

The birth of Jesus Christ



Luke 2: 1-7 / Matthew 1: 18-25

The Emperor Augustus had ordered a census to be taken throughout his empire. Everyone had to go and register, each to his home town. So Joseph and Mary travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. There Jesus Christ was born. They laid him in a manger.

84

The children learn that Jesus Christ was born on earth
and that he is the Son of God.

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ary has returned home after having spent about three months with Elizabeth. Joseph has been very worried. He is happy to have her back. But when he notices that Mary is expecting a child, he wants to leave her and move away from Nazareth. But an angel appears to him in a dream and says: "Joseph, do not leave Mary, take her to be your wife! The child is from God, and you must call it Jesus." Joseph obeys. He now joyfully waits with Mary for this great miracle—the birth of the Saviour of the world!

1

At the time Christ was born, Augustus, the Roman emperor, ruled over many countries, including Israel, where Joseph and Mary lived. One day the emperor wanted to know exactly how many people in his empire should be paying taxes. So he sent out his messengers to proclaim to his subjects that he has ordered a census to be held, and that every citizen must therefore travel to his home town to register. This also applied to Mary and Joseph of course. They were living in Nazareth, but their home town was Bethlehem.

2

Joseph sighs and looks at Mary: "At a time like this, when your confinement is near, we have to go on such a long and strenuous journey!" But they must obey the emperor's command. Soon they are on their way. For days their journey takes them through hilly countryside. The roads are dusty. Ma-

ry and Joseph are very tired.

