



# ***On Christmas Night . . .***

## **A Baby was Born**

Over 2000 years ago, in a little town called Bethlehem, not far from Jerusalem in what is now called Israel, a baby was born to Mary and Joseph. God had sent an angel to ask Mary if she would have a baby which would be his son, and she had said “yes”. Joseph had also been visited by an angel to tell him that it was all right to marry Mary because the baby she was expecting was from God. Their home was Nazareth, many miles to the north, so what were they doing in Bethlehem?

## **Why Bethlehem? Why a stable?**

The Romans, who occupied the country, had decided that everybody must be registered in the town their family came from. Joseph’s family, which went right back to the famous King David, came from Bethlehem. He and Mary had walked from their home in Nazareth for several days to get to Bethlehem, and when they got there they discovered that the town was so busy that there were no rooms available anywhere. Eventually a kind innkeeper, who could see that Mary was very tired and that she was expecting a baby, let them sleep in a stable at the back of his inn, where his customers’ donkeys were kept.

That night the baby was born, and they laid him in the manger on the soft hay. They called him Jesus, which means “Saviour”.

## **Surprise Visitors**

Later that night they must have been surprised when shepherds arrived straight off the hills outside Bethlehem. Angels had told them of the birth of their Saviour and they had hurried to the stable, where they were thrilled to see the baby, and worshipped him.

Please step inside when the space is free and see Mary and Joseph and the baby, and the visiting shepherds. You can see the shepherd who was left to look after the sheep out in the Kirkyard, and coming in from the desert are some Wise Men, who are following a star to find a new King—it will be a while before they get to the stable.