Dressing up for Christmas

A nativity play is a tradition enjoyed by families every year, whether it’s at school, in church or even at home. If your child is in a nativity play, making your own costume can be great fun, and inexpensive. These costume suggestions for nativity characters may give you some ideas.
Nativity costumes can be bought ready-made, but making your own together with your child is more fun and could save money, especially if you buy the materials in a charity shop. Godparents and grandparents can help too if mum or dad are short on time.

Even if your child isn’t in an organised nativity at school or church, they can still make costumes and act out the nativity story at home, just for family and friends.

Children will love to help with costume-making, but remember to keep scissors and sewing kits out of reach.

Mary

Traditionally she wears a blue dress and a matching head dress. A basic blue pillow case can easily be turned into an outfit for Mary:-

- Cut a hole for your child’s head to go through at end opposite to the pillow case opening.
- Cut smaller holes in the side of the pillow case for your child’s arms to go through. You can hem the holes you’ve made with iron-on hemming tape if you wish.
- Remove the flap of material at the open end of the pillow case.
- Your child can now try on the pillow case dress with head and arms through the holes. If the pillow case corners are sticking out too much, simply push them inwards to conceal.
- Tie a thin rope around your child’s waist (or use a belt) to pull the dress in at the middle and secure.
- A blue tea towel or square scarf can be used for the head-dress, simply place over your child’s head and secure with a stretchy headband or a piece of ribbon.
- If the dress is a bit short, your child can wear leggings underneath.

Joseph, shepherds and innkeeper

Follow the steps above using any suitably coloured (for example brown, black or grey) plain pillow case. Complete the outfits with a plain tea towel secured with a dark-coloured ribbon or elasticated headband.

Angel

- Follow the above steps using a white pillow case. Use a piece of silver tinsel to tie around the waist and another to tie around your child’s head to make a halo.
- Wings are optional, but if you’d like to make some, draw a large butterfly outline shape on one panel of a large cardboard box, then cut it out.
- Score and fold it down the centre so the wings fold in a little. Paint white and leave to dry.
If you have an old feather pillow or cushion that you no longer want to use, slit it open and use the feathers to stick on the wings with fabric glue. Your child will love to help with this! Alternatively, you can draw feathers on the wings with black felt tip.

- The wings can be sewn onto the dress by stitching at the top and bottom of the folded part of the wings.

**Kings**

Each child can wear their smartest clothes underneath a cape.

- Old curtain material in different shades and fabrics will make wonderful royal capes. Ask around family and friends to see if there is anything they can give you, or see what can be found in charity shops or on eBay.

- Ask your child to stand up and measure from their neck to the floor. Cut a rectangle from the material which measures the same length and is wide enough to drape around your child's shoulders.

- Sew, or iron down with iron-on hemming tape, a small hem down the sides and bottom of the cape. On the top edge, create a fairly deep hem but leave each end open.

- Cut a long length of ribbon or thin rope that will tie loosely about your child's shoulders. Tie one end of the ribbon/rope securely to a pencil or wooden spoon and ask your child to hold the other end of the ribbon/rope. Thread the pencil or spoon through the large hem you made, pushing the material along the ribbon/rope as you go. When the ribbon is threaded, tie the ends to stop it from slipping out.

- A crown can be made from shiny craft paper or from cardboard painted with gold/silver/yellow paint. Templates can be downloaded online – just search for ‘king's crown templates’ and choose the download you like best.

- 'Jewels' for the crown can be made from tiny brightly painted pebbles stuck all over. Use glitter for extra bling too if you have it.

**Stable animals**

Your child can wear their own clothes all in the colour of their animal, eg white for a sheep, grey for a donkey, brown for an ox, and then wear a home-made animal mask.

There are a few free print and paint-your-own masks online, so search for one your child likes. SparkleBox offers farm animal masks to download.

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