



# Contents



## Especially for Families

A Note to Families begins on page v. There is A Letter Home at the beginning of each unit. A Family Feature, at the end of each unit, explores ways to nurture faith at home.



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# God Sent His Son as Our Savior

*God loved the world very much.  
He gave his only Son.*

adapted from John 3:16



# A Letter Home

Dear Parents and Family,

**In Unit 2 your first grader** learns about God's great gift to us. He or she is presented with lessons on the goodness and mercy of God, who sent his Son to be our Savior. You can help your child take this message to heart by reviewing the chapters together and praying as a family.

In Chapter 9 the children are taught about Adam and Eve and God's desire that they live with him forever. They learn about the effects of sin and how God showed mercy by promising a Redeemer. The Redeemer is Jesus, the Son of God, who wins back for the human family a share in God's life here on earth and the possibility of eternal happiness in heaven.

Chapters 10 and 11 show how God kept his promise to send a Savior and prepare a special people to be his own. God chose Mary and Joseph to prepare for Jesus' coming. With Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, God became human like us (in all things except sin) and dwelled among us. These lessons prepare the children for a meaningful celebration of the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Talking with your child about these lessons can add wonder to your own experience of Advent and Christmas, too.

In the last chapter of Unit 2, the children are led to share God's love with everyone, especially with the members of their families. Please notice the times they do so and offer them encouraging words.

Chapters 9–11 each end with a review and a Building Family Faith handout, which your child will bring home. This handout gives you a quick review of what your child learned and offers practical ways to reinforce the lesson so that the whole family may benefit. At the end of the unit, the children will bring home a Family Feature handout to help nurture the family's faith at home.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.





# God Promised a Savior

The Bible tells the story of Creation.

Long ago God created the whole world.

First he made the sky.

Then he made the water and the land.

God made creatures that fly, swim, and walk.

Finally, God made people.



God made people just like himself.

We read about the first people on earth in the Bible.

God made Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were happy.

They were God's friends.

They lived in the Garden of Eden.

God was good to Adam and Eve.

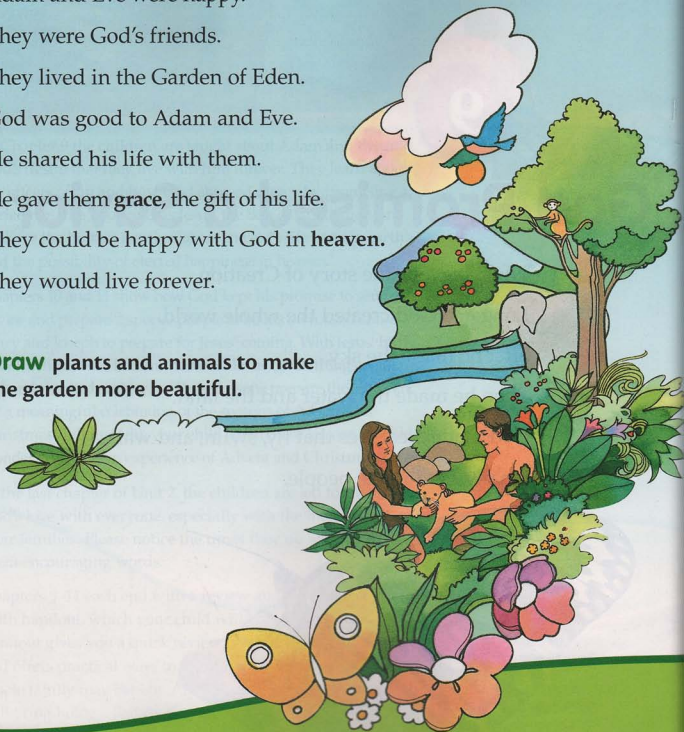
He shared his life with them.

He gave them **grace**, the gift of his life.

