

## *The First Christmas*

*[Narrator reading the main text, we had the children trained to do the bits inbetween, and there could be "Boo! Hiss!" and "Hooray!" boards to hold up to encourage the congregation to join in]*

A while back, God made the world:- He made day and night; he made land and sea; he made plants and trees; he made animals to live on the land, in the water and in the sky; and he made man and woman to be his friends.

Then God had a sit-down and a cup of tea and chatted with his angels about how good it all looked.

*All applaud*

Now, God isn't constrained by the same time-frame as we are. He knows how the story is going to turn out from the very beginning. So he wasn't surprised when the people he created decided to try and live their lives however they wanted instead of following God's ways.

*Everybody "tut" and shake their heads*

But he was very sad about it as he knew that it would mean they would miss out on his best hopes and dreams for them. That's why God had already thought of a method to enable people to come back to living life his way. Yes, God had a cunning plan.

He would send his son Jesus to live on the earth as a man to tell people how to get back to being best friends with God, and to make it possible by being a sacrifice to pay the price for all the things they'd done wrong. Now, how should God get Jesus from heaven and on to the earth?

*"Beam me down, Scotty!"*

Hmm. Perhaps not.

*"Ping!"*

And suddenly the shop keeper appeared! Hmm. Perhaps not that way either. And so it came to pass that the Virgin Mary was with child through the Holy Spirit. An angel appeared to Joseph, Mary's husband, in a dream and told him to name the baby Jesus, which means "the Lord saves". Mary and Joseph

*"Hooray!"*

are the heroes in this story. They were very brave and did everything God asked them to.

Everybody knows the next bit. Caesar Augustus ordered a census, so Mary and Joseph

*“Hooray!”*

had to make their way to Bethlehem to register. The town was packed and there really was no room at the inn, so when Mary

*“Hooray!”*

gave birth they placed the baby Jesus in a manger.

*“Away in a manger, no crib for a bed...”*

Isn't that lovely? An angel appeared to some shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

*“Baa! Baa! Baa!”*

And said loudly “Your Saviour has been born! Go and see him lying in a manger!” He was then joined by a whole choir of angels singing:

*“Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”*

What a beautiful sound! And after this recitation the shepherds scurried off and found Mary and Joseph

*“Hooray!”*

and the baby in the manger, just as they had been told. On their way home they told lots of other people.

Some Wise Men from the east also came to visit baby Jesus. They travelled via Jerusalem and stopped in to ask King Herod

*“Boo! Hiss!”*

if he knew where the king of the Jews had been born. King Herod

*“Boo! Hiss!”*

is the bad guy in this story. He didn't know the answer to their question and had to ask the chief priests and teachers of the law, and so King Herod

*“Boo! Hiss!”*

and the wise men found out that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. A star guided the wise men the rest of the way and when they saw Jesus they presented him with gifts and worshipped him.

King Herod

*“Boo! Hiss!”*

had asked the wise men to come back and tell him exactly where Jesus could be found so that he could go and worship him too, but they were warned in a dream not to do this and went home a different way.

*“He’s behind you!”*

King Herod

*“Boo! Hiss!”*

didn’t really want to worship Jesus at all. He was jealous and frightened at the prospect of a rival king and wanted Jesus dead. So Mary and Joseph

*“Hooray!”*

took baby Jesus and went and hid in Egypt. Some years later, when it was safe, they moved back to Nazareth in Israel. And that’s the story of how God chose to send his son to earth in preparation for the job of reconciliation he was to carry out. And it was all made possible by the willing cooperation of Mary and Joseph

*“Hooray!”*

The End.