

Introduction

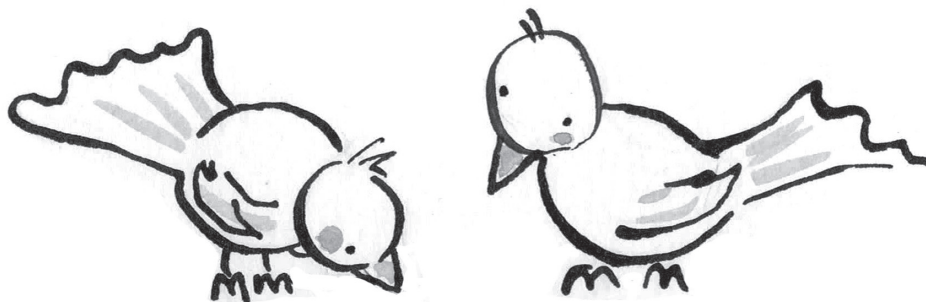
This colouring book is designed for you to read the Christmas story to your child as well as for them to enjoy colouring some unique Christmas pictures.

The greatest thing ever to happen in the long, long history of the world was about to begin. It was something that God had first promised soon after he had created the world. Adam and Eve, the first people, had disobeyed him and he had sent them out of the paradise he had made for them. God still loved mankind and had a plan that would make things right again. Down through the many years he had added small details through the mouths of his prophets until the picture was complete. He had done this to keep the hopes of his people alive and so that when it did happen they would know that God had kept his promise.

It was all beginning with a young unmarried girl, a virgin called Mary.

Gabriel had been sent by God on a mission, he had a great message to deliver to Mary. He greeted her and told her that she was “favoured” and that “the Lord was with her”. Mary had never been so confused in all her life. An angel visiting her! She was special to God! Her mind reeled with questions. Again Gabriel said, “Don’t be afraid.” His news was amazing! Mary was to have a baby even though she was a virgin and he was to be called Jesus.

That was just the beginning. Jesus would be the Son of the Most High God, he was to rule on the throne of King David and his reign would never end. Answering her trusting question “how?” Gabriel told her that it would be the work of the Holy Spirit and assured her that with God all things are possible. Mary simply trusted Gabriel’s word and said, “I am the servant of the Lord; let him do what he wants.”





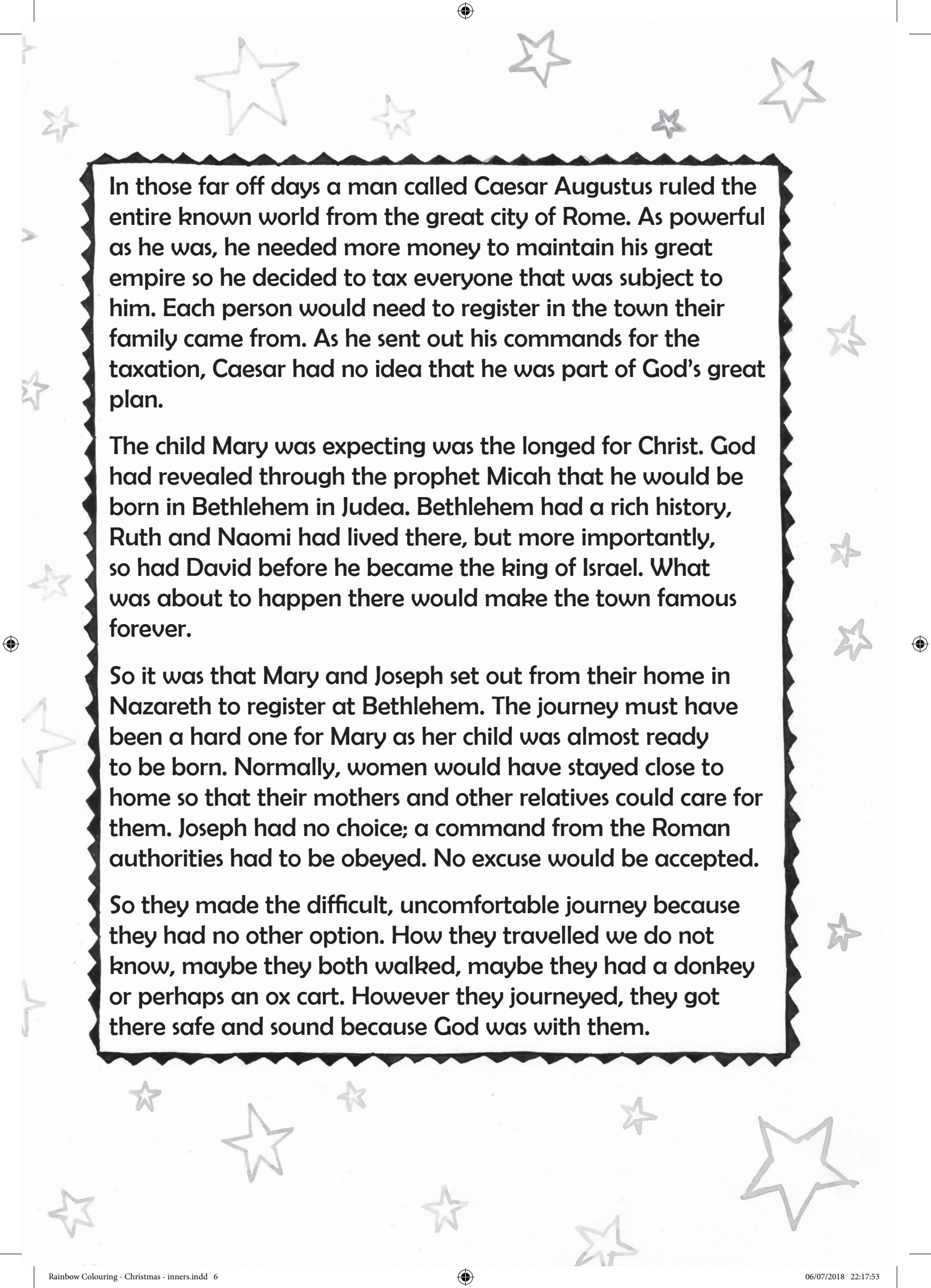
Joseph's heart was both sad and troubled. Mary, his beloved, was expecting a baby and he knew it wasn't his child. What was he to do? How could he marry her? To do so would disgrace him and his family. Yet, if he denounced her for expecting someone else's child what would happen to her? She might even be stoned to death.

