



Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem

A Personal Reenactment

Supplies

Nativity figures (Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angel(s), donkey, stable, star, shepherds, and sheep. (Use cotton balls for sheep, if there are none in your nativity set.)

Storytelling Technique:

Using your own figures and imagination, use the narrative below to creatively tell the Christmas story. Move each figure from your nativity set around to “act out” the story, while you narrate. Along the way, you will be asking “reflective” questions that invite the children to imagine what the actual nativity might have been like. Encourage them to think about the questions and picture in their minds what might have actually taken place. A child’s imagination can do wonders for any story! (Afterward, you may want to read the full description in Luke 2:1-20.)

“Mary and the Angel”

[Use Mary and angel figures]

Imagine that you are inside a small house in a small town called Nazareth—long, long ago. A young teenager named Mary lives in that house. Nazareth was a quiet little village; nothing extraordinary had ever happened there.

One day, an angel named Gabriel left heaven with a wonderful message. Gabriel was a powerful angel who had been in God’s very presence. —*I wonder what Gabriel looked like?*

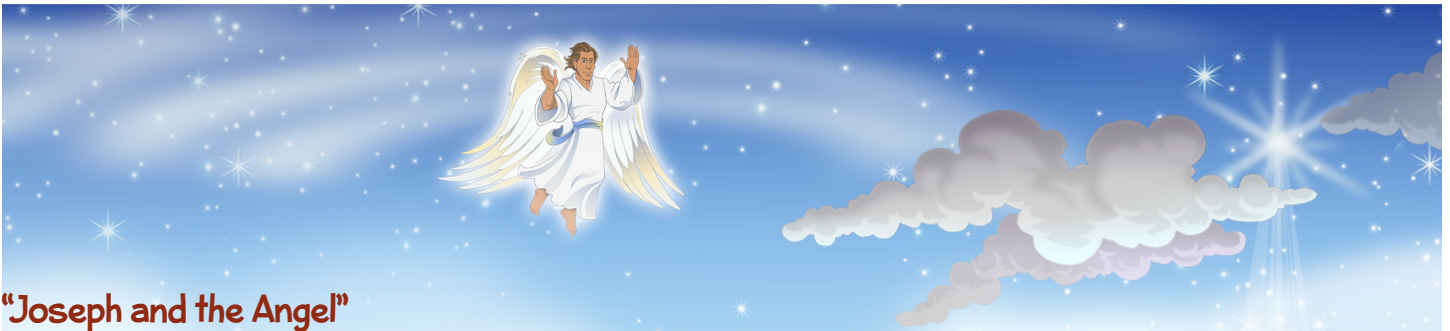
“Greetings, you who are highly favored! God is with you!” the angel told Mary. “Do not be afraid! God is going to give you a Son; you are to name Him ‘Jesus.’ He will be very great—God’s own Son. The Lord will give Him King David’s throne—and His kingdom will never end!”

Mary was amazed and confused. “How is this possible?” she asked. —*I wonder what Mary was thinking after hearing such an amazing message?*

Gabriel explained to Mary, “Only with God’s power can such an extraordinary thing take place!” Mary responded, “I’ll do whatever God wants.” How exciting—the Lord had chosen her to become the mother of His own Son!

By God’s amazing miracle, Mary was pregnant. The Son of God was growing in her womb. —*I wonder whom Mary told about God’s miracle? I wonder if anyone believed her?*





“Joseph and the Angel”

[Use Joseph and angel figures]

A man named Joseph also lived in Nazareth. He was engaged to become Mary’s husband. “What should I do?” Joseph wondered as he tossed and turned in bed. Mary had told him about the special Baby that God had promised. Joseph was very confused. Nothing like this had ever happened before! He wondered, “Did an angel really bring Mary a message from God? Is what she told me even possible?” —*I wonder how Joseph felt?*

That very night, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Joseph, the Lord has chosen Mary to have a Baby, God’s special Son. Take Mary as your wife and name the Baby ‘Jesus.’ He will be the Savior. Jesus will save people from their sins.” —*I wonder what it would be like for an angel to bring a personal message to me?*

When Joseph awoke, he knew just what to do. Soon, Joseph and Mary were husband and wife. Together, they would raise God’s special Son!

“Journey to Bethlehem”

[Use Mary, Joseph, and donkey figures]

Many years before, God had promised that His special Son would be born in a town called Bethlehem. Soon after Mary became Joseph’s wife, he heard troubling news, “All Jewish men must return to their hometowns. Everyone must be counted.”

“I must travel to Bethlehem,” Joseph realized. “But I can’t leave Mary here in Nazareth. Soon she will give birth to God’s special Son.” —*I wonder what Mary thought when she heard the news?*

In Bible-times, long journeys were very difficult. People walked or rode animals. Joseph and Mary left Nazareth and traveled for many difficult days on the back of a donkey. “Lord give us strength!” Mary prayed. Every night they camped beside the road. “God, protect us!” prayed Joseph. —*I wonder what their journey was like?*

“Jesus is Born”

[Use stable, star, Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, and donkey]

Finally, Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem! After such a long, dusty ride, they were very tired and hungry. “Lord,” they prayed, “Please show us a place to stay.” They knew that Mary’s Baby would soon be born. Before long, they realized that all the guest rooms in Bethlehem were already full!

“You can use my stable,” one innkeeper offered. That night God’s Son, the Savior, was born. —*I wonder what it was like for Jesus to be born in a stable?*

The Savior of the world was wrapped in strips of soft cloth and laid down to sleep in a feeding box for animals called a manger. The tiny Baby fell asleep in the rough, wooden box. —*I wonder what Joseph and Mary saw, smelled, and thought?*





"The Shepherds"

[Use angel(s), shepherds, Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and sheep/cotton ball figures]

That same night on a nearby hillside, several shepherds were standing guard over their sleeping sheep. It was dark, quiet, and peaceful. —*I wonder what the shepherds were doing?*

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, "Don't be afraid! I have wonderful news for all people! Today a special Baby was born in Bethlehem. You will find Him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. God has sent the Savior!"

Instantly, the night was awakened with bright lights and loud voices. Many, many angels filled the sky! They sang praises, "Glory to God in the highest heaven; and peace on earth to those He favors." Their singing amazed the shepherds. —*I wonder what an angelic choir sounds like?*

When the angels disappeared, the hillside became quiet again. "Hurry!" the shepherds shouted. "Let's go to Bethlehem and worship this Baby!"

The shepherds soon found Mary and Joseph in the stable. When their eyes gazed upon the special Baby, the shepherds bowed down with deep respect. They described to Joseph and Mary what the angels had said and done on the Bethlehem hillside.

After the shepherds left the stable, they could hardly contain their joy! They spread the news about the Savior to everyone. All the people who heard were amazed. —*I wonder, what do you think about the Savior born that night in that stable?*

