

NATIVITY PLAYS

We tend to think that Christmas is a time for children. That's why we get them to do Nativity Plays. But do they learn the story? Here's one child's testimony:

Christmas is a time for children because the baby Jesus was a child. So were his mum and dad. Mary was 10 when she had her baby, because that is how old Sheryl Foster is, and Joseph was 11 like Ravinder Singh.

Joseph was not the real daddy of Jesus. The real daddy was Mr Montgomery, out school caretaker, who is also Santa Claus.

Mary was pregnant, but stayed very thin, unlike my mum when she was having baby Sandra. Mary always wore a blue nightie, and Joseph wore a dressing gown like Ravinder Singh's dad.

Mary and Joseph had to travel from the back of the school hall to Bethlehem on a donkey called Gerry, after Mr. Montgomery the caretaker.

Caesar Augustus wanted the whole world to be taxed. That is why everybody went to Bethlehem and it was so crowded. People had even come from Africa and Australia because there is no snow there.

Mary decided she was going to have the baby right away in the snow, because there was no room at the inn.

The innkeeper had a wife whose name was Veronica. She was also one of the ugly sisters who had big feet.

The innkeeper's name was Lo, because Joseph said to him, "Lo, my wife is great with child." Lo took Mary and Joseph to a dirty cowshed. It was filled with steam and smells from the pigs and cows and hens who had gathered together for the census.

Mary had her baby in front of everybody. When he arrived everybody realised that she was dressed in blue because she knew it was going to be a boy. She called him Jesus.

Some shepherds came to see the baby. They had been told by the angels to bring him a lamb. Joseph put it in the manger beside the baby Jesus.

The Shepherds got in just before the three wise men who wore Mrs Anderson's silk scarves after they promised not to wipe their noses on them.

The wise men had gifts for the baby – a big stone covered with gold paper, a perfume bottle full of cochineal and incense sticks. Joseph put these in the manger next to the lamb and the baby Jesus.

Then the shepherds and wise men knelt down in front of the baby Jesus and sang Jingle Bells.

(With Thanks to Veronica for this glimpse of childhood understanding)