As he tried to decide what was best to do he eventually dropped into a troubled sleep. In his dreams an angel spoke to him and his problem faded away. The child was a gift from God. He would grow up to be the Saviour of his people.

He was coming to keep God's promise spoken through his prophets. Joseph was to marry Mary. When he woke he did just what God had told him to and married Mary.





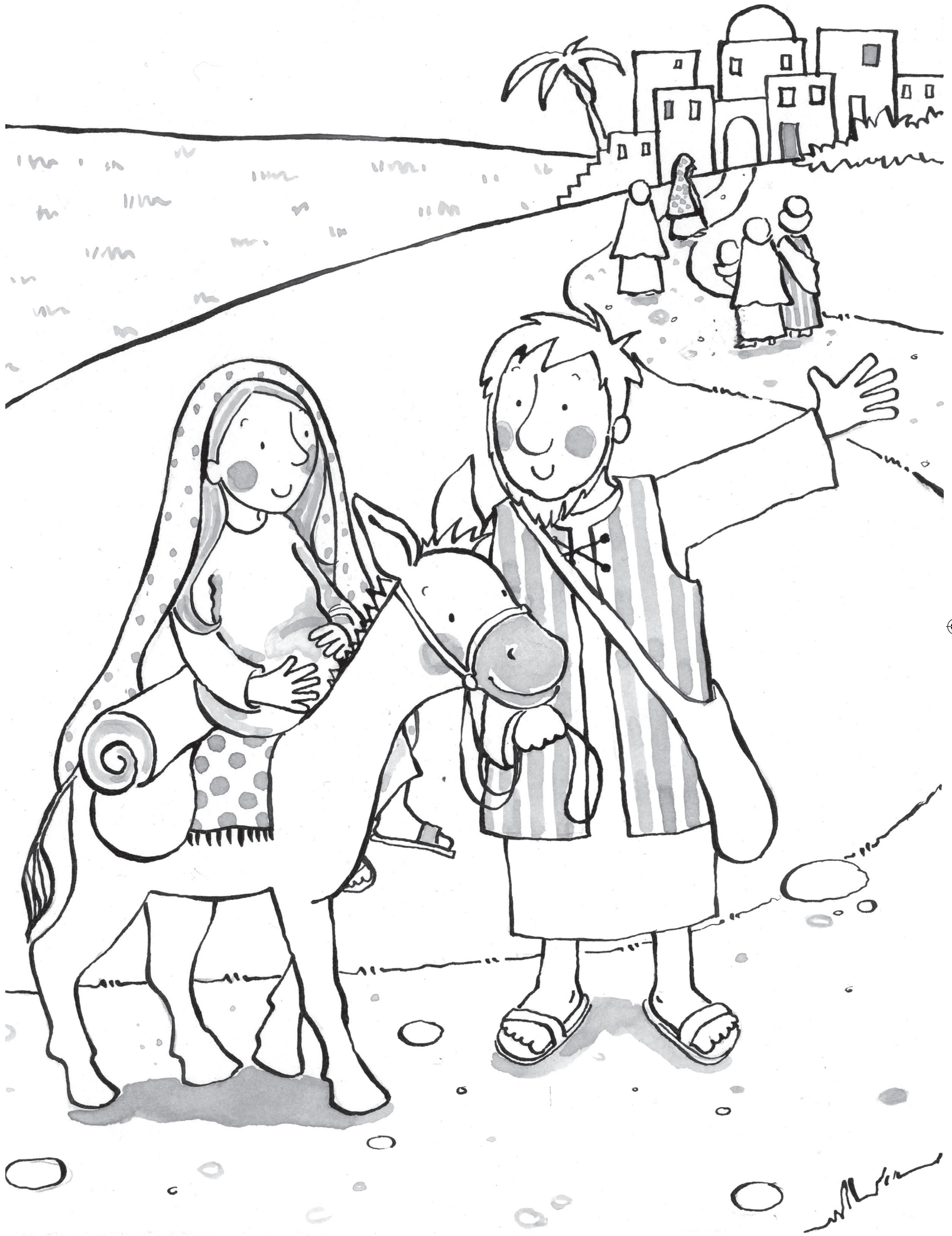


In those far off days a man called Caesar Augustus ruled the entire known world from the great city of Rome. As powerful as he was, he needed more money to maintain his great empire so he decided to tax everyone that was subject to him. Each person would need to register in the town their family came from. As he sent out his commands for the taxation, Caesar had no idea that he was part of God's great plan.

