



Ideas for Advent Posadas in a time of Covid

This Advent as we journey through the Bible, we are going to focus on the journey that Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. This journey has been celebrated for many centuries in Latin American countries with the traditional festival of 'Las Posadas' which is Spanish for 'the inns'.

The Festival reminds us of the challenges of Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem where they were unable to find anywhere comfortable to stay so that Mary could have her baby. In Latin American countries, children dress up as Mary and Joseph or carry statues of them as they process through the neighbourhood. The procession visits three houses singing traditional songs asking for somewhere to stay. Mary and Joseph are refused entry at the first two houses, before being admitted at the third where there is often a celebration feast. Traditionally the Posada festival lasts for nine days in December, but can work for fewer or more days depending on what you choose to do

Many churches and schools in the Diocese have used knitted dolls of Mary and Joseph who travel from household to household during December. We did toy with the idea of putting the dolls in a Perspex box so they could be wiped clean but passing items from one household to another, and resource sharing, does not comply with the guidelines, even if they are easily cleanable!

We have come up with the following ideas and resources instead:

Notes:

The '*Resources to download*' are available on the [Diocesan webpages](#). Unfortunately the website only allows us to upload PDFs of documents. Please email Carolyn.edwards@yorkdiocese.org if you wish to be sent the word document that can be altered to suit your purposes. '*Resources required*' are additional things you will need to buy or borrow.

Postal Posada

Post a picture of the holy family to every household that wants to be involved. Accompany this with a letter and some liturgy and/or prayers. Make sure each household knows what day they are to open their letter and put the picture up somewhere in the house as if Mary and Joseph have just arrived. You could encourage them to take a picture of it and post this on a Facebook page, and/or provide a poster that says 'Mary and Joseph are here' that they can put in their window.

Resources to download:

- Picture of traditional Bolivian nativity
- Sample letter to hosts
- Who are Mary and Joseph handout
- Liturgy and prayers
- Mary and Joseph are here poster

Resources required:

- Envelopes and stamps
- Sign up mechanism for households
- Volunteers to stuff 24 envelopes!

Facebook Posada

Although using social media can exclude some members of the community, one of the great things about the traditional passing of Posada items from one household to another was the opportunity for people to write comments in a journal on how the visit of the holy family had affected them. With this not being possible a Facebook page or equivalent that allows people to post pictures, thoughts and comments and where you can post questions may replace some of those missed opportunities. You could do a post a week during Advent, or a post a day for a week, whatever suits your resources

Resources to download:

- Reflections and questions

Resources required:

- Social media platform
- Volunteer to monitor and upload

Outdoor Posada

Ask someone to make a large wooden or Perspex version of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem. Ask local businesses and or households to sign up to 'host' the display in their shop window or front garden – you could also include your local school, care homes, nurseries, etc. Every day during December move the display to another spot and encourage everyone to 'spot' where it is today, perhaps taking a picture of it with their phone to upload to your Facebook page. You could send out a 'we saw them' sheet for families to complete and hand in in exchange for a small (pre-quarantined) prize (they could collect this when they come for the ['Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh tour!'](#))

Socially Distanced Procession

This year we will be unable to emulate the South American tradition where the whole village parades with the holy Family and feasts at the different houses. You could, however, hold a socially distanced procession where Mary and Joseph and a few escorts with lanterns process through the village in silence or accompanied by music. Post a leaflet through the door alerting households to the time the procession will be passing their door and asking them stand on their doorstep with a candle. You could also offer the opportunity for them to come to the church and collect a quarantined bag with information about Posada and a candle for them to light when the procession passes.

You could combine this with a collection for a charity for the homeless

Resources to download:

- Leaflet blank

Resources required:

- Volunteer to make a large wood or Perspex holy family
- Volunteers to move the family regularly
- 'We saw them' sheet – with dates of your event that families can complete when they have 'spotted' Mary and Joseph

Resources to download:

- Leaflet blank
- Picture of traditional Bolivian nativity
- Liturgy and prayers
- Information about Posada
- Posada@Home activity sheet

Resources required:

- Volunteers to dispense leaflets and candles before the event
- Volunteers to be Mary and Joseph and Lantern bearers
- Candles
- Bags

Static and Silent Posada

Although the Posada is about journey, as Mary and Joseph are not able to 'travel' very far this year, then set up an installation in the church where people can spend some time in quiet prayer reflecting what it might have been like for Mary and Joseph and the hope that Jesus offers, in what might feel like hopeless days. You could combine this with a request for people to bring items for a foodbank to the church

Resources to download:

- Picture of traditional Bolivian nativity
- Liturgy and prayers
- Information about Posada
- Reflections and questions

Resources required:

- Objects and pictures to create a sacred 'Posada' space
- Volunteers to open church and ensure compliance with cleaning, etc. requirements

Posada Game

In the Journey Through the Bible calendar, on page 23, there is a Posada Game for families to play. Why not create an outdoor version in your car park or grave yard that households can come and have a go at, using a dice rolling app on their phone

Resources to download:

- Game instructions
- Labels for squares

Resources required:

- Tape or some way of marking the squares on the floor
- Laminator and pouches so that labels do not disintegrate in the rain!
- Volunteers to set it up and monitor