



Time of Prayer when placing the figures in the Crib

Gather people around the empty crib. You might like to light a candle. You can miss out any figures you don't have.

Make the Sign of the Cross together:

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Begin with the reading from Luke's Gospel (or by telling the Christmas Story in your own words.)

Reader:

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was expecting a baby, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger - there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

TIME OF REFLECTION:

You may like to take some time to talk about the story: What did you enjoy about the story? What was the best bit? Who is your favourite character? Why do you think the Shepherds were afraid? Etc.

PLACING THE CHARACTERS, IN TURN, INTO THE CRIB:

You might like to share the characters out among everybody and ask them to hold their character up when it gets to their turn, before placing it into the Crib.

Animals: We place the animals in the crib. *(The animals are held up)*

Jesus was born into our world, a world created by God and filled with the creative spirit of God's loving generosity. We give thanks for the beauty of the world in which we live and pray we will always care for God's gift of Creation.

(Animals are placed in the crib.)

Mary: We place Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the crib. *(Mary is held up)*

As we think of Mary, we think of all women, our mothers, our daughters, our sisters and aunts and nieces, and grandmothers. We pray especially for those expecting a baby at this time.

(Mary is placed in the crib.)

Joseph: We place Joseph in the crib. *(Joseph is held up)*

We think of all the men in our lives...we remember our fathers, brothers, sons, our nephews and uncles and grandfathers. We thank God for the example of Joseph who had the courage of his love for Mary and Jesus.

(Joseph is placed in the crib.)

Shepherds: We place the Shepherds in the crib. *(The Shepherds are held up)*

The shepherds were looked down on in society, and yet they are the first to hear the good news. We remember all those on the edges of society and pray we will always try to include others as much as we can.

(Shepherds are placed in the crib.)

Angel: We place the Angel in the crib. *(The Angel is held up)*

The angels were the messengers of God. We pray for all those who help us to learn more about God and who share the message of God's love with others.

(Angel is placed in the crib.)

Jesus: Finally, we place Jesus in the crib *(Jesus is held up.)*

We remember all children. Each of us, each child begins life as a small helpless baby, totally dependent on others.

(Jesus is placed in the crib.)

Leader:

Let us take a moment to be quiet, to look at our crib and to bring ourselves and our lives here to the crib....

Prayer:

Loving God, as we stand before this crib, help us to make a place for your Son in our home and in our hearts. Help us to welcome him by being kind to one another and reaching out to those who need us. We thank you for the great gift of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

BLESSING OF THE CRIB:

Loving God,
You love the world so much
that you gave us your only Son.
We thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus,
who became one of us.
Bless all of us who have prepared this crib,
and let it be a reminder to us of your gift,
Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.
May it remind us of your presence with us and among us
in all the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows of our lives.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

You may wish to save putting the Kings into the Crib until the Feast of the Epiphany on 6th January>

Kings: We place the Kings in the crib. *(The Kings are held up)*

The Kings travelled a long way, following a Star, to meet Jesus. We pray for all those who are looking to find Jesus in their lives and those who need God to guide them and show them the way.

(Kings are placed in the crib.)