THE GOSPEL TODAY
Luke 2:1-14
In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

In this Gospel, it is very clear that Jesus has a special place in His heart for the poor and the abandoned, the ones that others would not even see. Mary and Joseph are refugees, driven from their home by an emperor who wants to count all of his subjects. They have no home, and their baby is born in a stable. The first people to hear the good news are the shepherds, poor people who live out in the fields, among their flocks. Even as a baby, Jesus reaches out to poor and outcast people.
Angels
Announced the glorious news of the Savior's birth.

Candle
Symbolizes the Lord's light upon the world.

Animals
They were close to Jesus at the time of his birth.

Candy Cane
Represents the shepherd's crook. They used it to bring lambs back into the fold and it reminds us that we are all our brother's keeper.

Bell
Lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring to guide us back to our Heavenly Father. It reminds us that we are all precious in the eyes of the Lord.

Christmas Cards
Just as the angels proclaimed Christ's birth to the shepherds, cards represent sending the word of Christ to all the world.

Bow/Ribbon
Represents the bonds of brotherly love. We are all children of God.

Christmas Tree
Symbolizes eternal life. Christ made it possible for us to live forever in heaven after we die.
CHRISTMAS AS A FAMILY

WHAT’S OUR STORY?

What is one of your favourite Christmas memories?

What is your favourite Christmas carol? Why is this one your favourite?

What makes a perfect Christmas?

What is one thing that you did to make Christmas better for somebody else this year?

What is your favourite Christmas movie?

What was the best gift you ever gave to somebody else? Why is this your favourite?

What would be the best gift that you could receive this Christmas?

What was the best surprise you ever received at Christmastime?
THE CHURCH TEACHES
THE INCARNATION--
AT CHRISTMAS, GOD TOOK ON HUMAN FLESH

"If we would please this Divine Infant, we too must become children, simple and humble; we must carry to Him flowers of virtue, of meekness, of mortification, of charity; we must clasp Him in the arms of our love."

St Alphonsus Liguori

From the "Novena for Christmas"
by St. Alphonsus Liguori
Founder of the Redemptorists, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

The Son of God, in becoming human for our sake, might have appeared in the world at the age of a grown man, the way Adam appeared when he was created. But since children usually attract greater love to themselves from those who take care of them, Jesus chose to appear on earth as an infant; and as the poorest and most miserable infant ever born.

O my Jesus, almighty and true God, what else could possibly have attracted you to come from heaven and be born in a cave, if not your love for us?

Let us enter that cave in Bethlehem, but let us enter with faith. If we go without faith we will see nothing but a poor infant, who moves us to compassion by seeing him so beautiful, but shivering with cold and crying from the itchiness of the straw on which he lies. But if we enter with faith, we will believe that this child is the Son of God, who loved us so much that he came down to earth and endured so much to pay for our sins. How could we not thank him and love him?