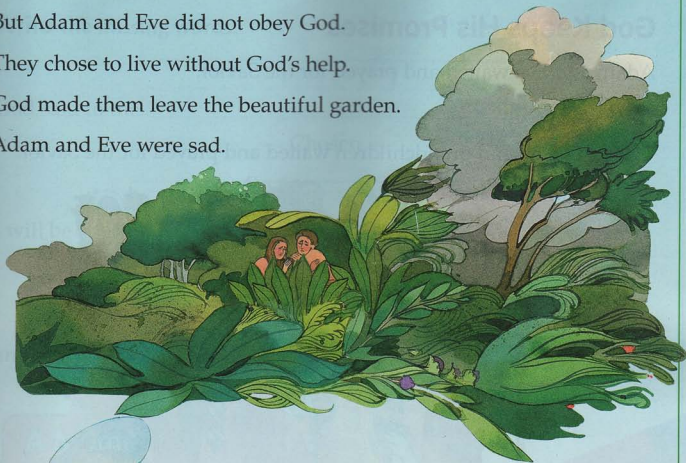
They could be happy with God in **heaven**.

They would live forever.

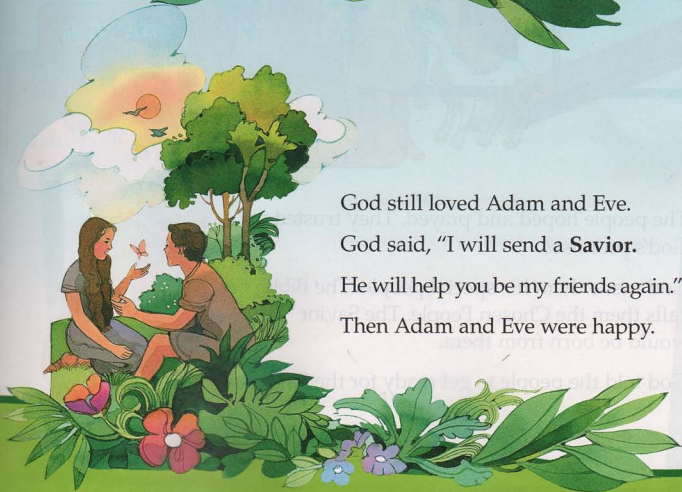
**Draw** plants and animals to make the garden more beautiful.



But Adam and Eve did not obey God.  
They chose to live without God's help.  
God made them leave the beautiful garden.  
Adam and Eve were sad.



God still loved Adam and Eve.  
God said, "I will send a **Savior**.  
He will help you be my friends again."  
Then Adam and Eve were happy.





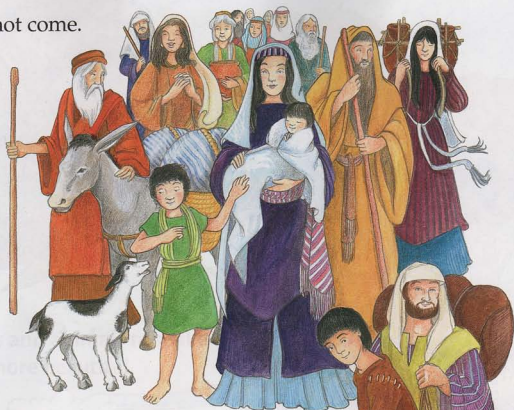
## God Keeps His Promises

Adam and Eve waited and prayed for the Savior.

He did not come.

Their children and grandchildren waited and prayed for the Savior.

He still did not come.



The people hoped and prayed. They trusted in God's promises.

God made them his special people. The Bible calls them the Chosen People. The Savior would be born from them.

God told the people to get ready for the Savior.





**Write** the missing words.

God said to the \_\_\_\_\_ people,

Chosen

I will be your \_\_\_\_\_,

God

and you will be my \_\_\_\_\_.

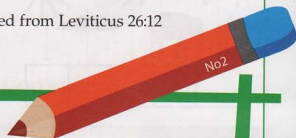
people

adapted from Leviticus 26:12

### A Moment with Jesus

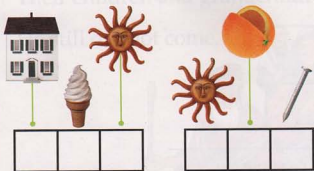
Talk to Jesus in the quiet of your heart.  
Thank him for being our Savior.

