

In the run up to Christmas there may be times when you need to put craft activities together at the last minute.

You can save yourself a lot of stress and panic by keeping the following items in your store cupboard.

- Cotton wool
- Envelopes of different sizes, preferably not shiny
- Paper of all colours, including black
- Glue
- Scissors
- Glitter
- Colouring pens (not brush tips because children jam the lids on too hard and damage them)
- Crayons

The above materials can be used to create the following masterpieces.

Envelope sheep

This is a good one to know because there are a lot of sheep stories in the Bible.

Take an envelope that is big enough to be used as a hand puppet. Neatly cut off the triangular flap. Turn the envelope upside down and glue cotton wool onto its face. This is the fleece.

Take the triangular flap (or extra paper if it wasn't that kind of envelope) and cut out the sheep's head and four legs. Make sure that enough paper extends from the sheep's neck so that it can be glued onto the back of the envelope. Likewise make sure that the sheep's legs are long enough to be glued onto the back and still appear proportionate from the front.

Draw a face and ears on the sheep's head and glue a tuft of cotton wool on top. Glue them onto the back of the envelope and voila, you have a sheep hand puppet!

Envelope Old Testament prophets/three wise men

There is no shortage of men with beards in the Bible. Depending on the age of the Bible character you may want to colour the cotton wool with felt tip pen.

Take a large envelope and turn it so that you can put your hand inside. Draw a face on the envelope and glue cotton wool on the beard and hair area. If the character is a king you could cut a crown into the top of the envelope and decorate it with glitter.

When you are cutting the crown, be careful not to completely open up the top of the envelope. A partly closed top prevents the hand puppet from turning into a sleeve and slipping down the child's arm.

Jewels, flames, mystery and allegory

Take a sheet of paper and coloured wax crayons (not black). Cover the paper completely with different colours. Then with black crayon cover the paper so that the colour is gone. Take a pointed object and scratch a picture into the black wax, revealing the colour underneath.

This craft activity suits depictions of jewels, flames and mysterious things. Make the picture extra sparkly by carefully adding glitter.

Coloured paper stained glass window

Take a black piece of paper and cut shapes out of it so that it looks like the lead framework of a stained glass window.

Then stick a white piece of paper onto the back of the black paper so that the white shows through. Use felt tip pens to draw on the exposed white parts of the paper.

or

Cut coloured paper to match the shape of the holes in the black paper. The coloured shapes need to be slightly larger than the holes they will cover. This is so that they can be glued onto the black framework of the window.

Glue the coloured shapes onto the back of the black paper so that they show through the front and give the appearance of a stained glass window. Glue cotton wool and glitter onto the front of the window to give the look of snow and frost.

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