



FAMILY TAKE AWAY



The Bethlehem box

Game

What I'd like

The first person says "What I'd like Father Christmas to bring is". The next person repeats the phrase adding to the list what they would like, the list of things to remember grows.



Craft

Equipment: card, scissors, glue, piece of ribbon, green and red paper.

Christmas hand wreath

Draw a large circle on card with a smaller circle inside.

Cut out the doughnut shape.

Draw round everyone's hand multiple times.

Cut out the green hands and glue them to the card doughnut.

Cut out small red circles and stick on as berries.

Fasten ribbon around the top of the wreath so that it can be hung up.



Story Time

Read the story on the back about that first Christmas.



Discussion

How do you feel when Christmas is coming?

What do you like most about Christmas?

What present would you have taken for baby Jesus?

Do you think of the true meaning of Christmas?

How does it feel to know that God sent his son to earth as a baby so that we could know him?



Puzzle

Can you find the following words from the story;

STARS

COW

SHEEP

MARY

JOSEPH

BABY

DONKEY

LOVES

BETHLEHEM

ANGEL

E T Y E Z Y A E K R G S F Y
L F Y M R E D L E I F L A M Y
R G M I K W T P B M U K L S D
M Q V N K R Z Y R S K H P T J
P E O G R U Y U W G H H V A J
J D H A N G E L O S G E A R S
W M J E L Y S F C T E Y E S X
Z T O O L D B G G I O E E P N
B O V O I H X A G W M V R J Y
Q E H X A D T Y B Q C E F A N
S K P B W D L E R D I A Q Q C
J X E X Z X F O B N Y J Q Z U
E G S E E K T O R A R T R U J
Z J O Y Q E A H R A V K J H I
D O J Y R A M P W M Z E Q M A



Prayer

Dear God we thank you that you sent your one and only son to earth as a baby, so that we could know him and how much you love us. This Christmas help us amidst the fun and good times, to remember it's true meaning and spend some time with you. Amen



Independent Methodist Churches
Christians in the Community

The Bethlehem box

“Sit on the floor, in a circle,” said Mum. And when the children did she put a box, wrapped in red and green, in the middle.

“This is your first Christmas present,” Dad explained. “It’s a bit like pass the parcel. I’ll play a Christmas carol, then you pass the box around until the music stops.”

The box was on Malachi’s lap when the music stopped. And when he opened it up, inside there were Christmas card cutouts of Mary and Joseph, a little Lego angel and a slightly smaller box.

“Gabriel was one of God’s angels,” said Mum. “He paid a surprise visit to a girl called Mary. He told her not to be scared, and that God had chosen her to be the mother of his son.”

“Mary was engaged to a carpenter called Joseph,” Dad continued. “So an angel visited him, too and told him all about

God’s plan for Mary. He said that Joseph should call the baby Jesus, a name that means ‘God saves’.”

Back on went the music. The children passed the smaller box around and, when it stopped, Leah had her hand on it.

“I hope it’s the baby,” she whispered. But when she tore it open, what she found was a brown plastic donkey, loads of numbers written on the inside of the lid, and another box.

“The numbers are for the census,” said Mum. “That’s when a government counts up all its people.”

“That’s what the Roman government did,” added Dad. “And even though Mary was expecting a baby, she still had to take a long trip with Joseph to Bethlehem, the town he was from, so that they could be counted.”

Another carol played, the box went round, and when it came to Malachi, again, little Jacob stamped his feet.

“Mine,” he grumbled.

Mum stroked his head. “Patience, honey.”

When Malachi opened that box, he found bits of straw, a wooden cow. And yet another box.

“When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem,” said Dad, “the only place available for them to stay was in the part of the house where the animals were kept.”

“So that’s where Jesus was born,” said Mum. “And Mary laid him in a manger - a feeding trough - filled with straw.”

On went the music. Round went the next box. And Dad turned it off as soon as the box got to Jacob.

Jacob tore the paper off as fast as he could and threw it aside. Then he dumped out a pile of confetti stars, yet another box and a little plush sheep. He grabbed it and hugged it tight, while Dad went on with the story.

“There were shepherds out in the fields that night,” said Dad, “just watching their sheep.”

Then Mum picked up the Lego angel again.

“But the angel surprised them, too,” she said. “He told them not to be afraid. He told them that their long-awaited saviour had been born. He told them they would find him in Bethlehem, in a manger.”

“So off they went,” Dad added. “And when they got to Bethlehem, what do you think they found?”

And he started the music again.

Round went the next box, and Leah could hardly sit still when the box ended up in her lap.

“A baby!” she shouted. “That’s what they found.”

And, sure enough, when she opened the box, a tiny little baby doll tumbled out. And she was so busy looking at the baby, that she did not see the photos glued inside the box’s lid.

But Malachi did.

“Look,” he said. “There are three other babies.”

“They’re our babies!” said Mum, pointing to each one in turn. “Malachi. Leah. And Jacob.”

“That’s why God sent his baby to Bethlehem,” said Dad. “To show our babies - and every other baby who was ever born - that he loves them and wants to be near them.”

Then Mum and Dad hugged each of their ‘babies’, put the music back on, and gave thanks for what God had given them in his Bethlehem box.



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