The child Mary was expecting was the longed for Christ. God had revealed through the prophet Micah that he would be born in Bethlehem in Judea. Bethlehem had a rich history, Ruth and Naomi had lived there, but more importantly, so had David before he became the king of Israel. What was about to happen there would make the town famous forever.

So it was that Mary and Joseph set out from their home in Nazareth to register at Bethlehem. The journey must have been a hard one for Mary as her child was almost ready to be born. Normally, women would have stayed close to home so that their mothers and other relatives could care for them. Joseph had no choice; a command from the Roman authorities had to be obeyed. No excuse would be accepted.

So they made the difficult, uncomfortable journey because they had no other option. How they travelled we do not know, maybe they both walked, maybe they had a donkey or perhaps an ox cart. However they journeyed, they got there safe and sound because God was with them.



Bethlehem was so crowded that by the time Mary and Joseph arrived, all the rooms in the inn had been taken. The only place available for them was among the animals. Jesus' life on earth was about to begin in the way it would continue.

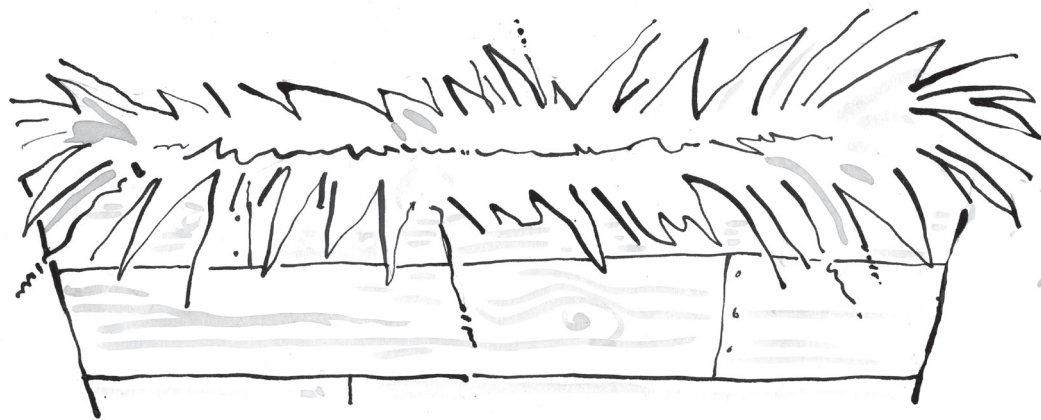
Later when he grew to manhood and began his ministry, as he preached the good news and healed the sick, he would point out that unlike foxes that had their holes and the birds that had their nests, he had nowhere to lay his head. He had left the glory of heaven to become a man and live, not among the rich and powerful, but among the poor and needy. The pattern for his life was starting with his birth.





So it was that when the child was born he was wrapped like all new-borns were in those days, in what were called swaddling bands. Snug and secure he was placed in his first bed. Today parents often prepare wonderful nurseries for their babies. They fill them with a lace-covered cot, warm sheets and blankets, maybe a fascinating mobile to dangle from the ceiling and dimmed lighting. Everything is done to make the first days of the baby as comforting as possible. All Jesus had was a manger to lie in.

We can be sure that Joseph or someone would have cleaned it out well because a manger was just a feeding box from which the animals normally ate their hay. Jesus may well have been destined to rule forever over David's kingdom but no one that night would ever have guessed it from his first bedroom.





Watching sheep at night is not usually exciting, not unless a lion or a bear is stalking around looking for a meal. This however, was a night none of the shepherds would ever forget.

First, there was an angel in all his glory scaring them. (I wonder if angels get tired of telling people not to be afraid when God speaks to them!) Then, that amazing message he called “good news for all the people”. The Saviour, the Christ, had been born just down the road in Bethlehem.

This message was followed by more angels than anyone could count all praising God together and talking about “peace on earth”.

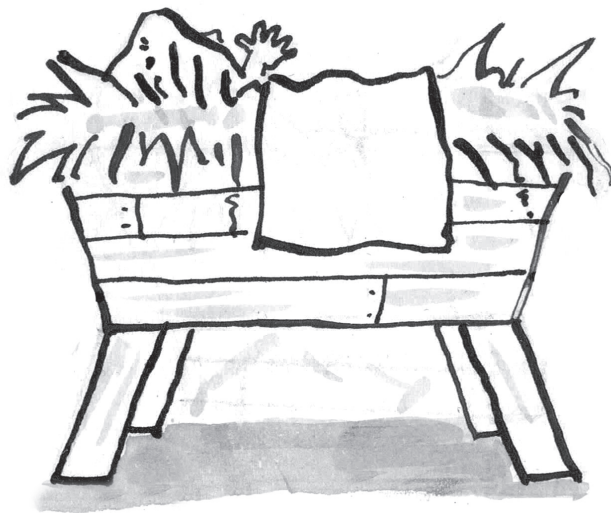
As suddenly as they had come they all vanished again. It didn't take long for the shepherds to decide that they would leave the sheep for once and go and see this wonder God had told them about



