**The Christmas Nativity**

*Before telling the story, instruct the children to join in with actions when the following words are mentioned:*

**Actions:**

Angel: surprised faces/hand over mouth…. ‘oooooohhh!’

Baby: rocking arms

Bethlehem: hand over eyes, looking in the distance

Animals: baaaa, moooo, eee-aw

Sheep: baaaa

Stars: twinkling fingers

1,2,3…… counting: teacht the children to count in 3s (1,2,3……… 4,5,6………..7,8 and 9)

*While reading the story you can show the accompanying slides of the PowerPoint or they can be shown afterwards.*

PP1

A long time ago, in Nazareth, an angel appeared to a young woman called Mary. The **angel** spoke to her and said: “You have been chosen by God to do an important job. You are going to have **a baby**!!

Mary didn’t know what to think. She had never seen an **angel** before. And she didn’t understand. How could she have **a baby**. She wan’t even married yet! She felt scared.

The **angel** smiled. “The **baby** will be a miracle child. He will be the Son of God. “

Then Mary felt a bit better. If it was God’s plan, God would look after her.

PP2

Mary was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter (what does a carpenter do?). When Joseph heard the news about the **baby** he was shocked, but he agreed to marry Mary and help her as it was part of God’s plan. So Mary and Joseph looked forward to the birth of this special **baby.**

PP3

Mary counted the months: **1,2,3…..4,5,6,…….7,8 and 9**. It was almost time for her **baby** to be born. Mary counted the blankets, Mary counted the towels….. everything was ready for the birth of God’s own special Son.

But someone else was counting too. It’s the emperor! Sighed Joseph, as he walked into the house. “He wants to count everyone in the country. Everyone! And we have to go back to my home town!”

“Your home town?” cried Mary. “But that means we have to go all the way to **Bethlehem!**”

It was a long and hard journey, from Nazareth all the way to **Bethlehem.** Mary and Joseph counted the miles…..**1,2,3…….4,5,6,……..7,8 and 9**………so many miles to go…….. until they finally arrived in **Bethlehem.**

PP4

But once they arrived safely in **Bethlehem**, they had another problem to face…..

There was not a single room in the town for them to sleep in. Poor Mary and Joseph went from one side of **Bethlehem** to the other side of **Bethlehem,** they knocked on all the doors: 1,2,3…..4,5,6……7,8 and 9…….. but all they heard were the words “sorry, there is no room”

And to make things worse, Mary realised that the **baby** was going to come very soon. What were they going to do?

PP5

Tired and hungry, Mary and Joseph knocked on the last door they could find. Yet again it was full……. But… “Wait a minute!” said the innkeeper who opened the door… “Why don’t you stay in my stable! My **animals** are there, but it’s warm and dry!”

PP6

And on that very night, God’s Son came into the world and Mary and Joseph called him Jesus, just like the **angel** had told them to. Mary wrapped her **baby** in strips of cloth and laid him on a bed of straw in a manger. (*What is a manger?)*

PP7

At the same time on a nearby hillside, some shepherds were looking after their **sheep.** Suddenly a bright light appeared and an **angel** stood before them! “I bring good news” said the **angel**. “Today in **Bethlehem,** a **baby** has been born who is the Son of God. And you will find him, a **baby** bundled up tight and lying in a manger”

And then suddenly, the **angel** wasn’t alone. A whole choir of **angels** joined him and they all started singing: “Glory to God in heaven, and peace to men on earth!” (invite children to repeat what the angels said).

And then…. The **angels** disappeared, leaving the shepherds alone. The shepherds leaped to their feet and went to **Bethlehem.**

PP8

There they found Mary and Joseph and **baby** Jesus in the manger, just as **the angel** had told them. The shepherds knelt before the manger to look at **baby** Jesus. And everyone was amazed!

PP9

Far away in the East, some wise men were studying **the stars**. “Come quickly!” shouted one of the men to the others. “There’s a new **star** in the sky!”. “That means a new king has been born!” replied the others. The wise men studied the word of God and knew it could only mean one thing – the King of the Jews who would save the world had been born!

PP10

And so the wise men began their journey. All the way to **Bethlehem**! The **star** guided them night after night…. Through deserted streets…. Over miles of dark desert…. Until they found Mary, Joseph and **baby** Jesus.

PP11

Mary and Joseph welcomed the unexpected visitors who had travelled so far to see God’s Son. The wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh with them. They were gifts fit for a King!

PP12

The birth of Jesus was a miracle, and soon everyone would know of it. But on that first night in **Bethlehem**, in a simple stable, the Son of God slept peacefully on a bed of straw, watched over by those who loved him.

It was the very fist Christmas day!