



Photocopiable
resource pack.

Please pull out and use as
needed.



Welcome. We are a group of
Friends **E**xploring **A**nd **S**haring **T**ogether,
and we are so pleased to welcome you to this Gifted Table.

Here, we each come as we are – there is no preaching, no pressure, just the warmth of welcome, the hope of honest connection, and the joy of being in community.

Each week we follow this simple rhythm, as we learn to listen deeply to each other, and to God

- **Friends** (5–10 mins): Welcome, and a simple icebreaker.
- **Exploring** (10–15 mins): Words or phrases that stand out.
- **And** (5–6 mins): Receiving the gift of wondering.
- **Sharing** (15–20 mins): Conversations, stories, and a possible creative task.
- **Together** (10 mins): Sending and singing.

Whether you have come on your own seeking answers, or because a friend invited you, know that there is a place set especially for you around this table.

We do hope to see you again, and that through **G**race,
Invitation, **F**aith, **T**ransformation, **E**ncounter, and **D**iscovery,
we will celebrate this season as **FEAST**.



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John 1:1-14 NRSV *The Word Became Flesh*

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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Week 1 – The gift of Grace

Friends

- When has someone's kindness or care touched your life unexpectedly, and how did it make you feel?

Exploring

- What insights into grace does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, notice what memories or longings stir within, those moments of Grace.

Sharing

- Where do you notice moments of grace in everyday life?
- How can we offer these "gifts of grace" to our communities this Advent?
- Who in your life has spoken grace to you?

Together

- This week, try to notice one act of grace that is shared with you; be it a kind word, a gentle act, or a simple smile, and pass it on.

Friends, beloved of God, may we

Explore the light that shines in our darkness.

And receiving grace upon grace, may we

Share that love with open hands and hearts, as

Together we live as gifts to the world. **Amen**

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Week 1 – The gift of Grace

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)
Love Came Down at Christmas (1885)

**Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.**

**Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?**

**Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.**

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Week 1 – The gift of Grace

**Have yourself a merry little
Christmas
Let your heart be light
From now on
Our troubles will be out of sight**

**Have yourself a merry little
Christmas
Make the Yule-tide gay
From now on
Our troubles will be miles away**

**Here we are as in olden days
Happy golden days of yore
Faithful friends who are dear to
us
Gather near to us once more**

**Through the years we all will be
together
If the fates allow
Hang a shining star upon the
highest bough
And have yourself a merry little
Christmas now**

**Here we are as in olden days
Happy golden days of yore
Faithful friends who are dear to
us
Gather near to us once more**

**Oh, through the years
We all will be together
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So hang a shining star upon the
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Week 2 – The gift of Invitation

Friends

- Have you ever received an unexpected invitation that changed something for you?

Exploring

- What insights into invitation does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, notice the memories or longings stir within, those moments of Invitation.

Sharing

- What makes you feel truly welcomed?
- How can we offer these “gifts of invitation” to our communities this Advent?
- What invitation do you feel drawn to accept this season?

Together

- Who might you offer an invitation to this week through a meal, a walk, or a conversation, to help them feel they belong?

Friends, invited by Christ, may we

Explore the call to belong.

And receiving a homecoming love, may we

Share that gift with generosity, as

Together we live as children of God. **Amen**

Week 2 – The gift of Invitation

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Week 2 – The gift of Invitation

Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)
The Gate of the Year (1912)

**And I said to the man who stood
at the gate of the year: "Give me
a light that I may tread safely
into the unknown".**

**And he replied: "Go out into the
darkness and put your hand into
the Hand of God.**

**That shall be to you better than
light and safer than a known
way".**

**So I went forth, and finding the
Hand of God, trod gladly into the
night.**

**And He led me towards the hills
and the breaking of day in the
lone East.**

**So heart be still:
What need our little life
Our human life to know,
If God hath comprehension?
In all the dizzy strife
Of things both high and low,
God hideth His intention.**

**God knows. His will
Is best. The stretch of years
Which wind ahead, so dim
To our imperfect vision,
Are clear to God. Our fears
Are premature; In Him,
All time hath full provision.**

**Then rest: until
God moves to lift the veil
From our impatient eyes,
When, as the sweeter features
Of Life's stern face we hail,
Fair beyond all surmise
God's thought around His
creatures
Our mind shall fill**

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Week 2 – The gift of Invitation

**I'm dreaming tonight of a place I
love
Even more than I usually do
And although I know
It's a long road back
I promise you**

**I'll be home for Christmas
You can count on me
Please have snow and mistletoe
and presents under the tree
Christmas eve will find me
Where the love light gleams
I'll be home for Christmas
If only in my dreams**

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Week 3 – The gift of Faith

Friends

- What helps you keep going when things are uncertain?

