

## **CHRISTMAS 2015**

### **For children**

The crib replaces the advent wreath because Christmas has come and the time of preparation is over. Jesus was born in a place where animals were housed in winter and was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger. The manger was a feeding trough for animals. The reason why Jesus was born in a stable was because Mary and Joseph were turned away from the nearby guesthouse which was full of visitors on that particular night because lots of people were in Bethlehem for the census which Caesar Augustus had ordered.

But you don't find Joseph or Mary complaining when they saw the 'no vacancies' sign in the window of the inn. Are we ever sullen at times when we don't get everything we want? They were so thankful that Jesus was safe even if he had to make do with an outhouse to be born in. They say that God never closes one door but he opens another. The door of the inn may have been closed to Him but by His birth He opens the door of Heaven to all of us.

Strange as it may seem I think God wanted His Son Jesus to be born in a stable where there were no luxuries so he could identify with all those who haven't everything they want. Having lots of things, even presents, is not what makes us happy. The people in the stable love and care for each other. And when we are with people who love and care about us we are really happy too. The greatest present we can give each other is the love of our hearts. Look at the people in the crib tonight. Mary and Joseph love each other and both of them love Jesus. The shepherds too were really happy when the angels appeared to them in the middle of the night and told them to go to Bethlehem. A lot of people didn't like the shepherds because they lived like nomads. People would avoid them. But when the angels appeared to them they must have felt very privileged and indeed humbled at the same time. Even if some people

didn't like them they were special in God's eyes because they were the very first to hear of Jesus's birth from the angels who came all the way from heaven. The shepherds felt at home in the stable with Mary and Joseph and it didn't matter what kind of clothes they were wearing or how rough they looked. I'm sure there's a lesson there for all of us. Let us not judge people by the clothes they wear or the way they look. Everyone is equal and precious in God's eyes.

Christmas is about God's love for us and our love for God and one another. Exchanging gifts is one way of showing this. But the spirit of Christmas is meant to find a permanent home in our hearts. The fact that God the Son entered this world as a little vulnerable child should touch even the hardest of hearts and help us celebrate Christmas in a worthy fashion. A happy and peaceful Christmas to you all.