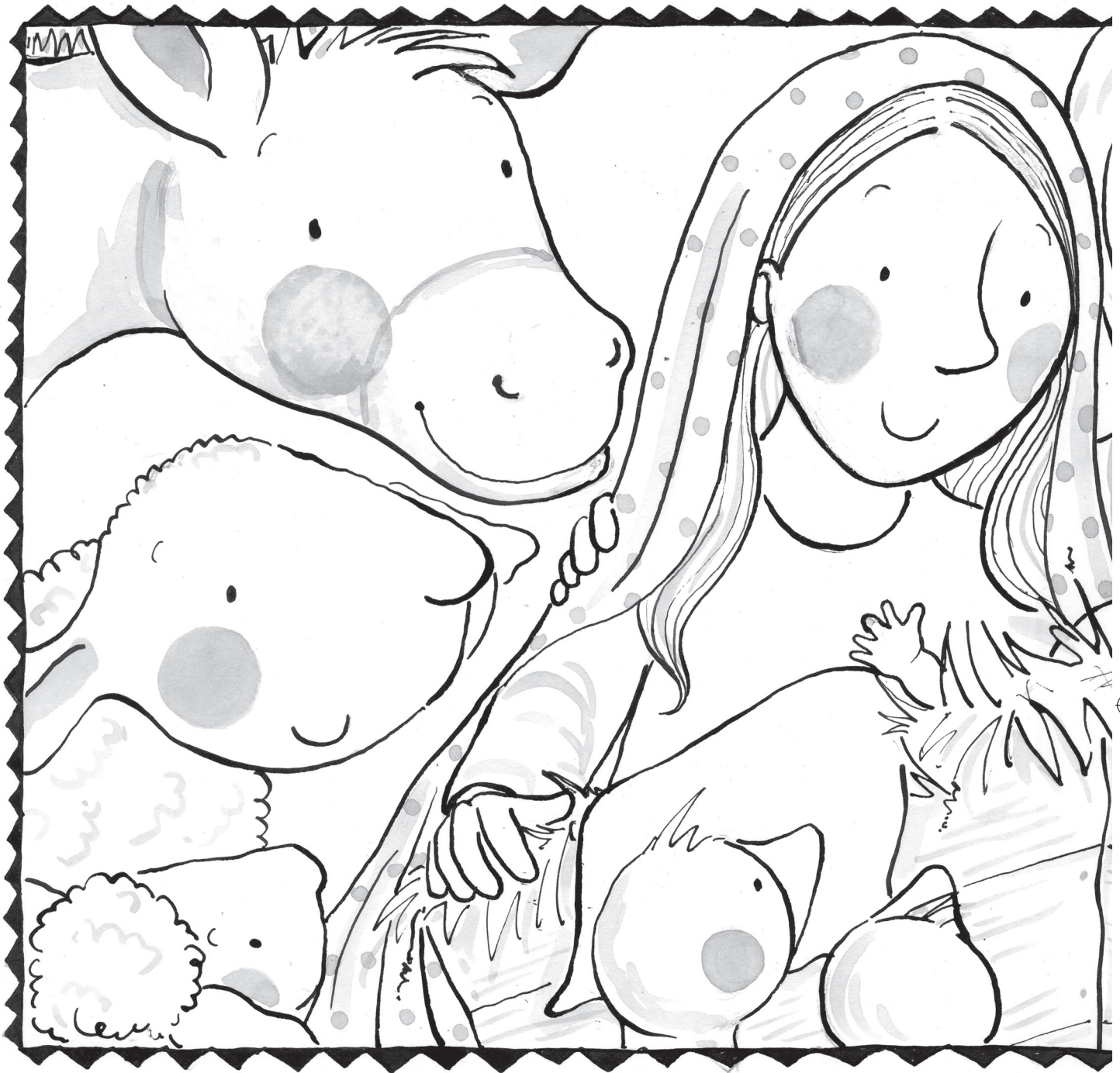


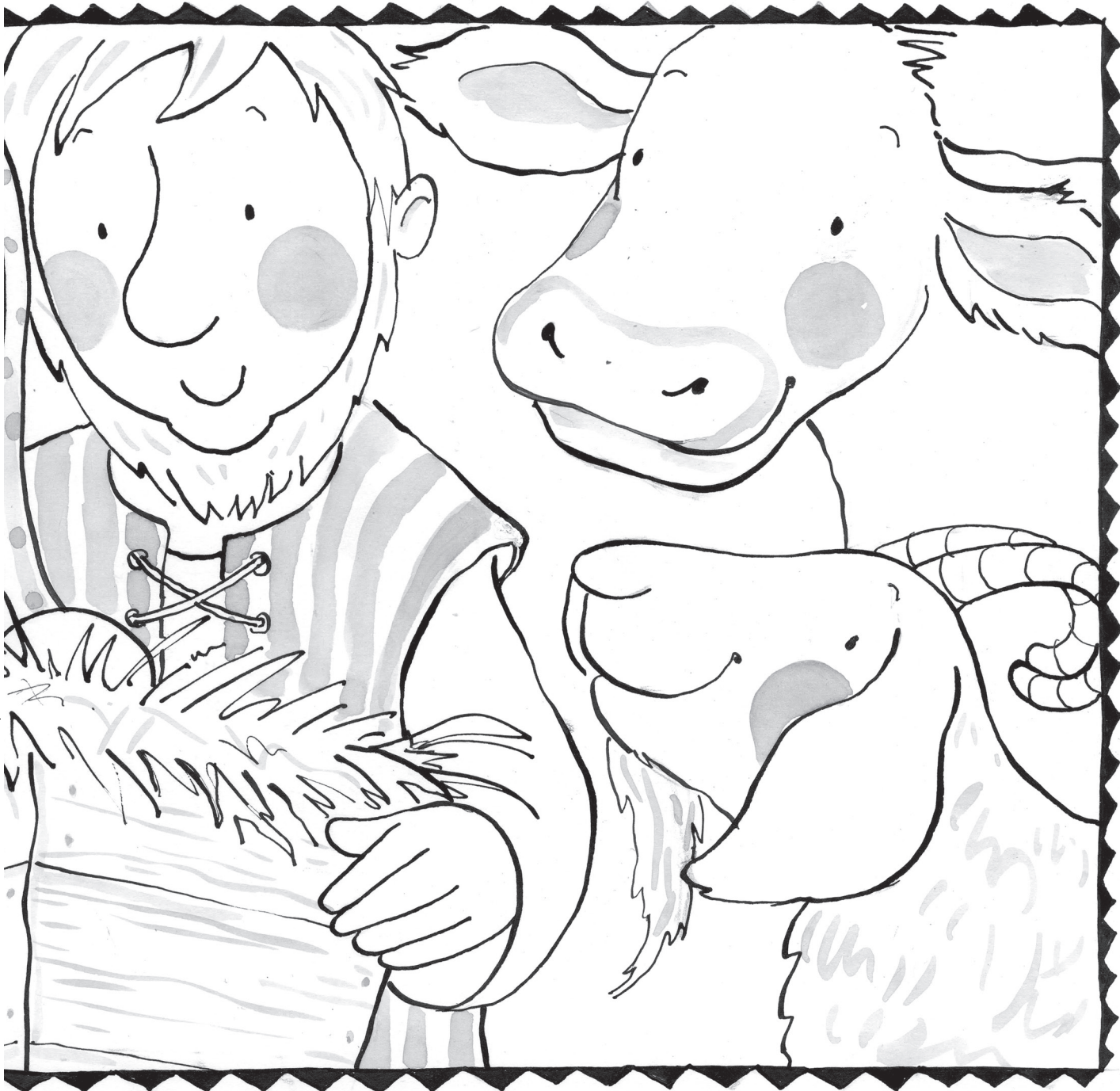
So they hurried on their way. What a wonderful night they were having! God had done something amazing in their town of Bethlehem. Even better, he had chosen to tell them about it. God had sent angels, not to the rich or powerful people filling the town for the Roman census, but to simple shepherds. It was just as God had said, the baby wrapped up and lying in a manger.

This was too good to keep to themselves, so they told everyone they saw the amazing events that had occurred that wonderful night. Their hearts were so full of praise to God. Mary would never forget that night; it was truly a night to remember. She sat quietly thinking about all that had happened.









Meanwhile, far, far away in a distant land God was speaking to some very different people about the exact same events.

The child that was born would be the Saviour, not just for the Jews, but for all nations. So it was only right that his birth should be made known even in far off lands.

