



One day about 2,000 years ago an angel named Gabriel appeared to a young Jewish woman named Mary. Gabriel told Mary she would have a son, Jesus, who would be the Son of God! Mary was confused and worried about this sudden news, but she had faith in God and said, "I am the Lord's servant; let it be as you say."

Mary and her husband-to-be, Joseph, lived in a town called Nazareth. But they had to travel to the city of Bethlehem to register for a census ordered by the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus. When Joseph and Mary got to Bethlehem, there was no place for them to stay because the inn was already full. They ended up spending the night in a stable, a place where animals were kept.

That night, Jesus was born. There was no crib, so they laid Jesus in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. Some shepherds were in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks of sheep. An angel appeared to them and gave them the good news that a Saviour, the Messiah, had been born. The angel told the shepherds they could find Jesus lying in a manger. Suddenly a whole group of angels appeared saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

The shepherds hurried into Bethlehem and found Jesus in the manger, just as the angel had told them. After they had seen Jesus, they spread the news, and everyone who heard was in awe.

Adapted from Luke 2:1-20



Lord,

As we celebrate another Christmas
 Help us to live each moment gratefully
 May we have the faith to trust in the gifts
 you have given us

May we have the hope that overcomes
 the dark thoughts that sometimes cloud our
 vision

May we have the love that makes our world a
 better place.

We make this prayer through Jesus our brother,
 born for us again in Bethlehem.

Amen



a
 christmas
 prayer



God could not have made himself bigger to impress us, so he made himself smaller to attract us.

Prayer for Christmas

Dear God, we know that you love every single one of us just like our parents love us. During this Christmas season let us take time to think about you and about our families. We pray for our parents and remember how they keep us safe in our loving homes. We pray for those who are not as lucky as us – those who live in extreme poverty.

During this Christmas season we hope that they can live a happy and healthy life and have hope for the future. Fill us with joy at the coming of your Son Jesus, and help us to spread this joy and your love by caring for all our brothers and sisters around the world.
Amen



Reflection

Wrapped in linen strips, his first bed was a straw-filled manger, the feeding trough of the animals. God wrapped in swaddling clothes? God lying in a manger?

No one would ever have suspected that God coming to Earth would be so helpless. And that is precisely why so many fail to find him. Just imagine....if you had the whole world at your finger tips, if you were able to choose where and how you would have your first baby, what kind of place would you choose? A first rate hospital? Comfortable and warm surroundings?

Yet God who could have chosen anywhere chose the lowliest place on Earth. From the moment of his birth, Jesus identified with poverty and pain.

The stable – there lay all the hopes of 4,000 years of recorded history. Christmas is the time and place where God pulls back the curtain so that we can see his face.

God could not have made himself bigger to impress us, so he made himself smaller to attract us.

