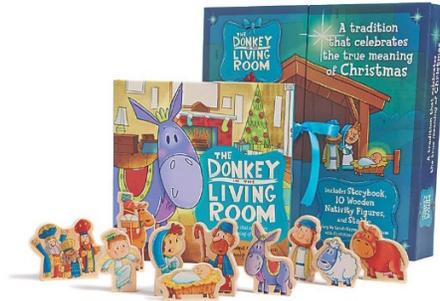


The Donkey in the Living Room

By Sarah Raymond Cunningham



WHAT IS IT?

“The Donkey in the Living Room” is a tradition that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas. It comes two ways – either as just the book – or as the kit with the nativity characters to deepen the experience. The book can be purchased from most bookstores and big box retailers.

It is meant to be a family activity for the 9 days leading up to Christmas. As the days pass, kids collect the pieces of Christ’s birth story – but also hear a story (or short poem) from the point of view of each day’s figurine.

Characters: Mary, Donkey, Cow, Sheep, Shepherd, Angel, Camel, Wise Men, Joseph, Baby Jesus

HOW CAN I USE THIS IN CHILDREN’S MINISTRY?

In brainstorming ways to use “The Donkey in the Living Room” during a Very Covid Christmas (does not sound like a Hallmark movie I’d want to watch), several seem doable.

- Use luminaries to light a drive-thru path in your church parking lot. Have 10 stops along the drive-thru path, and at each stop, have someone dressed as the character tell that character’s story/poem (or for the animals, have someone dressed as a shepherd holding a stuffed animal tell that animal’s story/poem). At the end, have a pre-bagged take-home element. You could create your own version of the Parent Connection in the back of the book, which includes a scripture reading, a few discussion questions and a craft element. You could even bag the items needed for the craft activity, along with a Nativity coloring sheet and possibly a Christmas toy (I’ve used stuffed donkeys, stuffed baby Jesus and squishy candy canes as Christmas Eve gifts, and any of those items {easily found on Oriental Trading or Amazon} would work for this as well). There are variations of this model that would work well too.
- If your church is keeping all ministry virtual during Advent and Christmas, you could still use the concept of the book and its Nativity characters as a “Countdown to Christmas” video series. You could even wrap each character so that there’s an unboxing element for those who love all the unboxing videos from YouTube.