



REFERENCES: LUKE 2:1-7; *THE DESIRE OF AGES*, PP. 43, 44.

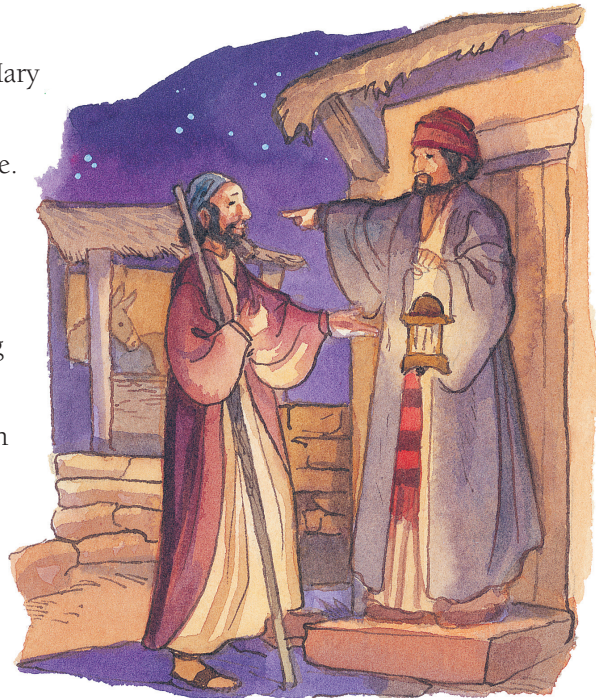
The First Christmas

Have you ever been on a long trip? Have you wished you could stop and rest? A long time ago Mary and Joseph traveled to a city called Bethlehem. That trip changed their lives.

Bethlehem at the time that Mary and Joseph went there was probably a noisy, busy place. People crowded into the narrow streets, and all of them were tired. They had been traveling for a long time to get to Bethlehem. The king had ordered a count, called a census, of everyone who lived in the country. Each man

had to take his family to the place where he had been born to have their names written in a record book. All these people had come to Bethlehem to be counted and registered.

Two of those people were Mary and Joseph. They lived in



Memory Verse

“Thanks be to God
for his . . . gift!”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15, NIV.

The Message

We worship God
when we thank
Him for sending
Jesus to earth.

Nazareth, and Nazareth was 70 miles away from Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary, just like all the other visitors to this busy little town, had come to Bethlehem to register because Joseph's family came from there. It had been a long trip, and they were tired. And Mary was about to have a baby.

Mary and Joseph tried to find a guest room where they could stay. But, there were a lot of other people looking for guest rooms too. Unfortunately, there were no guest rooms left in Bethlehem.

However, a place was found for them in the shelter where animals were kept. At least they would be warm and safe. And that's where Mary's baby was born.

Mary wrapped her newborn boy in warm cloths and held Him close. He was so precious and so beautiful! Quietly she laid Him in the manger. That was the only bed she had for Him.

But Mary's son was no ordinary baby. He was Jesus, the Prince of heaven! He had come

to earth as a baby to show us what God is really like. He was willing to leave heaven to save the whole world from sin.

Jesus' birth is the reason people celebrate Christmas. Christmas is about Christ, another name for Jesus. Every Christmas we remember that He chose to live here to show us what God is really like. Christmas is also a good time to share His love with everyone.



Do and Say

SABBATH

Each day this week read the lesson story and use the following to review the memory verse:

"Thanks Clap your hands five times.

be to God Point upward.

for His . . . gift!" Pretend to rock Baby Jesus in your arms.

2 Corinthians . . . Palms together; then open 9:15 as if opening a book.

SUNDAY

Help your child "read" the pictures and tell the lesson story. Sing "Away in a Manger" or another song about Baby Jesus during family worship. Thank God for sending Jesus to earth.

MONDAY

Tell your child that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem because the leaders of the country were taking a census. That means they were counting everyone. Help your child count the people in your family and name them. Thank Jesus for your family.

TUESDAY

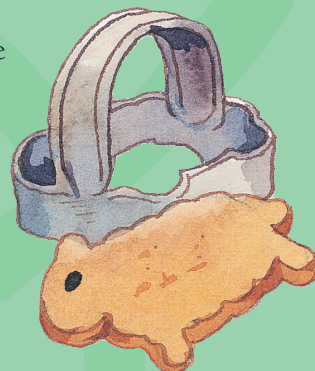
Visit a place where your child may see some common farm animals such as cows and



donkeys. Talk about caring for animals and thank God for them. (Alternative: Look at pictures.)

WEDNESDAY

Help your child make cookies in the shapes of things in the lesson story (animals, manger, stable, Mary and Joseph). Save some cookies for tomorrow. As you share a cookie, remember that we worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.



THURSDAY

Let your child invite a friend over or visit someone. Share some cookies and tell the story about Baby Jesus. Remember to worship God by thanking Him for sending Jesus to earth.

FRIDAY

Help your child look at the pictures in the lesson book and tell the story about Baby Jesus during family worship. Sing about Jesus' birth, then thank God for sending Him to earth.