



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE JUST LOVE STORY BIBLE

Please enjoy this excerpt from *The Just Love Story Bible* re-telling the story of Jesus' birth. Read aloud to your children and share the story of Christmas!

For thousands of years, people have told stories, sung songs, asked hard questions, and shared experiences to learn about God and how to live as God's people. In this bold and inspiring storybook Bible for children, Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis and Rev. Dr. Shannon Daley-Harris join this long line of sacred storytellers and question-askers.

Through retellings of thoughtfully selected Bible stories, *The Just Love Story Bible* presents a way for children to hear how others have also had questions about God, and the answers they discovered; to have their own ideas and ponder their own experiences; and to keep on wondering.



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A SURPRISING BABY

MATTHEW 1:18–24; LUKE 2:1–20

Mary wasn't the only one surprised by her pregnancy. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. He was worried and upset about this news at first. Joseph thought he might not want to marry her anymore if she was pregnant with someone else's baby. But one night, Joseph had a dream in which an angel told him that Mary's baby was a gift from God. He learned that he had a big part to play in this love revolution. So, he decided to keep his promise and stay loyal to Mary.

When it was almost time for their baby to be born, Mary and Joseph had to go on a long journey. The emperor, Caesar Augustus, had told everyone to go back to their hometowns to be counted. He wanted to know how many people lived in the Roman Empire. Mary and Joseph needed to travel to the small town of Bethlehem.

At last, they arrived. But because so many people were traveling home to Bethlehem, there was no guest room available for them. And then the baby decided to come. What would they do? Mary was in labor and needed a place to have the baby!





Thankfully, there was space in a place where a household kept their animals.

Jesus was born, and his mother wrapped him in bands of cloth to keep him warm. She laid him in a manger, a feeding trough for the animals, so he could sleep.

These were tough beginnings for a little baby. Very few people understood his mom's unexpected pregnancy. Jesus was born away from home, while his parents were traveling. Still, several miraculous things happened. A bright star seemed to rest right over the spot where Jesus lay. It was so bright, some people from a far-away land who studied the stars noticed it. These astronomers—also called magi—would soon begin a journey to come and meet the baby they believed to be a king. That was a miracle.





The night Jesus was born, there were shepherds out in the fields taking care of their sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared, startling them. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy tonight. In the city of David—Bethlehem—a baby was born who is the Messiah you have been waiting for!”

And then a whole chorus of angels sang, “Glory to God and peace to humanity!” All these angels were another miracle.





The shepherds left the fields to go and find the child. The angels helped them get there. And everything was just as the angels had said. The shepherds ran to tell everyone they knew of this miraculous night.

And Mary? She was simply amazed at all the surprising miracles surrounding her baby. *My boy, a king? How blessed am I that this has happened to me!*