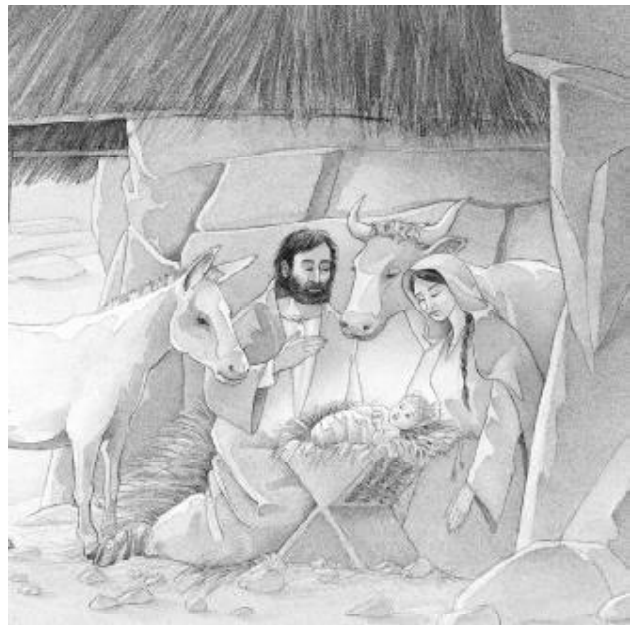
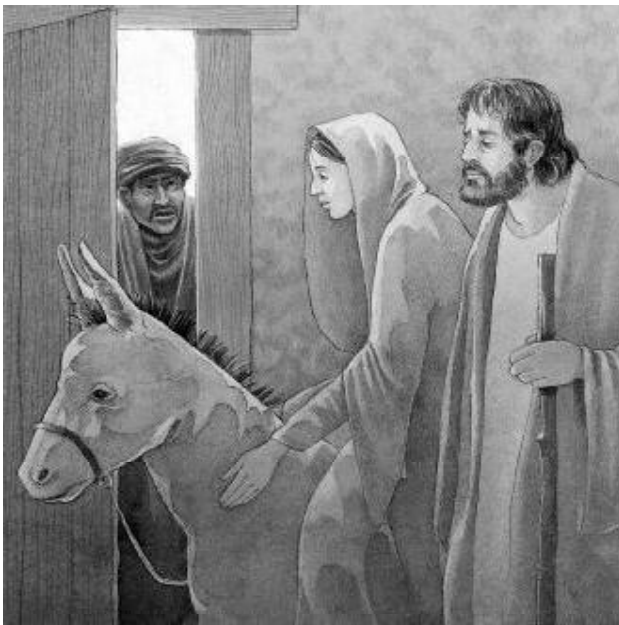
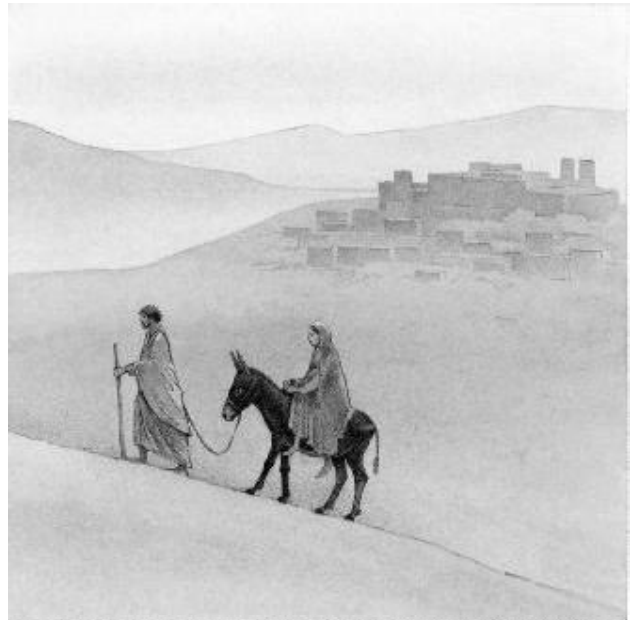
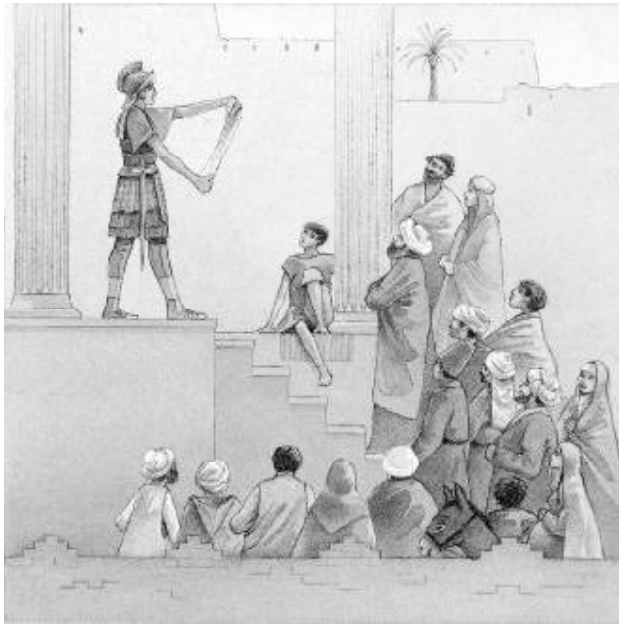
3

How relieved they are to see the gates of Bethlehem after their long journey! "Now we can rest and recover!" The streets of Bethlehem are very busy as many people had to come to the city to register. Mary and Joseph look for an inn where they can spend the night, but nothing is available for the exhausted travellers.

They find a quiet place at last. It is already growing dark. They sit down and eat some bread. They pray to God and thank him for the shelter he has provided. It has now become quiet in Bethlehem and the night-sky is ablaze with stars.

4

In this night the great miracle happens: The promised Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer, is born! No one sees this except God, Mary and Joseph. The parents are overjoyed even though the only thing they can give their child, is their love! They have nothing, nothing at all, not even a cradle! Mary wraps the child in some rags. Joseph fills the manger with straw and hay. Then they gently lay the child into it. Overjoyed, Mary and Joseph gaze at their child, the Saviour of the world.



1-4 We tell the children the Christmas story depicted in the four pictures. The children study the pictures carefully and describe them. Using the pictures as visual aid, they can be asked to retell the story. The (picture) story can also be enacted by the children.