These men were called Magi and they spent their time gazing up at the stars. One night, as they watched the sky they saw a new and special star, one unlike any other they had ever seen. God revealed to them that this star marked the birth of a great king far away in the west. So special was this king, the King of the Jews, that he was not just to be honoured as men honour kings, he was worthy to be worshipped.





Mary and Joseph had another journey to make. Jesus was now eight days old and it was time for them to give thanks at the great temple in Jerusalem. The wealthy offered a lamb but the poor like Mary and Joseph offered pigeons or turtledoves.

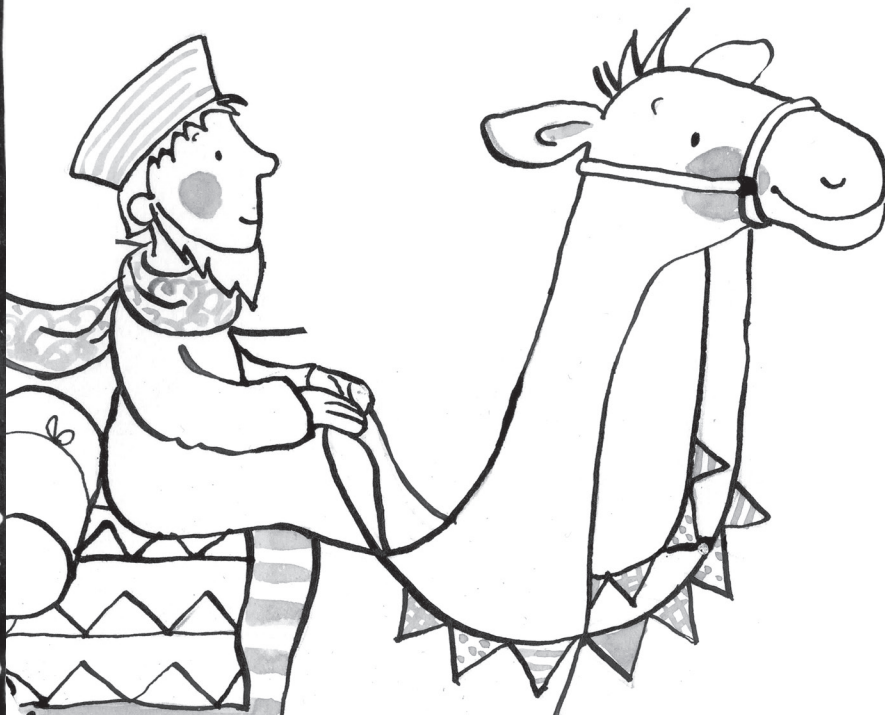
God wanted two special people to know what had happened and who had been born. The first was Simeon, a godly man who had longed all his life for the Christ to come. When he saw Jesus he knew his prayers were answered and he could die in peace. He told Mary that her son would cause some people to rise and others to fall and something of the heartache she would know. The other was an old woman, a prophetess called Anna. She also recognised who Jesus was; she worshipped God and told everyone the good news.





