and new baby, who had come last year with a big bump and posed as Mary and Joseph with a 'No vacancies' sign, and this year wanted a follow-up photo to email to everyone.'

Brilliant! It was our first time, so lots learnt, but we will almost certainly be doing it again!





Get in the Picture is not a project that will see people become Christians straight away on the streets! Rather, it is an opportunity to sow the seed of the gospel into the lives of many people who have yet to hear and see what it means to be a follower of Christ. It serves as one step on a journey for people to consider what it means to be a Christian.

Through positive engagement with people, church members can:

- 1 Plough the ground
- 2 Sow the seed of the gospel
- 3 Gently water interest in faith through invitations to other events.

Through these three principles **Get in the Picture** looks to address the problem that for many people they just don't have a clue about Jesus and his significance. Therefore:

- 1 **Ploughing** through showing a positive, engaging and fun impression of the Church where too often people's attitudes are negative.
- 2 **Sowing seeds**, gently reminding people that the first Christmas story was a gift for them today.
- 3 **Watering** the gospel through invitations to further church events over Christmas time.

Permissions, Insurance and the Police

Local Authority Permission

It is important that you consider what permissions may be necessary for your Get in the Picture event and that you have these in place well in advance of setting up your Nativity scene. Early contact with your local authority will also reveal what other events are taking place at the same time; you may want to choose your date to avoid these or alternatively you may find that there is mutual benefit in working together or alongside. Permissions should be requested in writing and you should allow plenty of time for the local authority or landlord to process your request and reply especially if it has to be discussed by a council committee beforehand.



Much will depend on where you plan to set up and whether this is on public or private land. Remember that many shopping centres are privately owned and you will need the landlord's permission both to set up and to take photographs. If you are in any doubt whether your intended site is privately owned, your local authority should be able to advise you. For events on public land such as town parks, market squares or streets you should seek advice from your local authority. In most cases an initial enquiry to your Town or Parish Council offices is the best way to start – try the Town Clerk or Services Manager. Depending on local arrangements, you may be asked to contact your District, County or Unitary Council - you may even find that your town has an Events Manager who would be able to offer a wealth of information and advise you on where to set up, at what times and who to speak to about local advertising.

Public Liability Insurance

Public liability insurance is not mandatory for 'Get in the Picture' events. The risks of a member of the public sustaining injury at your event are likely to be very low, however, it is good practice to ensure that you are covered and you are strongly advised to speak to your Church insurance company or broker before your first event. Your local authority or land owner may require public liability cover as a condition of their permission.

Most churches will already have public liability insurance in place and you will simply need to inform your insurance company of the nature of the event and check that you have adequate cover. You may be required to conduct a risk assessment and you should ask for guidance from your insurer. The Baptist Union Corporation has published Health and Safety guidelines that include advice on conducting a risk assessment – the relevant Guideline document is L10 which can be downloaded at: www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368692/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx

Please note that if you are planning to run your event as a group of churches you will need to have separate group public liability insurance as individual church policies are unlikely to provide cover. If it is an established ecumenical group you may already have cover – again you are strongly advised to speak to your group's insurer.

On a related note – if your photographer is using their own equipment, it is advisable to ensure that their equipment is insured for your event. Professionals will have their own cover but if you are planning to ask a volunteer to take your photographs they should be advised to check their relevant policies. Of course, similar considerations apply to any other valuable equipment such as laptop computers that you plan to use at your event.



Keeping the Police Informed

It is a criminal offence to obstruct free passage on the highway and this includes footpaths and cycleways as well as roads. If the police do consider that you are causing an obstruction it is likely that you will simply be asked to move along. Talking with your local authority to agree a site in advance should avoid any problems but it would be wise to inform the local police of your intentions and to ensure that they are content with your plans. Again, it would be sensible to submit your plans in writing; include a brief description of the event, noting that you will be taking photographs (with parental consent for photographs of children), date, time and location and a point of contact in case the police have any questions or comment. You should aim to write at least 6 days before your first event.

*'The event was very successful.
Everyone involved enjoyed it and the event
was appreciated by the community.'*

Guidelines on taking Photographs

We must respect the privacy of individuals, ensure that identities are safeguarded and prevent misuse of the images, especially if you will be uploading photographs on to the web with world wide access (via your church website or church Facebook page). All those involved in your event should be aware of the following safeguards:

- **If you will be putting photos on your church website or Facebook page,** print out the 'Important Notice' on page 8 so that all participants are fully aware that their photographs will be published on a website. Their consent must be given before their photograph is taken and a sample consent form can be found on page 7. If requested by the subject, their image must be demonstrably deleted from the camera.
- Ensure that individuals in photographs will not be identified by name on the website.
- Parental consent should be obtained for photographs of all children under 16 years of age. Again, the sample consent form on page 7 can be used.
- If consent cannot be gained for children who are under, or appear to be under, the age of 16, no photograph should be taken.
- Event coordinators are to ensure that a copy of the consent form for each event is kept.
- All photographic media (memory cards etc) must be stored safely.
- Any participant must be able to request removal of their photograph by contacting the website moderator using an on-line messaging option.



- **If you will be taking photos on participants' phones or cameras,** you may need to check the operating instructions for the device with its owner before participants pose for their photo.
- It would also be worth allowing participants to check that they are happy with their photo as you hand back their phone/camera.
- Encourage the participants to share their photo with the church - if they have permission from everyone in it - and maybe set up a church instagram account for your event so that they can easily do this.



Churches Together in Peterborough operated from an empty shop in the city centre, and also offered refreshments and mince pies, children's colouring competition, prayer tree, listening ear - and even had a live donkey on opening night. 'It was extremely successful. Having people out on the streets to encourage people in worked well.'



Important Notice

Please be aware that photographs taken as part of this '**Get in the Picture**' event will be published on the [_____](#) website, which has links to Facebook and Twitter. As this is a public website, it may be accessed by anyone from the world-wide web.

By taking part in this Get in the Picture event you are giving your consent for your photograph to be published on this site. In order to protect your identity, we will not attach any names to these photographs.

IF YOU ARE NOT CONTENT to have your Get In the Picture photograph published in the public domain please let the photographer know and **DO NOT** have your photograph taken.

We regret we cannot take photographs of children who are, or appear to be, under 16 years of age without the parent or guardian's consent. A consent form is available.

facebook



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the picture

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