

The Miraculously Ordinary Story of a Baby (RR)

Materials: Paper grocery bag (one side should be plain)
Infant
Swaddling
Straw
Manger
A pen

What story might there be in here? It is a shopping bag. This is the type of bag that groceries come in. Bags like this might be used for lunches, big lunches, or maybe as wrapping paper. Sometimes I'll bundle newspapers to be recycled in a bag like this. Maybe there is some food or some news in this bag today.

Take out the manipulatives and the pen (all of which should be in a zip-lock freezer bag). Take note of the plastic bag and set it aside slightly behind you. Look around in the bag for an underlay.

Normally we have a piece of felt to lie out and then we tell our story on that. There doesn't seem to be any in here. I guess we could use the bag.

Lay the bag out as flat as possible.

Today's story is an everyday sort of story. It is the story of a baby being born. It is a happy story in that way.

Cradle the infant in the palm of your hand.

The baby was so small and fragile. His parents thought he was beautiful and wonderful. But like many people the baby's parents had very little money.

Bring out the manger then the straw then the swaddling. Set them out separately.

The parents didn't have fancy clothes, so to keep the baby warm they wrapped him in old blankets and shirts that they tore into strips.

Wrap the child in the swaddling cloth.

They didn't have a special bed for the baby, but they had a box that they used to feed the animals. They filled it with hay so it would be soft, and they laid the baby in it. That was the best they could do.

As you speak, carefully put the straw in the manger and lay the swaddled infant in the manger.

When it came time to give the baby a name they gave him the name Jesus. This is the story of the Jesus you have heard about before, the one who was kind to people that other people ignored, the one who healed sick people, the one who told amazing stories, and the one who taught people how to live a good life. This is that same Jesus as a little baby.

Now this baby would grow up to be a man who was so close to God that many have said that Jesus was God's child. The old, old story of Jesus being born says that because he was that close to God, angels must have come to see him be born. Angels must have announced his coming. I wonder what an angel might be? I don't know, but I've been seeing a lot of angels that look like this.

Take the pen and begin to draw an angel on the paper bag to the right of the manger.

When this baby named Jesus grew up he would be so wise that when he was born the wisest people from all over must have come to see him. People who read books and knew about the stars and the skies, people who advised kings and queens, those people must have been there when Jesus was born.

Below the manger begin to draw an open book.

When Jesus grew up he cared for the sick and the weak, he was a friend to the friendless, he lead people in a better way of living. He was a lot like a shepherd who protects her sheep from wolves and lions, who guides them over treacherous mountains to places with fresh water to drink. Shepherds must have been there when Jesus came into the world.

To the left of the manger draw a sheep and a shepherd's crook.

Even though Jesus lived thousands of years ago people still talk about him. People all over the world look to his ideas to show them how to be kind. For many his life is like a bright, bright light that shows them how to live. The old, old story of Jesus says that, at his birth, a bright star must have shined in the sky above the place where he slept.

Above the manger draw a star.

This beautiful story is so very, very old that no one can say for sure what parts are true and what parts were made up to make the story special. It doesn't matter if a story is ALL true if we look to find what PARTS of it are true. Unitarian Universalists find things that are true in this story. Maybe what's true is that when a baby is born, that baby is a special gift! Maybe what's true is that babies don't need fancy clothes and lots of money to grow up good and kind and important. Maybe what's true is that we are like shepherds or we are like stars. This time of year is a good time to tell old, old stories and wonder about what they can teach us that is true. This time of year is a good time to wonder about things that are ordinary until we can find some magic inside them.

Wondering Questions:

I wonder what part of the story you liked the best?

I wonder what part is most important?

I wonder where you are in the story?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?