The Magi had set out on their long journey to find and worship the king. Many preparations needed to be made and when eventually they would find Mary, Joseph and Jesus they would find them settled into a home in Bethlehem. We can read their story in Matthew's Gospel.

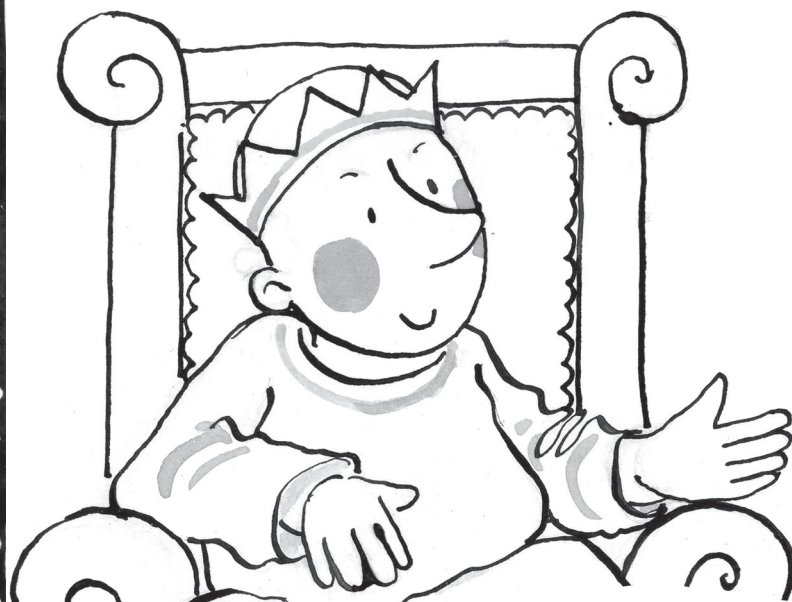
We often assume that there were three of them, but we don't really know, only that they carried with them three precious gifts that would be God's provision for the family in dark and difficult days to come. God always knows the needs of his people long before they are aware of them and he loves them so much that he provides for them even before they ask him.





Where would you expect to find a new-born King? The Magi assumed he would be living in a palace so they made a big mistake. As soon as they got to Judea they headed for the palace of King Herod and told him they were looking for the future King of the Jews.

Herod was a very cruel man who was always afraid that someone would seek to take his throne from him. He was also a very cunning man so he pretended to be delighted by the news and summoned all his priests and scholars to see if anywhere in the scriptures it would tell them where this king would be born. When he learnt that it was in Bethlehem he sent the Magi asking them to let him know exactly where the child was to be found. He pretended that he wanted to worship Jesus.





The star they had seen in the East, now miraculously guided them to the place where Jesus was to be found. Their long journey was at last at an end. They entered the house, fell down and worshipped the Lord Jesus.

They presented the gifts they had brought with them. Gold – a gift fit for a king. Frankincense – an expensive ingredient used in worship and so fit for Immanuel “God with us”.

Myrrh – a plant used to dull pain that would much later be offered to Jesus as he suffered on the cross. Each gift was valuable as well as having deep meaning. They would soon be even more thankful for them when Herod unleashed his terrible anger.

So the story of the birth of Jesus came to an end but the story of his life and death was only just beginning.