**Draw** yourself with Jesus.



Whom would God send?

**Write** the first letter of each picture in the box.



## We Remember

What promise did God make to Adam and Eve?

God promised to send a Savior.

## Words to Know

grace

heaven

Savior

## We Respond

Save us, Lord God, please  
save us.

adapted from Psalm 40:14

## Building Family Faith

**THE STORY OF Adam and Eve** shows us God's plan for his people. God created human beings to share his life and to live in peace and tranquility. Our disobedience disrupted God's plan. In order to restore it, God promised to send a redeemer. Jesus, his Son, came to earth to heal us from the effects of sin.

### REFLECT

"[H]e was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin."

1 John 3:5

### DISCUSS AS A FAMILY

- Why do we sometimes feel unhappy?
- What can we do to bring happiness to the other people in our family?

### PRAY

Come, Lord Jesus. Be here with us.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.

### DO

Make preparations for Advent, a time of waiting for the coming of the Savior. Make an Advent wreath and locate Advent prayers.





CHAPTER

10

# God Chose Mary and Joseph



Mary belonged to God's people.

The **angel** Gabriel came to her.

He said, "Hail Mary, full of grace.

God has chosen you to be the mother of the Savior.

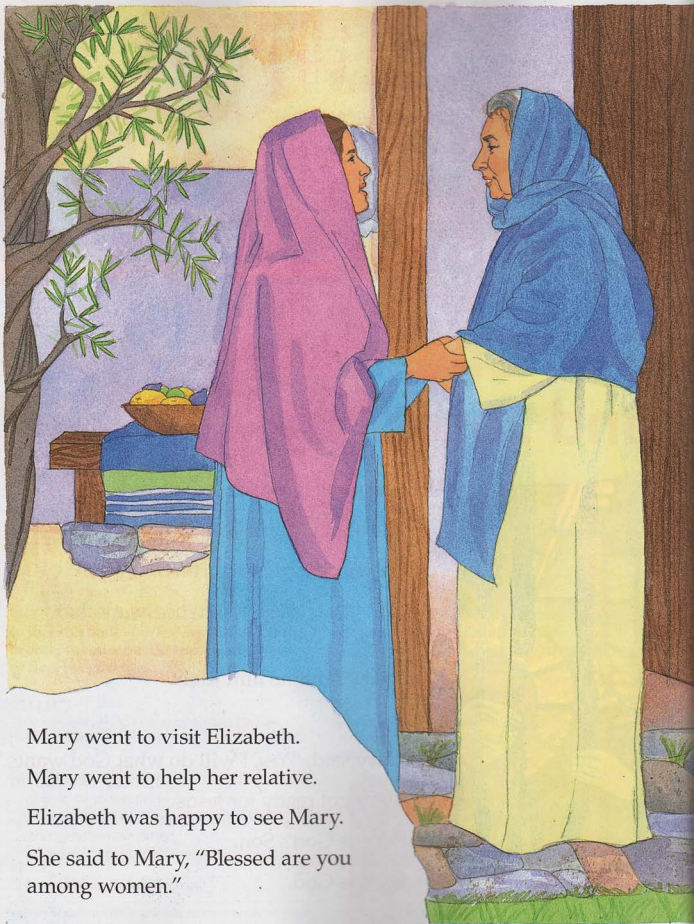
You will name him Jesus."

Mary said, "Yes, I will do what God wants."

Mary got ready for Jesus.

Jesus is God's Son.

Jesus is God.



