This day in Bethlehem, the city of David, a child called Jesus was born, and he is the one whose birth has been waited for - Christ the Lord. And this is what will prove it to you. Go to the stable and you will find the baby wrapped warmly in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

As the angel finished speaking, the night sky was filled with the sight and sound of many angels who praised God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth." The shepherds were very excited by what they had heard and seen and decided to go into Bethlehem to see if what the angels had told them was true.

So they hurried off, and there, as the angel had told them they would, they found Mary and Joseph, with the newly born baby lying in the manger. The shepherds told them what had happened and everyone was amazed at their story. Mary listened to what they said, remembered their words and thought about them often.

Then the shepherds returned to the flocks of sheep which they had left on the hillside, praising and thanking God for all that they had seen.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

The Travelling Crib Scripture

The Birth of Jesus

Notes for adults are in this purple text.

Someone can start the prayer time by reading out loud:

Let's think about this time of Advent when we wait for the arrival of Jesus. We wait with Christian people all over the world. These weeks of Advent give us time to prepare and think about Jesus and all that he will bring to the world.

Lay out a cloth on which to set the figures and candle. Light the candle and say:

God of life and love, we gather together, waiting for all the joys of this holy season. This light reminds us of your life and light that comes to us in Jesus.

Place figure of Mary on the cloth and say:

This is Mary who lived in a village called Nazareth 2000 years ago. Because of her great goodness God chose her to be the Mother of Jesus. Mary trusted God and said yes.

Place the figure of Joseph on the cloth and say:

This is Joseph, the husband of Mary. He was a carpenter and engaged to be married to Mary when God asked him to be the father of Jesus on earth. Joseph trusted God and said yes.

Place the manger and figure of Jesus on the cloth and say:

This is Jesus, Son of God, who came to earth to bring peace, love and joy to all people. He was born in a simple place. A manger was His bed.

Reading about the birth of Jesus

(based on Luke 2:1-7)

The Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, (whose lands included the country of Israel) gave the order that a census was to be taken over the whole of the Roman Empire. Everyone was to return to the town that his or her family had come from, so that their names could be registered and they could be counted. This meant that Joseph and Mary had to leave their village of Nazareth in Galilee and travel to Bethlehem in Judea. By this time Mary was expecting her baby and although the child was due to be born quite soon, they had to leave their home and make the uncomfortable journey to Bethlehem.

They arrived in Bethlehem to find that it was full of other travellers like themselves, and there was no room for them to stay in any of the inns. Luckily they were able to find a stable in which they could shelter. Soon afterwards the time came for the baby to be born, and so Mary wrapped him round with strips of cloth and laid him in the manger (which was the box of hay for the animals to eat).

That same night, shortly after Jesus was born, some shepherds were looking after their sheep on the nearby hillside, when a bright light lit up the dark sky and an angel, a messenger from God, appeared. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid. God has sent me with good news for you, which will bring great joy to everyone who hears it.