

## Welcome Mary & Joseph to stay at your place

There's a way to welcome Mary and Joseph into your home this Christmas through a lovely tradition originating in Mexico. It's called Posada and this is how it works...

'Posada' (Spanish for 'inn') is a Christmas activity which lasts from December 16<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> when small versions of Mary and Joseph travel around different households in the community and stay there for one night.

People sign up in advance, offering to host Mary and Joseph for a night. It's open to everyone, and lots of families find it's a great way to be involved in the Christmas story.

At other times of year, children often host special things from school, like school toys that have particular meaning, or as a reward for good work.

Posada is a chance to host Mary and Joseph – to make room for Jesus at Christmas time!

On Christmas eve, the figures are returned to church, often at the Nativity or Crib service as everyone gets ready to welcome the Christ child once again.

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Not all churches run a Posada activity, and those that do may use it in slightly different ways. Denise Keane is from the congregation at St Mary's, in Mucklestone, and she explained what happens in her parish, which has strong links with the local Church of England school.

She said: "We have a midweek Sunday school after school, and children who go to this make the Posada figures. We launch the journey of Mary and Joseph at a family service in church where families can sign up to receive it, but children can sign up at school as well.

"A book comes with Mary and Joseph so that children can record photos, and there's a selection of prayers, or they can write their own. It all ends up back in church at the schools' carol service on a Friday afternoon."

The Revd Becky Richards, from Tixall with Ingestre, said Posada was very popular in their parish: "The figures travel around in a story bag with a copy of the Christmas story, plus a diary into which all those who host Mary and Joseph, (and the donkey), can write in their experience. Also included in the bag is an Advent candle and this can be lit and burned down one section on the night which Mary and Joseph stay with the family.

"There's also a short dialogue people can say on the doorstep when they pass the figures over to the next person. People have found this really helpful because they've chatted and got to know different people – it builds links between young and old."

“...it builds links between young and old.”

If your church doesn't run Posada, you could ask if they would consider trying in your community, if not this year, then perhaps next.

Alternatively, you could make your own Mary and Joseph or use figures from a nativity set, and pass them around your family and friends.

Include something that tells the Christmas story, perhaps even an Advent calendar from [The Meaningful Chocolate Company](#).

If your range of nearby contacts is quite small, the nativity family can stay with each family for longer.

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