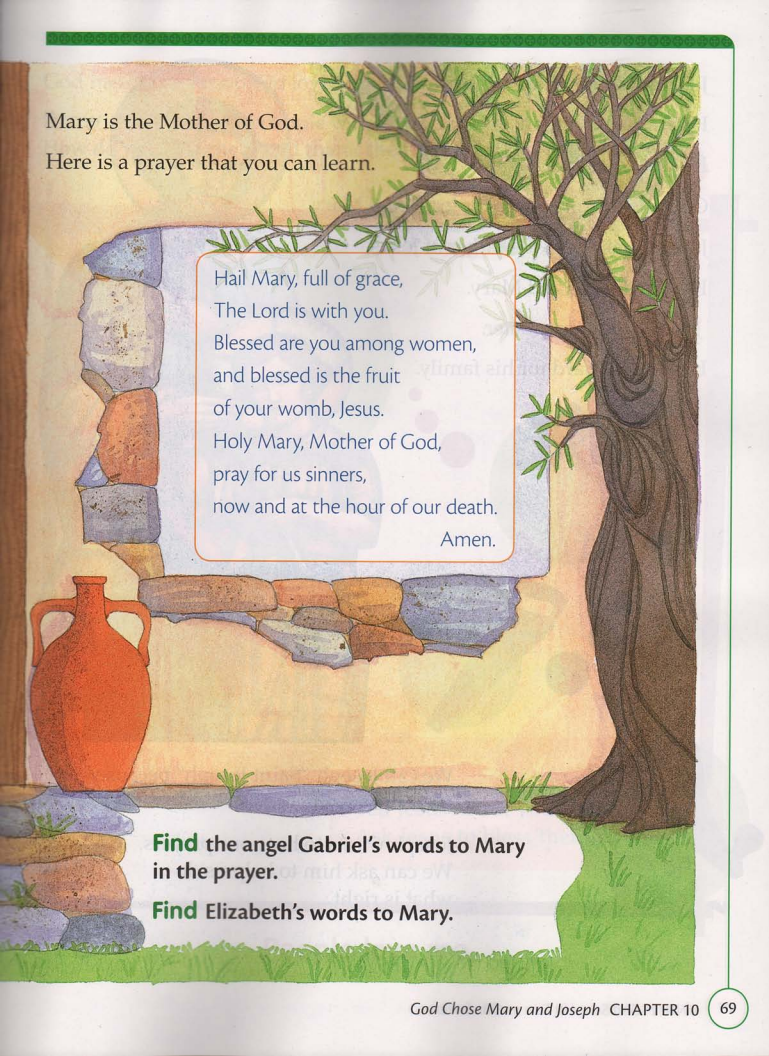
Mary went to visit Elizabeth.

Mary went to help her relative.

Elizabeth was happy to see Mary.

She said to Mary, "Blessed are you among women."





Mary is the Mother of God.

Here is a prayer that you can learn.

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit  
of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

**Find** the angel Gabriel's words to Mary  
in the prayer.

**Find** Elizabeth's words to Mary.

**Joseph** belonged to God's people.

He was a good man.

He did what was right.

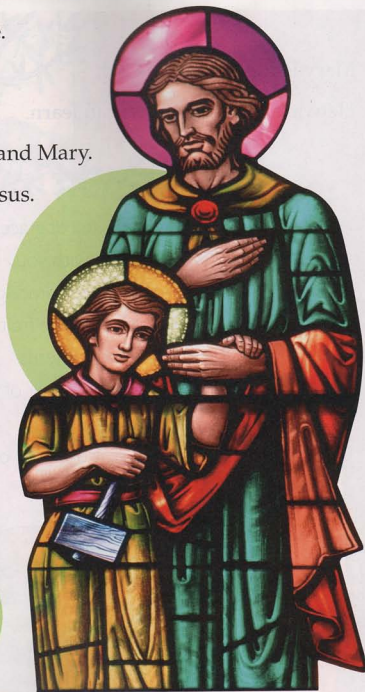
God chose him to care for Jesus and Mary.

Joseph was the foster father of Jesus.

He loved Jesus and Mary.

Joseph was a carpenter.

He worked hard for his family.



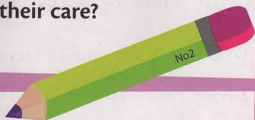
We call Joseph "Saint Joseph" because he is in heaven.

Joseph wants to hear our prayers.  
We can ask him to help us do what is right.

God has chosen people to love and care for us. Who loves you?

