

I still remember the visit I made to a young mum and her baby. We were talking about why she wanted her little one baptised.

She started to talk about churchgoing. “We go every year” she said, “To the nativity”. I found myself wondering how we might help them to discover their place with God and God’s people beyond the star and into the year ahead.

**#FollowTheStar** has reached and engaged millions of people, helping them to discover all that Christmas at church can mean. Churches are welcoming all ages to a huge range of services, and online resources are encouraging them to pray at home. But this year, we are piloting an opportunity for churches to invite families and children to return after Christmas.

All the research that we have done around Life Events has told us clearly that being invited is key to continuing a faith journey. So 200 churches across the country are taking part in a pilot scheme to invite families who attend crib and carol services to go *‘Beyond the Stable’* at services on or around 5th January (Epiphany). When they come to the service, they will get a simple take-home gift to encourage prayer at home – and an invite to return to *‘Share the Light’* at a service on or near 2nd February (Candlemas). And at that service, there will be a simple take-home gift to encourage prayer.



Alongside the pilot churches, any church which is interested can buy this new range of material which extends **#FollowTheStar** into 2020. Customised publicity, as well as the giveaway items, are available on the [Church Print Hub website](https://www.churchofengland.org/followthestar).

This is a great opportunity to build on the impact of **#FollowTheStar** and create relationships with families that will encourage them on their faith journey. It can also encourage the local congregation as they begin to meet people beyond Christmas, and journey together to follow the Christ

Child who is the Saviour of the world.

**Sandra Millar**  
**Head of Life Events**

Epiphany

A Christian holy day in January (traditionally 6 January in Western Christianity) that celebrates the revelation of the baby Jesus to the world.

Candlemas

A church festival held on 2 February, in honour of the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple and the purification of the Virgin Mary: candles are blessed on this day.

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