Read more of the Christmas story in

The promise of the birth of John the Baptist **Luke 1:5-25**

The promise of the birth of Jesus **Luke 1:26-38**

Joseph troubled about the baby **Matthew 1:18-25**

Mary Visits Elizabeth **Luke 1:39-56**

John the Baptist is born **Luke 1:57-80**

The promise concerning Bethlehem is found in **Micah 5:2**

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem **Luke 2:1-5**

The Story of Ruth and Naomi is found in the Book of **Ruth**

The Story of David is found in the books of **1 & 2 Samuel and 1 Kings**

The shepherds in the fields **Luke 2:8-20**

Simeon and Anna in the Temple **Luke 2:21-38**

The Magi (often called Wise Men or Kings) **Matthew 2:1-12**

Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt **Matthew 2:13-15**

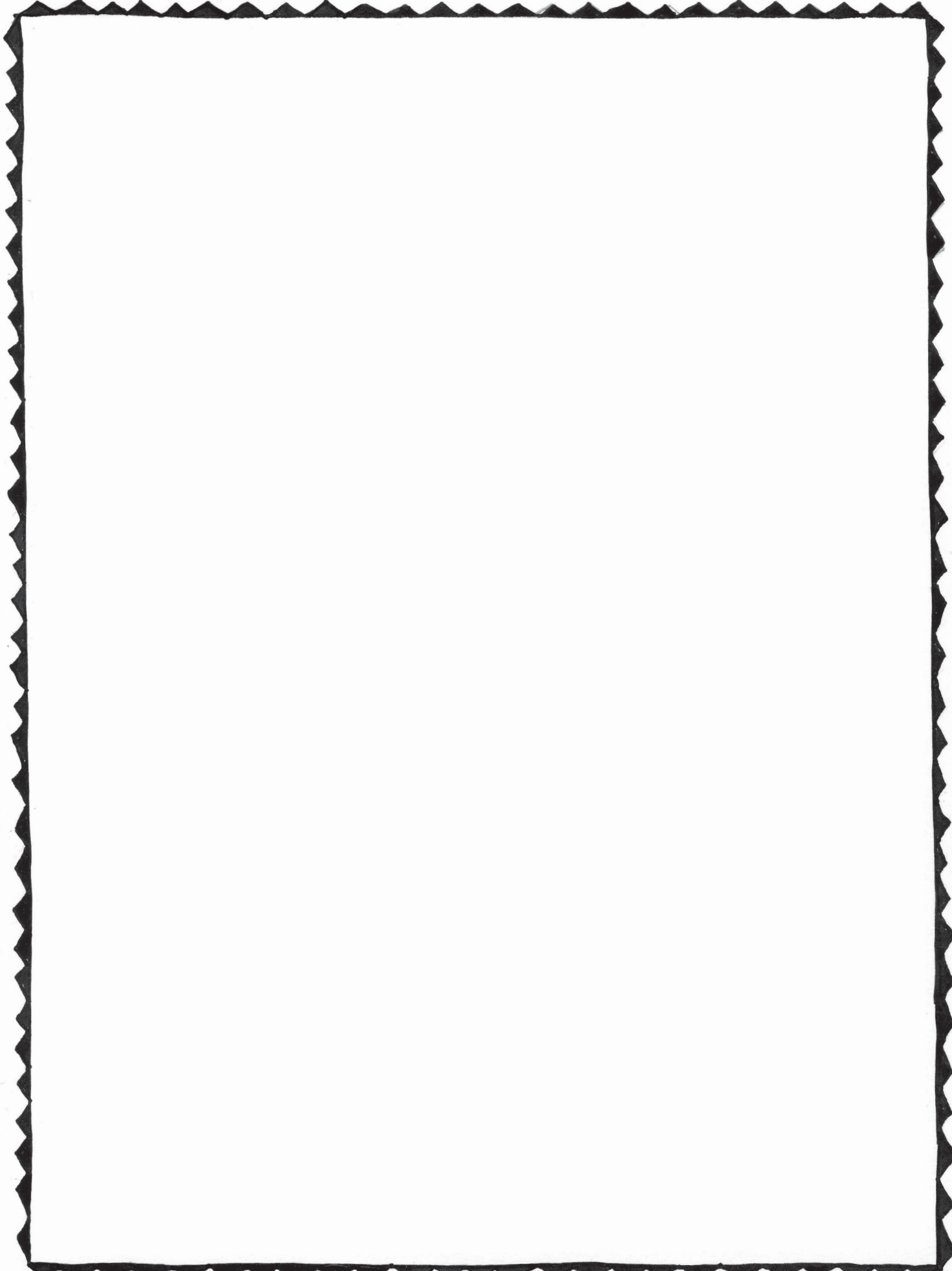
Herod kills the little children **Matthew 2:16-18**

This was predicted by Jeremiah **Jeremiah 31:15**

The family return to Nazareth from Egypt **Luke 2:39-40**

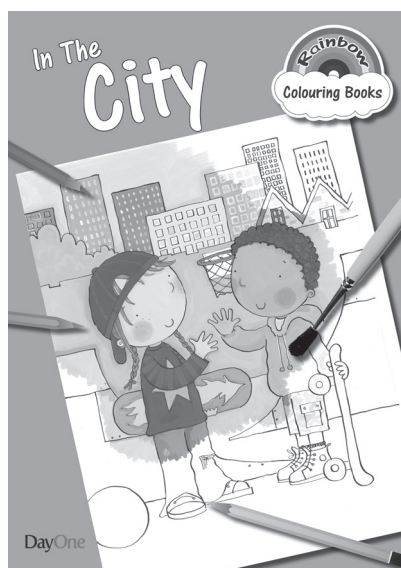
This was predicted by Hosea **Hosea 11:1**

Why not draw your own Christmas picture?

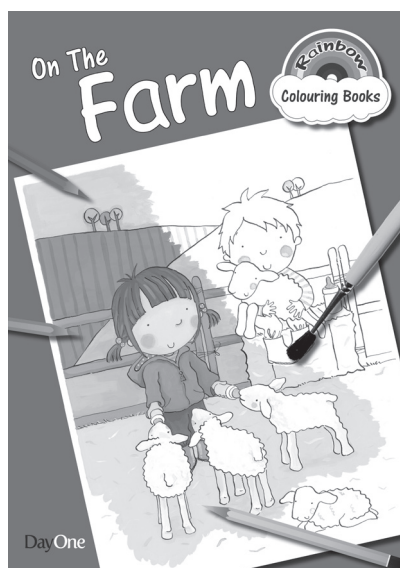


All entries sent to DayOne will receive a prize!

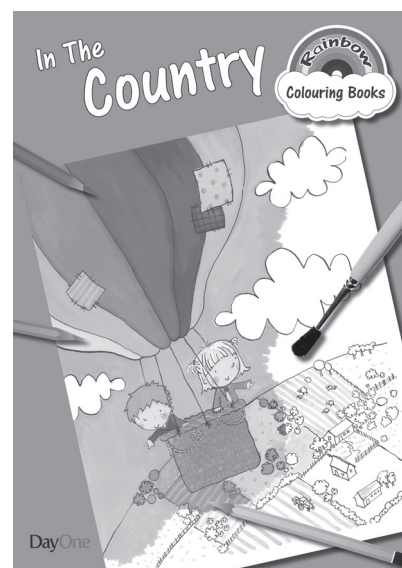
The Rainbow Colouring Book Range...



