

Nativity Craft Project

PART 2

Read the information and complete the tasks. Look up the words in bold and underlined (including the title!) in a dictionary.

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem

The world of Mary and Joseph was a difficult and dangerous place. The week before Jesus, their baby son was born; they had to travel to Bethlehem because of the Emperor's decree to register in your birthplace. To refuse to do so, because of Mary's condition, might have resulted in a fine, jail or a physical punishment such as stoning. Bethlehem was where Joseph had been born and so he and Mary his fiancée had to make the 90 mile journey south, along the flatlands of the Jordan River, then west over the hills surrounding Jerusalem, and on into Bethlehem.

It would have been a gruelling trip. In those days the average distance travelled per day would have been about 20 miles but because of Mary's condition (the birth of her baby was close) and the fact that the road was poor, it was not a simple journey, and so they would probably only have covered about 10 miles a day.

Furthermore, part of the journey took them through the Judean desert where, during the winter, temperatures can reach 30 degrees or more during the day and it often pours with rain. At night, it would have been freezing: The journey would have been nasty and miserable.

To protect themselves during this inclement weather, Mary and Joseph would probably have worn heavy woollen cloaks, constructed to shed rain and snow. Under their cloaks, they would have worn long robes, belted at the waist, tube-like socks and enclosed shoes to protect their feet.

However, the unpaved, hilly roads and harsh weather were not the only hazards Joseph and Mary would have faced on their journey south. One of the most terrifying dangers in ancient Palestine was the heavily forested valley of the Jordan River where lions and bears lived in the woods, and travellers had to fend off wild boars, bandits, and robbers.

For food Mary and Joseph carried water in animal -skin bottles and a lot of bread. . . . Breakfast would be dried bread, lunch would be oil with bread, and herbs with oil and bread in the evening." So, you can imagine how weary and hungry they would have been on their arrival in Bethlehem.

Normally, Mary and Joseph might have expected to stay in a bed and breakfast or a hotel, even a distant relative. However, when they arrived, late at night, it was so busy the only **lodging** they could find was at a **primitive** inn. The innkeeper, felt sorry for Mary and, being keen to help, offered the only space he had left which was a simple stable where the other travellers had put their donkeys to rest overnight and he kept a few sheep and chickens.

Task 2

Use Nativity figures of Mary and Joseph you might already have at home or colour and cut out the templates below .To bring the scene to life add some fairy lights.

To help your paper figures to stand up, try attaching a bent pipe cleaner or gluing the templates to a cut down loo roll Or stand on a blob of blu tac



