



Christmas exhibition press release

Christmas Angels with flapping wings and ringing bells

8 November 2025 – 8 February 2026

Winged messengers from heaven have long been at the heart of the Christmas story. An angel tells Mary she will give birth to Jesus, and a heavenly host leads the shepherds to the Christ Child on that holy night.

Angels are a familiar presence in many religions and cultures. Their ethereal beauty has captivated artists for centuries, inspiring depictions in paintings, ceiling frescoes, stained glass, and sculptures in churches and cemeteries. Often shown with wings, angels take many forms – sometimes as graceful women or youthful figures with flowing hair, at other times as plump, rosy-cheeked putti, their tiny wings fluttering through ornate church interiors. In art, angels often appear as divine messengers or as singers of praise, their voices lifting in a joyful “Gloria in excelsis Deo”.

At Christmas, angels also take centre stage in our homes. They appear as decorations on the tree, candleholders, nativity figures, storybook characters, and shimmering motifs on scrap pictures. Quietly, they help weave the magic of the season – lending a hand to decorate the tree or signalling the arrival of the Christkind with the soft tinkle of a bell. And as the classic Christmas film “It’s a Wonderful Life” reminds us: “Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.”

This exhibition celebrates the Christmas angel in all its forms. Picture books from 1900 to 1940, heartfelt wish letters, and postcards from the First World War reveal how angels have brought comfort and hope – especially in times of hardship. Visitors are invited to write their own postcard, to be sent out on Guardian Angel Day, enjoy traditional carols at the listening station, or ring a bell to help an angel earn its wings.

Exhibition texts are available in German, French, English and Italian. The museum is wheelchair-accessible.

Programme of events

Saturday

8 Nov 2025 – from 10 am

Exhibition opening

Heavenly photo booth, complete with large glowing wings.

Sunday

23 Nov 2025 – 1 pm to 3 pm

Hand-lettering workshop

Create atmospheric Christmas cards with RomanaSchrift

Ages 10 and up, limited number of places available.

Registration at: event@swm-basel.ch

10 CHF/person

Saturday

6 Dec 2025 – 2 pm to 5.30 pm

Visit from Santiglaus (Saint Nicholas)

Santiglaus looks forward to hearing your poem

Wednesday

10 Dec 25 – 2 pm to 6 pm

Children's face painting with angelic designs

Sunday

14 Dec 2025 – 10.30 am and 2 pm

Sled cinema in the Sääli

Film screening: *Niko – Ein Rentier hebt ab* (in German, suitable for all ages)

Wednesday

17 Dec 2025 – 2 pm to 5.30 pm

Angel Tales

Step into a world of Christmas stories

Saturday

3 Jan 2026, from 10 am

Last Christmas Leftovers

Friday

23 Jan 2026, from 6 pm

Angelic Museum Night

Sunday

8 Feb 2026

Finissage – Guardian Angel to Go

Angel Workshop

Every Wed, Sat and Sun, 1.30–5 pm

Opening Hours

January to November: Tue to Sun, 10 am–6 pm

December: daily, 10 am–6 pm

Special Christmas and New Year Hours

24 Dec 2025: 10 am–4 pm

25/26 Dec 2025: Closed

31 Dec 2025: 10 am–4 pm

1 Jan 2026: Closed

Admission

7 CHF, no additional fee for the special exhibition.

Children under 16 are free (must be accompanied by an adult if under 12).

For more information about the exhibition

Sibille Arnold, curator and director of Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel: arnold@swm-basel.ch

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About Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel

A doll plays in a toy shop, teddy bears race around in pedal cars and an entire amusement park comes to life at the push of a button: with over 6,000 objects, Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel offers unparalleled abundance and quality. Housed in a building dating from 1867, it is located in the heart of Basel. Its cheerful, lovingly and regularly updated window displays are famous far and wide, attracting young and old alike to a world full of wonders.

The museum also hosts several special exhibitions each year on a wide range of themes, giving visitors the opportunity to take a cultural journey, learn something new and discover objects in often surprising historical contexts.