Exploring

- What insights into faith does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, notice what memories, longings, or hopes stir within, those moments of Faith.

Sharing

- What does “light in the darkness” mean for you today?
- Where do we need to bring these “gifts of light” to our world this Advent?
- Who has helped you hold on in a time of darkness?

Together

- Choosing your own, or a different need from the sharing time, try to remember the person, place or situation in prayer during this week.

Friends, held in faith, may we

Explore the light that shines in our darkness.

And receiving God’s gift of trust, may we

Share that hope with those around us, as

Together we walk in the promises of God. **Amen**

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Week 3 – The gift of Faith

Madeleine L'Engle (1918-2007)
First Coming (2005)

He did not wait till the world was
ready,
till men and nations were at
peace.
He came when the Heavens were
unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for
release.

He did not wait for the perfect
time.
He came when the need was deep
and great.
He dined with sinners in all their
grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were
pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished
world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished
shame
he came, and his Light would not
go out.

He came to a world which did not
mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its
scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made
Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is
sane
to raise our songs with joyful
voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our
pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice!
Rejoice!

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Week 3 – The gift of Faith

**Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Would save our sons and
daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?
This child that you delivered, will
soon deliver you**

**Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Will calm the storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little baby
You kiss the face of God
Mary, did you know?**

**The blind will see, the deaf will
hear, the dead will live again
The lame will leap, the dumb will
speak, the praises of the Lamb**

**Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby
boy
Would one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding is
the great, I Am
Mary, did you know?**

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Week 4 – The gift of Transformation

Friends

- When or where have you seen signs of transformation around you?

Exploring

- What insights into transformation does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, notice what memories, longings, or hopes stir within, that seek peace amid the pain of our world, those moments of Transformation.

Sharing

- What has the ordinary in your life become extraordinary?
- Where do we need to bring these “gifts of transformation” to our communities this Advent?
- Do you notice something new beginning in you?

Together

- Commit to taking one small action for justice or peace each day this week, by buying fairtrade, donating to charity etc.

Friends, in ordinary ways, may we

Explore the wonder of God-with-us.

And receiving this transforming live, may we

Share signs of that gift in our daily lives, as

Together we are changed by Christ’s light. **Amen**

Week 4 – The gift of Transformation

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Together

- Commit to taking one small action for justice or peace each day this week, by buying fairtrade, donating to charity etc.

Friends, in ordinary ways, may we

Explore the wonder of God-with-us.

And receiving this transforming live, may we

Share signs of that gift in our daily lives, as

Together we are changed by Christ’s light. **Amen**

**Week 4 – The gift of
Transformation**

**Denise Levertov (1923-1997)
On The Mystery Of The
Incarnation(1989)**

**It's when we face for a moment
the worst our kind can do, and
shudder to know
the taint in our own selves, that
awe
cracks the mind's shell and
enters the heart:
not to a flower, not to a dolphin,
to no innocent form
but to this creature vainly sure
it and no other is god-like, God
(out of compassion for our ugly
failure to evolve) entrusts,
as guest, as brother,
the Word.**

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Week 4 – The gift of Transformation

Someday at Christmas men won't be boys
Playing with bombs like kids play with toys
One warm December our hearts will see a world where men are free

Someday at Christmas there'll be no wars
When we have learned what Christmas is for
When we have found what life's really worth there'll be peace on earth

Refrain:

Someday all our dreams will come to be, someday in a world where men are free
Maybe not in time for you and me
But someday at Christmastime

Someday at Christmas we'll see a land
With no hungry children, no empty hand
One happy morning people will share
A world where people care

Whoa, someday at Christmas there'll be no tears
When all men are equal and no man has fears
One shining moment one prayer away from our world today

Refrain:

Someday at Christmas man will not fail
Hate will be gone and love will prevail
Someday a new world that we can start with hope in every heart, yeah

whoa, yeah
Someday in a world where men are free
Maybe not in time for you and me
But someday at Christmastime
Someday at Christmastime

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Welcome. We are a group of
Friends **E**xploring **A**nd **S**haring **T**ogether,
we invite you to join us as we wonder, reflect, and get
curious about the gifts of life and all its big questions.