**Draw** a picture of the people who love you.

How do you love them and thank them for their care?



### A Moment with Jesus

Tell Jesus about your family.  
Ask Jesus to bless them.

**People love me.**

**Draw** a line to the correct answer.

1. Told Mary she would be Jesus' mother
2. Jesus' foster father
3. Mother of God
4. Mary's Son, the Savior



## We Remember

Who is the Mother of God?

Mary is the Mother of God.

## We Respond

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.

## Words to Know

angel    Joseph    Mary



## Building Family Faith

**GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE** to send a Savior. Jesus, God's Son, became man and lived among us. God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus, and he chose Joseph to be Jesus' foster father. Both Mary and Joseph agreed to be part of God's plan. We too can do the work God has for us when we open our hearts to Christ's coming.

### REFLECT

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.  
May it be done to me according to your word."

Luke 1:38

### DISCUSS AS A FAMILY

- Mary said yes to God. What opportunities do we have to say yes to God?
- What can we do as a family to celebrate Christ's coming at Christmas?

### PRAY

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless our family.

### DO

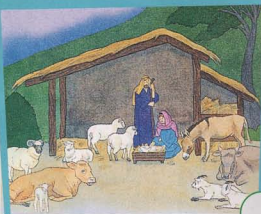
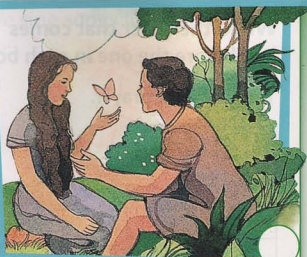
Help your child learn the Hail Mary.  
Pray it every day as a family.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.



## Unit 2 Review

**Number** the pictures in order.



### We Thank the Father for His Son Jesus

**Song** God, God, thank you God.  
Thank you for your Son.  
He gives us hope, he gives us life.  
Thank you for your Son.

**Reading** God loved the world very much.  
He gave his only Son.  
Everyone who believes in Jesus will not die.  
They will have eternal life.

adapted from John 3:16

**Response 1** We believe in you, Jesus.

#### Litany

We thank you for

- the archangel Gabriel.
- Mary the Mother of God.
- Mary's relative Elizabeth.
- Jesus' foster father Joseph.
- the angels who sang when Jesus was born.
- the shepherds who came to see Jesus.
- the Wise Men who followed a star.

Who else do you want to thank God for?



## We Celebrate

**Reading** Jesus is our Savior.

He came to save all people.

**Response 2** We thank you, God our Father.

**Song** Jesus loves me! This I know,

For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong;

They are weak, but he is strong.

**Our Father...**



# Family Feature

## Celebrating the Christmas Season

**The Christmas season** is a warm family time that is filled with powerful imagery and vivid customs that communicate the beauty and richness of our faith tradition. The season abounds in opportunities for parents to introduce key elements of faith to their children. Traditionally the Christmas season has focused on children, and rightly so. Christmas celebrates the arrival of the Christ Child, and it is a good time for your child to deepen his or her relationship with him.

Here are some ideas to help you make the most of the opportunities that the season gives us.

### Explain the Christian Meaning of Christmas Symbols

#### Gift Giving

The custom of gift giving may be commercialized and overemphasized in our culture, but the core of the custom of giving gifts to family and friends is a celebration of Christ—the gift God gave to us at Christmas. The first people to honor Christ this way were the Magi, who gave the newborn king gifts at the end of their long journey to find him. (Matthew 2:10–11) This background will add meaning to the gifts your child receives and gives.

#### The Date

We celebrate Christmas a few days after the shortest day and the longest night of the year, December 21. By December 25, we can notice that days are growing longer, and the nights are shorter. Christ our Light has come, bringing spiritual light to a world tinged by spiritual darkness.

#### Holly and Mistletoe

According to ancient traditions that predate Christianity, holly and mistletoe were considered sacred plants because they remained green during wintertime. Christians happily adopted them as decorations for this sacred winter feast.





