

The Christmas Story

4 simple readings telling the Christmas story

1: In the beginning

Our story begins a long time ago. In fact, a very long time ago, because our story begins at the beginning.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
He made the stars and the planets. He made the Sun and the Moon. He made the sea and the land. He made the plants and the animals. He made people, men and women.
And God said, "this is good, very good!"
God loved his world. He loved his people. He loved everything he had made.

But!

But his people turned away from him.
They thought they knew better than God. They thought they didn't need God and so things started to go wrong on the earth.
People started fighting. People started to be selfish. People started to be greedy and God was sad, very sad. He knew that he would have to do something about it.

But what? What could he do?

2: Mary and the angel.

Many years later a young girl was sitting at home. She lived in a town called Nazareth in a region called Galilee. Mary loved God. She prayed to him. She worshipped him. She longed for him to fulfil his promise and come to put the world right.

As she sat at home suddenly a bright light appeared shining all around the room. Mary was frightened and didn't know what to do. But then, out of the light, a voice spoke.
"Do not be afraid Mary. , I bring you greetings from God. God has seen you and the way you pray; he is very pleased with you. You will become pregnant and have a son. He will be called the Son of God and you must call him Jesus. He will be great and will be a great King on earth and in heaven."

Mary did not understand these words.

"How can this happen?" she asked.

"The Holy Spirit will touch you," the voice said, "and the power of God will surround you. That is why the baby will be called the Son of God."

Mary bowed her head.

"I am God's servant," she said, "let it be as you have said."

3: Jesus is born

In those days the Roman Emperor decided to count everyone in his empire. All the men and their wives, or the women they were going to marry, had to go to their family home to be counted. Mary was going to marry Joseph and Joseph was from Bethlehem. So early one morning they set out on the long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

It was nearly time for Mary's baby to be born and the journey on the donkey was very bumpy and uncomfortable. The longer the journey went on the more Mary wondered if her baby would be born by the side of the road.

Eventually they reached Bethlehem. Mary hoped for a room and a bed and rest. But as hard as Joseph tried, there was no room to be found. Everywhere was full.

One kind inn keeper offered them a stable and, although Joseph couldn't bear the thought of Mary sleeping with the animals, he had to say yes. There was nowhere else to go!

During the night the time came for the baby to be born. Mary gave birth to a son and she wrapped him up in cloths and laid him in the manger on the straw that the animals eat.

4: The shepherds

Just outside of Bethlehem there were shepherds in the fields keeping watch over their sheep. It was night; but suddenly a bright light shone all around them and an angel appeared in front of them. They were very frightened.

"Don't be afraid shepherds," the angel said, "I have come to bring you good news. Good news that will make you and all people on earth happy. For to you in David's town this night the saviour has been born who is called Christ the Lord. Go to Bethlehem and you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly hundreds of angels appeared all singing and praising God. They sang: "Glory to God in the heavens and peace to all people on earth."

When the angels had gone the shepherds ran to the town. They looked in every stable and in every manger until they found the baby. It was just as the angel had said., He was wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

The shepherds were overjoyed and went back to their sheep singing and praising God and telling everyone they met about the angels and the baby in the manger.

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