We each come as we are – there is no preaching, no
pressure here, only the warmth of welcome, the hope of
honest connection, and the joy of being in community.

Each week we will follow the same gentle rhythm:

Friends gather, faces both familiar and fresh.
Exploring scripture, poems, and songs of the season.
And receiving, we open our heads and hearts to God.
Sharing stories, and the gifts around and within us.
Together we listen, learn and grow as community.

Whether you have come on your own seeking answers, or
because a friend invited you, please know that there is a place
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Week 5 – The gift of Encounter

Friends

- What makes you feel most “at home” in a place or with people?

Exploring

- What insights into unexpected encounters does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, notice what memories, longings, or hopes stir within, those moments of Encounter.

Sharing

- What encounters, joyful or difficult, have shaped your memories of Christmas?
- How might we help others in our communities to experience the best “gifts of encounter” this Christmas?
- Who do you go to encounter “God with you” moments?

Together

- Remember to notice and name the presence of God in each and every moment of this week

Friends, as bearers of light, may we

Explore the gifts of Christ’s presence.

And receiving this love made near, may we

Share that joy with all that we meet, as

Together we encounter God in people and places. **Amen**

Week 5 – The gift of Encounter

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Week 5 – The gift of Encounter

U A Fanthorpe (1929-2009)
BC:AD (2002)

**This was the moment when
Before
Turned into After, and the
future's
Uninvented timekeepers
presented arms.**

**This was the moment when
nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the
earth.**

**This was the moment when even
energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote
provinces.**

**And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and
three
Members of an obscure Persian
sect
Walked haphazard by starlight
straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.**

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Week 5 – The gift of Encounter

**A ray of hope flickers in the sky
A tiny star lights up way up high
All across the land, dawns a
brand new morn
This comes to pass when a child
is born**

**A silent wish sails the seven seas
The winds of change whisper in
the trees
And the walls of doubt crumble,
tossed and torn
This comes to pass when a child
is born**

**A rosy hue settles all around
You've got to feel you're on solid
ground
For a spell or two, no one seems
forlorn
This comes to pass when a child
is born**

***And all of this happens because
the world is waiting
Waiting for one child
Black, white, yellow, no one
knows
But a child that will grow up and
turn tears to laughter
Hate to love, war to peace and
everyone to everyone's
neighbour
And misery and suffering will be
words to be forgotten forever***

**It's all a dream, an illusion now
It must come true, sometime
soon somehow
All across the land, dawns a
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Week 6 – The gift of Discovery

Friends

- Have you ever been on a journey that changed how you see the world?

Exploring

- What insights into discovery does this poem give you?
- What word, phrase, or sentence first caught your attention within this passage of scripture?

And ... as you listen to the song, take the time to listen to your head and heart, and notice what memories, longings, or hopes stir within, those wonder-filled moments of Discovery.

Sharing

- What have you discovered about yourself, or God, during this GIFTED season?
- How might we share these “gifts of discovery” within our families, friendship groups, and community in the year ahead?

Together

- Hang your GIFTED tag where you will see it daily, let it act as a reminder of all that you have shared/found here. Pause to ponder what next steps/new thing God might be gifting you.

Friends, seekers of Christ, may we

Explore the light that guides our way.

And receiving new insights about God, may we

Share our GIFTED discoveries with the world, as

Together we continue to journey on and in the way. **Amen**

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Week 6 – The gift of Discovery

**Howard Washington Thurman
(1899-1981)
The Work Of Christmas (1948)**

**When the song of the angels is
stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are
home,
when the shepherds are back
with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:**

**to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the
people,
to make music in the heart**

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Week 6 – The gift of Discovery

**I walked across an empty land
I knew the pathway like the
back of my hand
I felt the earth beneath my feet
Sat by the river and it made me
complete**

**Oh, simple thing, where have
you gone?
I'm getting old and I need
something to rely on
So tell me when,
You're gonna let in in
I'm getting tired and I need
somewhere to begin**

**I came across a fallen tree
I felt the branches of it looking
at me
Is this the place we used to
love?
Is this the place that I've been
dreaming of?**

**Oh, simple thing, where have
you gone?
I'm getting old and I need
something to rely on
So tell me when,
You're gonna let in in
I'm getting tired and I need
somewhere to begin**

**And if you have a minute why
don't we go
Talk about it somewhere only
we know?
This could be the end of
everything
So why don't we go somewhere
only we know?
Somewhere only we know**

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