

CELEBRATING THE KING!

We've seen some fantastic nativity performances this morning; everyone played their part wonderfully well. People started performing plays like these a long time ago to tell the story of Jesus to people who didn't know it; they played them out on the streets and these plays were a way of telling people the stories of Jesus and not just the nativity story, but other Bible stories as well; people watched the play and learned the story as we did today.

Here are some other things about Christmas; we're going to play a game like *Charades*; see if you can work out what these words might be and what they might have to do with Christmas.

Celebration: we're rejoicing in something. There is a sort of party atmosphere about Christmas, but we need to remember what it is we celebrate; the rest of our words tell us what and who we celebrate.

King: a king was born in Bethlehem; the wise men thought first of all that the king was born in the king's palace and that's where they went to look, but he was not there; a king being born in a stable seems strange, but Mary was told that her son would be a great king who would be king forever.

Fear: the angels came and people were afraid of them at first; Mary was afraid, the shepherds were afraid; there are lots of things about God that we don't understand because He is so great. He is big, strong, mighty and sometimes that makes us afraid. It does remind us that the whole story is about God; it is God's story, and a great story! Jesus says we don't need to be afraid any more!

Love: God's love is so great that He never stops loving us; it is because He loved us that He gave us Jesus; Jesus loved the world so much that He gave up His life to be our Saviour.

Whole World: the story is not just for us and for people we know; the gospel is not just for us and people we know; Jesus is not just for us and people we know. Jesus is the Saviour for the whole world and so His coming is good news for the whole world; people all across the world celebrate Christmas and celebrate Jesus being born.

Welcome Home: this is what God does for us; He welcomes us. The world is full of lots of good things; we do good things. But the world is also full of wrong things and we do things that are wrong; we wander away from God. But God welcomes us home; He loves us; He forgives us the wrong that we do. Jesus didn't come to save people who are perfect; He came for people like you and me, who've made mistakes, who've messed things up at times, who have wandered off to go our own way. He came to bring grace and peace to us and to our world. God has come to the world in Jesus and God opens His arms to the world and says "*come to me and I will give you rest.*" (*Matthew 11:28*)

This is what we celebrate; this is why we rejoice; this is the story we tell; Jesus has come and God loves us! Here is something to celebrate and to tell the whole world!