# Family Feature

## The Christmas Tree

The Germans revered the evergreen tree as a sign of life because it remained green in the bitterest cold. We bring evergreen trees into our homes at Christmas as a sign of new life in Christ. The ornaments on the tree represent the beauty and abundance of the gifts Christ brings us.

## Santa Claus

The jolly, gift-giving Father Christmas is based on Saint Nicholas, a Catholic bishop in the fourth century who secretly gave gifts to poor people. His feast on December 6 is a special celebration in some European countries. Read about Saint Nicholas at [www.ChristOurLife.org](http://www.ChristOurLife.org).

## Christmas Stockings

The story is that Saint Nicholas left his gifts in stockings that some girls had hung by the fireplace to dry.

## Christmas Caroling

The tradition of Christmas caroling recalls the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds. When the angel of the Lord told the shepherds where to find the child, a choir of angels suddenly appeared and proclaimed in song, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14).

## Las Posadas

Posadas is a tradition that originated in Mexico. It is celebrated wherever Mexicans and their descendants live. At dusk, a procession of children, singing carols and carrying



candles, walk door to door in their neighborhood to reenact Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem. They are turned away at a succession of houses. Finally, they arrive at a home where the "innkeeper" welcomes them with the greeting, "Enter, holy pilgrims." The children gather around the Nativity scene in the house for prayer. Then everyone has a party, which features the breaking of the piñata.

The traditional posadas (which means "inn" or "shelter") happens every evening for nine days, beginning on December 16 and ending with the piñata party on Christmas Eve. However, it is often celebrated just on Christmas Eve or on one evening during the nine days before Christmas.



## Read the Christmas Story

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I

proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest  
and on earth peace to those on whom his  
favor rests."

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. Luke 2:1-18

# Family Feature

## Find the Story Behind Christmas Stories

Children hear, watch, and enjoy many Christmas stories this time of year. Help your child notice how the stories usually echo the themes and values of the Bible's account of how a great king, born in the humblest circumstances, exalts the lowly, confounds the powerful, and brings salvation.

*How the Grinch Stole Christmas* A nasty ogre terrorizes decent people, but a little child, Cindy Lou Who, sees good in him. Cindy Lou reaches out to the Grinch and he has a change of heart.

*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* When strong, powerful reindeer run into serious trouble, a lowly reindeer saves the day. This completely unexpected turn of events bring great joy to the world.



*A Charlie Brown Christmas* Protesting the commercialization of Christmas, Charlie Brown buys a pathetic-looking but real Christmas tree instead of a glittering artificial tree. He is mocked for it, but Charlie and his friends learn the real meaning of Christmas when Linus tells the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible.

*A Christmas Carol* The Christmas spirit of joy and new life penetrates the hard heart of Ebenezer Scrooge, transforming the bitter miser into a generous and kind man.



*The Little Drummer Boy* A young boy of humble origin

grows to distrust and hate people after his family is killed and he is betrayed by two showmen. His life begins to change when he meets three kings and follows them as they follow the Star of Bethlehem. Finally, when the boy encounters the Christ Child, he learns to how to let go of hatred and embrace the true spirit of Christmas.

## Portray the First Christmas with a Nativity Scene

The Christmas crèche (French for "crib" or "manger"), which holds a place of honor in many homes at Christmas, was created by Saint Francis of Assisi. On Christmas Eve in the year 1223, Francis created a live manger scene in a cave near the town of Greccio. He used live animals and real people to depict the uncomfortable, humble setting of Jesus' birth. During midnight Mass at the cave, people reported seeing a baby miraculously appear in the manger. The practice spread rapidly, and soon the custom of a home crèche, with figures depicting the Holy Family, the Magi, and animals, became a cherished Christmas tradition.

Children are fascinated by the crèche figures. Many families place the figures in the crèche one by one during the weeks of Advent. On Christmas Eve the whole family gathers around the crèche, and the final figure—the baby Jesus—is placed in the crib. A child reads the Christmas story from chapter 2 of Luke. The ceremony ends with the family singing a Christmas hymn.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.