

# Welcome

Over two thousand years ago a new star appeared in the sky to show that a king had been born. Journey through the story of the first Christmas with those that saw the star, and understood it's importance, to find out more about this king Jesus and why we still celebrate his birth

## Gold

God shared the news that he was keeping his promise of a saviour with ordinary people like us. As you read and hear bits of the story take some time to be creative and wonder together about what the gifts the travellers brought tell us about who Jesus is.

## Frankincense

As you think about the experience of those who were part of the first Christmas, remember that Jesus was born to bring hope, peace, love and joy to the world. His story shows that he knows that life is not always easy or straightforward, and reminds us that we too can be part of his good news story .

## Myrrh

# How it works...

There are seven stations for you to visit.

At each one you will read the words from the Bible that tell the true story of the first Christmas.

There will also be a made up story that helps us to imagine what it must have been like to have been there.

Take some time to wonder how you might have felt if you had been present at the time, and how this resonates with our lives today.

In your 'gift' pack is all you need to complete the craft activity for each part of the story. You can take this home to remind you of your visit and why we celebrate this amazing story of the birth of Jesus every year

# Keeping safe



# A Star for a King

During the time of Herod, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him"

Matthew 2:1-2



We don't know how many people travelled to Bethlehem, or if indeed they were only men, but we know that people who were clever at understanding star patterns and ancient texts, saw a new star in the sky and knew that it meant that God's promise of a saviour had been kept.

They travelled many hundreds, possibly thousands, of miles, and some believe that they didn't arrive in Bethlehem until Jesus was a toddler.

They travelled a long way because they knew something important had happened, and they wanted to worship Jesus

## A King's city

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel'

Matthew 2:6



Prophecies are messages from God with promises about the future. The wise men knew this prophecy from the writings of the prophet Micah. When they saw the new star, they therefore travelled to Bethlehem to find Jesus. They went to Herod's palace first, to find the new king, but Jesus was going to be a different kind of king, and Herod knew nothing about him.

# God's message for Mary

God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a young woman called Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

"Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, Beautiful inside and out! God be with you." She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest'. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. There will be no end, ever, to his kingdom"

Luke 1:26-33



**Mary was just an ordinary girl and we think she was quite young when she was visited by the angel. Can you imagine how shocked and frightened she must have been?**

**But... she loved God and chose to take on this huge responsibility, knowing that He would help her through the difficult days ahead**

## God's message for the shepherds

There were shepherds camping in the neighbourhood, watching over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for the whole world: A Saviour has just been born in Bethlehem, a Saviour who is God and King. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

"Glory to God in the heavenly heights,  
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him."

Luke 2: 8-14



Very ordinary people were the first to hear the news that God had kept his promise and sent a saviour for the whole world. No surprise then that straight away the shepherds ran down into the city to find the baby Jesus.

# God born in a stable!

The shepherds hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about the child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them'

Luke 2:16-20



It was amazing: a bright new star appearing in the sky. Prophecies from thousands of years before coming true. Shepherds running around a city talking about angels. The Saviour of the world, born in an animal shelter to an ordinary family. And yet, there was more to come. No-one knew just how amazing this baby was going to be when he grew into a man

# Myrrh for a sacrifice

Mary pondered all these things and treasured them  
in her heart

Luke 2:19



From the moment Mary met the Angel Gabriel, her life was turned on its head. Not only had she had a baby, but everyone who met him had something to say about what his future held. When they took the baby Jesus to the temple, according to the Jewish customs, they met Simeon and Anna who knew straight away that this tiny infant was the Saviour of the world. When the wise men arrived from the East their gifts weren't normal presents for a baby, but instead represented who Jesus was and what he would become: Gold for a King, Frankincense for God, and Myrrh for a sacrifice. She had a lot to think about!

## A refugee king

When the visitors from the East had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Matthew 2:13-15



Having a baby is a scary time for any new parent, but running away from an angry king makes it even more so! When our Christmas is full of fun and food, it is easy to forget that the first Christmas was not cosy and cute, it really was a matter of life and death!

# Goodbye

Thank you for journeying with us through the story of the first Christmas. We hope you discovered why the star followers were prepared to travel so far to meet the new king

Gold

We pray for God's blessing on your Christmas and New Year. That you may know the peace, joy, love and hope that Jesus brings

Frankincense

We are aware that Christmas this year is not how many of us had hoped. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help

Myrrh