

## Awakenings Units:

Why do we Celebrate Christmas? Level 1  
The First Christmas Level 2  
Christmas the Meaning of Joy and Peace Level 3

# THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Luke 2:5-20

### Prepare to hear the Word:

- Only Luke and Matthew's Gospels tell the story of Jesus' birth.
- Find Bethlehem and Nazareth on a map of Israel.
- Jesus' birth was first announced to Shepherds.
- Angels are messengers of God.

### You will need:

- Sand coloured underlay
- Felt road
- Nativity set with separate crib and Jesus figure.

*When children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story, place the gold box/bag, containing the materials you will need, carefully beside you.*

*Place the underlay in the middle of the space. Place the road on top of the underlay. Place Mary, Joseph and donkey on the road at the far end away from you.*

**When the time came for Jesus to be born, Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem.**

*Slowly move Mary, Joseph and donkey halfway down the road. Place your hand at the opposite end of the road to Mary and Joseph.*

**Bethlehem was a long way from their home.**

*Continue to slowly move Mary, Joseph and donkey down the road to Bethlehem.*

**When they arrived the town was very crowded.**

*Place stable to the side of the road. Move Mary, Joseph and donkey from the road to the stable.*

**The only place Mary and Joseph could find to stay was a stable.**

*Place Jesus in the manger between Mary and Joseph.*

**In this cold and lonely place Jesus was born.**

*Place shepherds and sheep on the underlay away from the road and the stable.*

**Nearby some very poor shepherds were looking after their sheep.**

*Place an angel near shepherds.*

**An angel of the Lord appeared to them and told them that Jesus had been born in a stable in Bethlehem.**

*Place more angels facing shepherds.*

**That night God's angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth."**

*Move angels to your side. Move shepherds to the stable.*

**The shepherds went to the stable to see Jesus. They saw Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus lying in the manger.**

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**I Wonder:**

- I wonder why God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus?
- I wonder how Mary felt about being the mother of Jesus?
- I wonder what would it be like to be born in a stable?
- I wonder why shepherds were the first people to know about Jesus' birth?

**The Birth of Jesus**

**Luke 2:5-20**

Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God.

They said: "Praise God in heaven!

Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God."

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

**Prepare to Hear the Word: Teachers**

- Luke's birth story consists of five parts; the birth itself, the announcement to the shepherds, the circumcision and naming, the purification and dedication in Jerusalem and the return to Nazareth and summary of the child's growth
- This is not an historical account there is no confirmation of a census at the time of Jesus' birth.
- Luke's primary aim is to place the birth in the city of David because Jesus' continuity with the house of David was important for Luke's Christology, his depiction of Jesus' identity.

*Harpers Bible Commentary 1988*