

Come, all ye faithful Christmas viewing

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Publications and Promotions

Christmas is approaching fast and will once again be celebrated around the globe. Even though the traditional message of this event has remained the same over the centuries, the way of marking this occasion has resulted in a variety of customs and traditions.

For many Christians it is a time of introspection and spiritual rebirth, while the less devoted emphasise the festive aspect of this celebration. Regardless of the approach to Christmas, its symbols such as the Magi, stars, angels, carols, gifts, decorated trees and Santa Claus or Father Christmas are recognised by all and signify a special, joyous, happy and festive occasion.

A selection of videos available from the Library Service is featured to inspire librarians and alert them to the wide-ranging viewing material related to Christmas.

Previews for the whole family

Jesus

This programme is also available in Afrikaans and Xhosa. The Gospel according to Luke is the third of the four New Testament books that recounts the story of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Nonetheless this narrative contains much that is not found in the writings of the other evangelists, from details concerning Jesus's infancy to some of the most notable parables in its account of the Ascension. The **New Media Bible's** original **The gospel according to St Luke**, on which this video is based, consists of 15 programmes that attempt to provide a

faithful translation of the Biblical text into a visual medium. For this version the material has been re-edited and the reader of the commentary has been replaced by dialogue dubbed into English. The text itself is based on the **Good News Bible** and the Authorised (King James) Version.

Christmas star

This unusual documentary investigates just what it was that supposedly guided the three wise men to the birthplace of Christ. A tale of cosmic detection, it starts by examining the Biblical records and the historical chronology of events, and then tries to separate astronomical fact from religious mythology to consider a number of heavenly phenomena that might qualify. Using current scientific knowledge and early records, it considers everything from comets and meteorites to novae and super novae, before coming to the most likely conclusion, namely that it was an unusual conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. The leading consultant was David Hughes of Sheffield University, who feels that 15 September 7 BC was probably Christ's real birth date. There are also contributions from other scientists, some of whom query Hughes's theories. Informative and stimulating, the programme should appeal to a variety of viewers.

Children's video Bible. Part 4, The first Christmas

Based on **The Lion story Bible**, written by Penny Frank, this is one in a series of five programmes which uses the original illustrations by Eric Ford, John Haysom and Tony Morris to present iconographic versions of selected stories from the Old and the New

Testament, retold for children's audiences. The narration has been embellished with music and sound effects, and each episode is approximately five minutes long. The individual titles are: *A baby called John*; *The first Christmas*; *When Jesus was young*; *Jesus's special friends*; *Jesus the teacher*; *Jesus gives the people food*; *Secrets Jesus told*; *The story of the good Samaritan*; *The story of the sower*; *The story of the two brothers*; and *The story of the great feast*. The stories are also available in book form.

The curious case of Santa Clause

According to BRITE Catalogue it is a unique combination of comedy and documentary, tracing the legend from its origins in the story of St Nicholas in 4th century Turkey, to the familiar Santa Claus of today, visiting worldwide locations along the way.

Other titles

Christmas experience in Bethlehem Jesus: his life

The visual Bible: Matthew.

Librarians provide material on the different aspects of this celebration to their communities during the festive season and go to special lengths to assemble Christmas displays to create a special atmosphere in their libraries.

These videos can add another dimension to the displays and could also be used in holiday programmes in the build up to Christmas. Children especially delight in the traditions of Christmas and could be involved in various activities around this occasion. The same group of children causing havoc in their quest for school project information, instantaneously are converted into angels once they start singing *Silent night*.

To whatever extent Christmas touches your life, may this festive season be joyous and filled with happiness.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector.

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