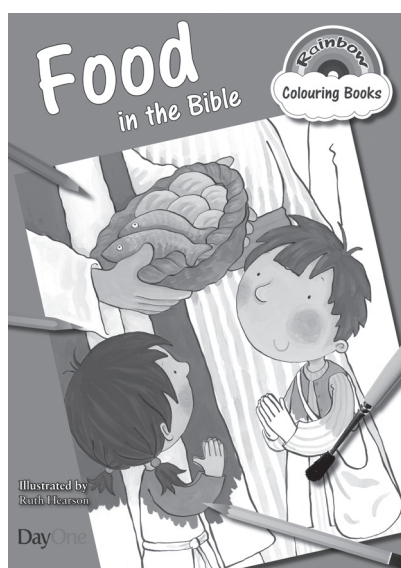
In The City



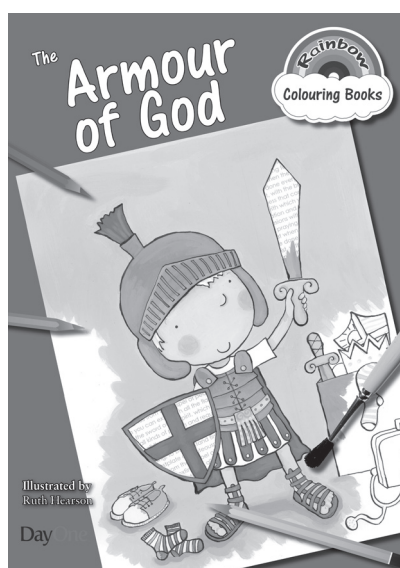
On The Farm



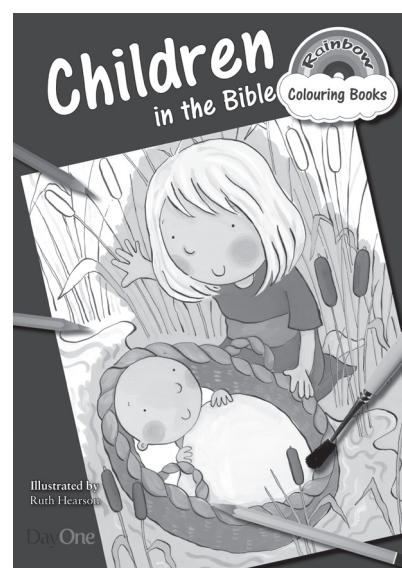
In The Country



Food in the Bible

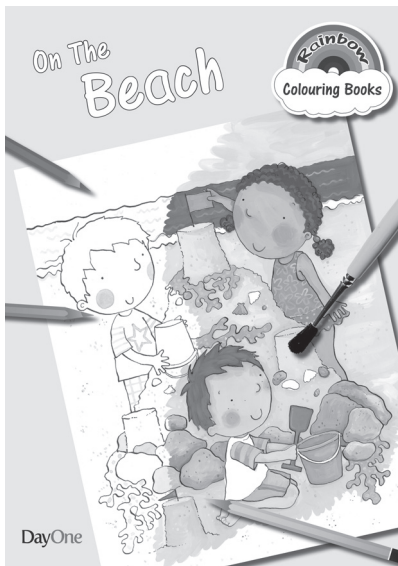


The Armour of God

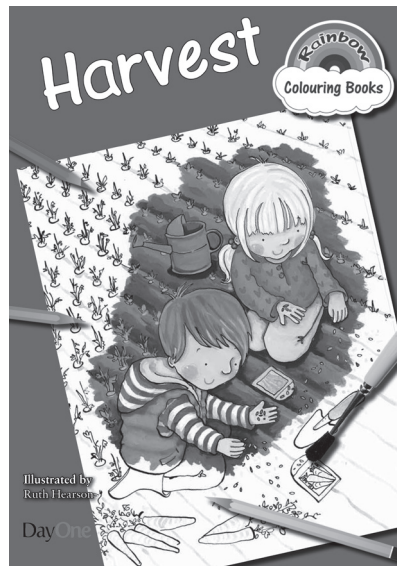


Children in the Bible

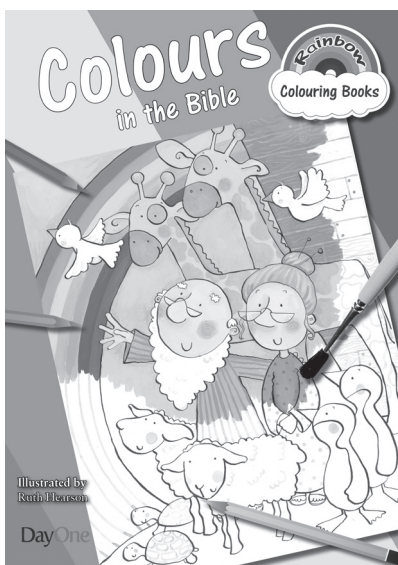
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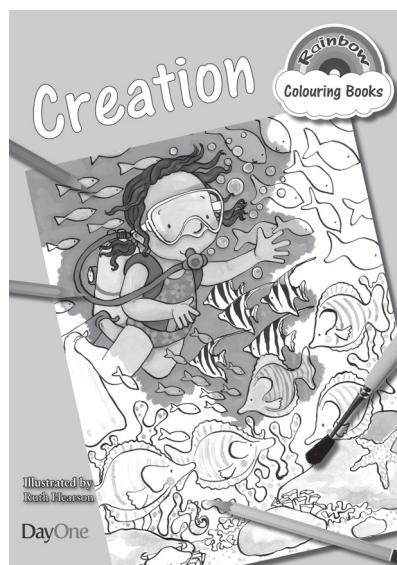
On The Beach



Harvest



Colours in the Bible



Creation



Christmas

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