**What to do**

Explain to the youth that you’re going to play a game

These are rules of the game:

1. “You must follow instructions as they are given. Can I have your commitment to follow instructions?”
2. “Hold the sheet of paper in your hand.”
3. “Close your eyes and keep them closed until you are told to open them.”
4. “No talking at all is allowed.”
5. “Fold the paper exactly in half.”
6. “Tear off the bottom right hand corner.”
7. “Fold the paper in half again.”
8. “Tear off the top right hand corner.”
9. “Tear off a piece of paper along the middle of the left side of the paper.”
10. “Fold the paper in half again.”
11. “Tear off a piece along the middle of the right side.”
12. “Tear of the lower left hand corner.”
13. “Open your eyes”
14. “Unfold your paper.”
15. “Compare your paper to the paper of the other youth next to you.”

**Hmmm!** You all had the same instructions, I’m hoping you all followed them and yet we have lots of different results.

Maybe that’s because not everyone understood the instructions, or perhaps more likely that everyone interpreted them differently.

When I said fold in half, some would have folded from left to right, others right to left and some even top to bottom or bottom to top!

There was more than one way of doing it!

And then when I said tear off a bit, I didn’t say how much, so different amounts have been torn off.

In life there is often more than one way to do something. Doing it differently to someone else doesn’t mean it is wrong. Unless of course you tore off the right corner when I said the left!

And so each snowflake is different just as they are in real life and the same is true with us. They are unique in the same way that each of us is unique. And each snowflake is shaped by its journey just as we are shaped by our journey through life, by the people we meet and the experiences we have. Some are good and some not so good, but God uses all the things we encounter to mould and shape us, even the seemingly bad things.

In the Christmas story, Mary discovers as an unmarried girl that she is pregnant, Joseph is shocked. They have taxes to pay, there is no room at the inn for them and Herod is outraged that another King is out to take his place that he intends to kill all the newborn baby boys. But God used all these things to give us a Saviour to show us how much he loves us and how precious we are to him.

Snowflakes are temporary, there one minute and melted the next, but in that moment they provide us with beauty and wonder. We too are temporary, we are born, we live and then we die, but when we are here we have the opportunity to make the world a better and more beautiful place. Jesus’ time on earth was temporary, but his love for us is for always and his light continues to shine in the world through you and me and the unique and different people we are.

This Christmas, as you open your presents, and hopefully watch the snow fall, think about how you are each a unique and different gift to the world and how through you the light and love of Jesus can continue to shine into the hearts of other people.