

Part 1: Journeys

- Whose made the longest journey in the last few days?
 - shortest?
 - most different forms of transport?
 - what about longest ever? (you've made / anyone's made?)
- I've got some journeys for people to make - volunteers - maps - 3 teams... start them off.
- Always **start** a journey somewhere - always **end** a journey somewhere - destination - always have a **reason** for going.
 - maybe its to visit friends or family - journey tomorrow to see grand-parents;
 - maybe its to go to work;
 - maybe its to take a message or a present or a card to someone;
 - maybe its because someone has sent you...
- What was the destination of your journey? What did you find there?
 - each group found out a password
 - what were they? "**Mary & Joseph**" "**Shepherds**", and "**Angels**"
 - Those passwords are all clues about some journeys that happened at the first Christmas;
 - we'll find out more in a moment
 - but first sing again: "**Away in a manger**" and "**This child**"

Part 2: Dramatised Reading

- We are about to hear some of the Christmas story read from the Bible - there are at least two journeys made by people in the reading - see if you can spot them!
- **Read Luke 2:4-20**, from "The Message", interspersing with OHP acetates as the story develops (**a Higgins to read!**)
- What were the journeys?
 - **Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to register for census (& have baby)**
 - **Shepherds to Bethlehem to see Jesus**
 - maybe also... **angels from heaven to earth?**

Offering...

Part 3: Jesus' Journey from Heaven to Earth

- There were actually loads of journeys at the first Christmas:
 - **Mary & Joseph** from Nazareth to Bethlehem;
 - **Shepherds** from fields to Bethlehem;
 - **Wise men** from East to Bethlehem;

- Angels from heaven to shepherds;
- Mary to see Elizabeth while pregnant with John the Baptist;
- Flight into Egypt!
- etc???
- There was one journey more important than all of them!
 - journey of Jesus from heaven to earth
- He was God's Son, had always been with God, had all power and glory and honour of sitting at God's right hand side.
 - left it all behind - to become a weak baby, dependent on mere human parents, in an obscure village far from the centre of any power or influence. Not even room in the hostel/inn/hotel!
 - later, when he grew up people mis-understood him, got angry with him, accused him of things he hadn't done, beat him up and eventually had him killed in a very horrible way - the final destination of his journey from heaven to earth was the Cross at Calvary.

Why?

- Because he loves us:
 - he wants us to be our friend
 - he wants us to be his friends
- So Jesus came all the way from heaven to earth so we could meet him "face to face":
 - now we can't meet him like we can meet each other, but we can read about him in the Bible, how he met people then, how he showed his love, how he invited them to follow him...
- One of the names for Jesus we often use at Christmas is Emmanuel - it means, "God is with us" - he made journey from heaven to earth for us.
- So we can meet him, get to know him, follow him - and he will introduce us to His Father - God in heaven!
- That's why Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem:
 - so Jesus would be born in the right place, in God's place
- That's why the angels told the shepherds where Jesus was born:
 - so they could go and get to know him
- That's why the shepherds journeyed from the hills down into Bethlehem:
 - so they could meet Jesus
- That's the good news of Christmas time:
 - that because Jesus came to earth, we can get to know him and spend time with him
- Have a lovely Christmas - and make sure Jesus is at the centre of it!
- Finish with 359 "Hark! the herald angels sing" (heralds announcing Jesus' coming!)

- Start at position 1 on the map!
- Move on to position 5 on the map!
- Move on to position 7 on the map!
- Move on to position 11 on the map!
- You have finished! Your password is "Mary & Joseph"
- Start at position 6 on the map!
- Move on to position 2 on the map!
- Move on to position 9 on the map!
- Move on to position 10 on the map!
- You have finished! Your password is "Shepherds"
- Start at position 4 on the map!
- Move on to position 3 on the map!
- Move on to position 8 on the map!
- Move on to position 12 on the map!
- You have finished! Your password is "Angels"