

An Aussie Christmas



You will need:

- a large gum tree branch to decorate
- decorations: angels, bells, stars and tinsel (and any others you might like to use) The 'tree' will be decorated during the service.

Welcome:

Carol:

Prayer:

Let us pray:

Loving God, we come with joy to worship you, rejoicing that in Christ you became human and lived here on earth, immersing yourself in all its uncertainties and challenges. And you come now to offer us hope and your loving companionship in all our own uncertainties and challenges.

We love this Christmas season, we know it so well, yet we become so busy with the many other things that need to be done: gifts to buy and wrap, food to organise, parties and, of course preparations for Christmas Day – so busy, we forget that your coming is central to all we do.

We come now to the end of this Advent Season, remembering the story of your birth. As we decorate our tree, remind us of the love you have for us and all your people, remind us of the reason for your coming among us. Kindle in us a deep desire to make room in our hearts and lives for you, and let us sense again the wonder of your love and grace. **Amen.**

Carol:

***Story:** *A Kelpie Christmas Tale* -
Or Message

The Christmas Tree:

In Europe, where Christmas was first celebrated, this time of the year is cold, often the ground is covered with snow, and most plant life dies, until the coming of spring. The fir (or pine) tree, an evergreen, is a reminder of God's constant love.

Here in Australia, our gum trees also remind us of God's love. Soon after devastating fires, when we think that everything is lost, new shoots begin to grow out of blackened stumps, and the bush springs to life again. So as we come to decorate our tree, we do so, remembering that this tree too is symbolic of eternal life, and the constancy of God's love and presence.

Song: *O Eucalypt (Tune: O Christmas tree)*

O Eucalypt, O Eucalypt,
how lovely are your branches. *Repeat*

Through summer's heat and winter's cold,
your story of new life is told.

O Eucalypt, O Eucalypt,
how lovely are your branches.

O Eucalypt, O Eucalypt,
how lovely are your branches. *Repeat*

Your fragrant leaves and blossoms fair
Show us that Love is everywhere.

O Eucalypt, O Eucalypt,
how lovely are your branches.

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Decorating the Christmas Tree

As the person speaks about the significance of each decoration, the Scripture is read, and the children decorate the tree with the relevant decorations.

ANGELS, as we have heard, are very important in the Christmas story. The angel Gabriel came to Mary with the Good News that she was to be the mother of this special child whom God had promised. An angel came to Joseph in a dream telling him that this child would be called Jesus, and that He is Emmanuel, which means 'God with us'. On the night of Jesus' birth, the angels lit up the night sky singing praises to God. An angel is a messenger from God. The children have made their own angels, and they will place them on the tree as a reminder of the special role angels played in the Christmas story.

Bible Reading: Luke 1:26-33

BELLS are a symbol of joy, and Christmas has always been seen as a time of joy. When the angel appeared to the shepherds they were told that the message of the birth of Jesus was one of great joy. When many other angels joined the first angel, they praised and gave glory to God.

Bible Reading Luke 2:8-14

Suggested carol: *Angels from the realms of glory (TIS 309)*

STAR: The stars on our tree are a reminder of the wise men who travelled such a long way to see Jesus because they saw a special star in the sky and wanted to worship the new baby and bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

When we see the Southern Cross in our skies, it also reminds us of these kings and their journey.

Bible Reading Matthew 2:1-2. 9-10

Suggested carol: *We three kings*

TINSEL: If we look up at the night sky, we can see the beautiful Milky Way. Sometimes it seems as if we could reach out and dip our fingers in the stars. With tinsel we bring the light of those stars to the tree, to remind us that this Jesus, who came into our world to teach us about God's love, is the light of the world.

Bible Reading: John 1:1-5

Suggested Carol: *Joy to the world! (TIS 268)*

Prayers:

Carol:

Blessing:

**'A Kelpie Christmas Tale' is available on the CSBC web site:
www.communityofstsbarnabasandcecilia.com
or from the Rev'd. Sr. Sandra Sears CSBC: srskscsbc@bigpond.com*

*For a real Aussie flavour, the three sets of 'Five Australian Christmas Carols'
by John Wheeler and William James are worth checking out.*