

Creative COVID-Friendly Children's Advent Ministry Ideas from Canada

By Dr. Ian Fitzpatrick

In Canada, just like other parts of the USA/Canada Region, we have needed to become extra creative in ministry to children as ministry practices were altered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have identified two excellent children ministry leaders: Kathy Yeomans, children's ministries director at Moncton First Church in New Brunswick and Sheri Lynne Martin, Canada West children's ministries director. I've asked them to share how they address some of the ministry challenges during the Advent season.

The Canada West District - Sheri Lynne Martin

Due to the pandemic, we have had to really be creative when it comes to ministering to children and families on the Canada West District.

Here are a few of the things that worked well during the Advent and Christmas season.

The Canada West Children's Ministry Team has a mascot. She is a puppet named Molly. Molly did a series of posts on the Canada West Kids Facebook Page for the Advent/Christmas Season. They are as follows:



Post one: Molly was doing some "Quarantine Clean-up" with the extra time she has on her hands. She found this item. It belonged to her Grandpa Noel. What is it?

- A. A small suitcase
- B. A leather bound book
- C. An old camera
- D. A special dog leash

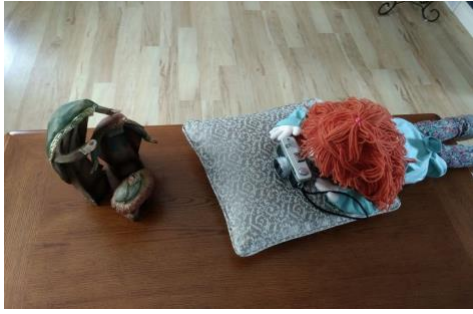
The children & families would post what they thought Molly had found, thus participating in a fun activity that connected our people over our vast district.



Post two: Yes, it was a camera that Molly found! Great guesses, Canada West! Who do you think Molly is taking a picture of?

- A. Her pet dog
- B. Baby Jesus
- C. Her favorite snack
- D. A snowman she built

By posting what they thought Molly was taking a picture of, children and families were getting excited for the next part of our lesson.



Post Three: Molly has found a new hobby! Molly wants to be a world changer and a difference maker. Now, she has heard different rumblings about Christmas this year.... How it is going to be different, lonely, no special memories. This has put Molly into action. She wants to remind people that Christmas is all about Christ! So, she has a challenge for all of us!

How many pictures do you think Molly and the CWD families can post of baby Jesus by January 6?

- A. 12 pictures
- B. 25 pictures
- C. 18 pictures
- D. 50 pictures

Then the children and families would answer the question. Of course, they answered the most...50 pictures!

Post four: Molly put up a post that allowed children and families to post their nativity scenes for others to enjoy. This gave everyone an opportunity to see that Jesus is everywhere – in homes, in grocery stores, in people’s yards, at church, etc.! We met our quota of 50 nativity scenes posted.

This activity took place over several weeks. In addition to being enjoyable, I think it allowed us to share a little Christmas and hope with others across the district as well as reinforcing that Jesus is the TRUE reason for the season.

Moncton First Church in New Brunswick - Kathy Yeomans

I love the work we do here in Moncton, and I have been involved in children’s ministries for 45 years as helper, leader, and director. My involvement started under the leadership of my dad, who was the Caravan director at our church. I have seen many of our Bible-based programs for children come and go, but three things have stayed the same...making children feel accepted, heard, and loved.

The children’s group is called Super Kids. We have a monthly theme that is demonstrated through a variety of activities such as videos, flannelgraphs, object lessons, science experiments, and Bible stories acted out by the children. Children spend a lot of time watching TV or playing video games at home, so it is always surprising to me that their least favorite way to hear the Bible story is by video!

Since COVID, we are ministered through Facebook, drive-through events, and care package deliveries. In November and December, we are heavily engaged in our preparations for Christmas. I do an Advent story each Wednesday evening, and of course we prepare for the concert. The Super Kids start the Advent Season with a party, decorating rooms and putting up the tree. They vote on a Christmas project, and we get their parents involved in it since 90 percent of Super Kids do not attend our Sunday service.

Our emphasis for Advent and Christmas is to get all the children involved and have the major celebration on a Sunday morning. On that Sunday, parents to help set up so that they feel a part of the church community. We conclude the Christmas concert with lunch in the gym where our congregation can meet the parents of our Super Kids.

May the Lord use these ideas to help you on your creative journey.