



Finally look into your crib and see the **gifts** which the kings have brought, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. There is gold, the love which we must bring to Jesus. There is frankincense, our faith in him. And there is myrrh, our obedience to what he teaches.

This Christmas Crib is a wonderful picture of all the feelings and thoughts that must be present in our hearts and minds if Jesus is to be truly born in our lives and begin the amazing transformation that only he can achieve.

May you and your family and friends be blessed with a truly loving and peaceful Christmas.



Find the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the visit of the shepherds in Luke's Gospel chapter 2 and read about the visit of the kings, or wise men, in Matthew's Gospel chapter 2.



## The Christmas Crib

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

I saiah 9:6



A church I know has a Christmas Crib displayed in its porch at Christmas. This attracts a lot of interest from passers-by, especially small children who are able to peer into the lighted crib and see all the animals and figures that make up the scene. It is a traditional crib with large figures (up to 30 cm high) and includes both shepherds and kings as well as Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus surrounded by various animals. I know that it is very unlikely that the shepherds would have been there with the kings, but it doesn't really matter .

This leaflet gives the opportunity to look at this well known Christmas scene from a new and different perspective by seeing it as a wonderful spiritual image of the way Jesus Christ can be born into our lives today rather than just as a picture of an event 2000 years ago. So relax and look at the pictures shown here and think about what they mean for you.



First think about the **manger** in the centre of the crib. It is a place for animals to feed, perhaps horses but more likely for an ox or ass. The animals seek feed in the manger just as we need to seek spiritual nourishment and to understand Jesus and what he teaches.

Now look around the crib and see the **sheep** gathered together with their shepherds. The sheep are looked after by the shepherds and led to the manger. The sheep are the simple acts of goodness in our lives which must be present for Jesus to come alive within us.



Now concentrate on the **shepherds**. The shepherds have seen the angels and have come to find Jesus. They have brought with them all their sheep which they lovingly protect and care for even if they go astray. The shepherds are our desire to cherish goodness in our lives and direct it to serve others.

And now picture the **kings**, who have been led by a bright shining star to come to Bethlehem. They have travelled a long way to find Jesus because they know how important his birth is and they want to present their gifts to him. We can be kings when we allow the light of the Bible to guide us and show us how Jesus can be truly born in our lives.