

<p>Nine months before the first Christmas, God sent an angel to a young girl engaged to be married to a man called Joseph in a village called Nazareth</p>	<p>The young girl was called Mary, and the angel greeted her with the words “Good morning! You’re beautiful with God’s beauty, inside and out! God be with you.”</p>	<p>Mary was terrified, she had never seen anything like it before but the angel assured her “You have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: you will become pregnant and give birth to a son”</p>	<p>The angel told Mary all about this son “He will be called Jesus, and he will be great. He will be called the Son of God, and his kingdom will have no end”</p>
<p>Mary did not know how this was going to happen, but the angel told her that nothing is impossible for God. He also said that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a special baby in her old age</p>	<p>Mary visited Elizabeth, and as soon as they met, the baby in Elizabeth’s tummy leapt for joy. He was to become John the Baptist – a special messenger from God to prepare people for Jesus</p>	<p>Mary’s fiancé Joseph was disturbed by the news that Mary was going to have a baby, but an angel spoke to him in a dream and told him that the child would be God’s son</p>	<p>The Roman Emperor of the time, Caesar Augustus, decided to count how many people lived in each region. Everyone had to register to be counted at the city of their ancestors</p>
<p>As a descendant of the shepherd king David, Joseph had to travel to his ancestral hometown of Bethlehem. Even though Mary was heavily pregnant, they travelled together to Bethlehem</p>	<p>When they arrived in the busy city, there were so many other travellers that they couldn’t find anywhere to stay so ended up in an animal shelter</p>	<p>The time came for Mary to give birth. Jesus was born. They wrapped him in blankets and used the animal food trough as a makeshift crib</p>	<p>Outside the city of Bethlehem, there were shepherds who were watching over their sheep. Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them</p>
<p>The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event. Tonight, in Bethlehem, the saviour of the world has been born”</p>	<p>The angel told the shepherds to go into the city and find the baby wrapped in blanket and lying in a manger</p>	<p>Suddenly the sky was full of angels singing God’s praises: “Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth”</p>	<p>The shepherds ran down to the city and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. They were overjoyed, and told everyone they met what the angel had said about this child</p>
<p>The night Jesus was born a special star appeared in the sky. Astrologers from the East saw the star and knew that it was a sign that the Saviour of the world has been born</p>	<p>They travelled many hundreds of miles, keen to worship the new king. They arrived at Herod’s palace in Jerusalem expecting to find the new king there. But Herod knew nothing about Jesus.</p>	<p>Herod pretended he wanted to worship Jesus just like the star followers, and told them to return to him with information about where this new king was</p>	<p>The travellers followed the star to Bethlehem and found the child Jesus in the arms of his mother Mary. They were overjoyed and knelt down to worship him</p>
<p>They gave gifts that showed who Jesus was: Gold for a King, Frankincense for a God, and Myrrh for a sacrifice</p>	<p>In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they travelled back to their own countries by another route</p>	<p>Joseph too had a dream in which an angel said “Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Herod is on the hunt for this child and wants to kill him</p>	<p>So Jesus and his family became refugees until Herod died and they were able to return to the village of Nazareth</p>