

# The Inn Keeper



## Find

- 'Barney' the sheep
- Some straw (Hide the straw behind Barney)
- Find three knock, knock jokes to tell in the assembly.

## Introduce

Introduce Barney as the sheep who has been on a Christmas Adventure. Explain that on his travels he has picked up a clue for us, and hidden it behind his back. Ask a volunteer to come and find what Barney's hiding. Get the volunteer to show the piece of hidden straw, explain that the straw is a clue to where the sheep has been on his Christmas adventure this week. Ask the school which part of the Christmas story they think Barney has visited. Where would Barney have found straw in the Christmas story?

The straw suggests that Barney has perhaps visited the stable at the back of the Inn Keepers house; maybe he has brushed past the manger that Baby Jesus was placed in. Double check the children know what the manger is; a feeding trough for the animals which is why straw would be there. Ask the children why they think Jesus was born in a stable and not a palace? If Jesus was the Son of God surely a Palace would make more sense. What was significant about the stable?

Mary and Joseph never planned to have their baby in a stable; they wanted to have their baby in a warm room, sheltered from the wind and bad smells! We know this because the bible says they knocked on the doors of lots of different Inn Keepers. Sadly though at each door they were told by there was no room at the Inn. Finally one very generous Inn keeper, although he didn't have any rooms, saw their need and offered all that he had left. This Inn Keeper offered them the stable where he kept his animals at the back of the Inn.

## Play

Today we are remembering the part of the Christmas story where Mary and Joseph knocked on lots of doors before they found a place to stay, so to get the school thinking about the theme begin by playing a silly activity which involves the phrase 'Knock Knock'.

Explain how you are going to tell three 'knock, knock' jokes and they have to decide which knock, knock joke is the best. Tell your jokes then ask the children to clap for the joke they liked the best, until you find a winner. If you prefer you can ask three members of staff to come and tell their best knock, knock joke for the children to judge, giving a prize to the winning one. Once you have finished this activity you may even like to choose to ask the children what their favourite knock, knock joke is, and share it with the school.



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## Talk

When the inn keeper got the knock on his door from Mary and Joseph he could have said there was no room at the Inn. However, he chose to say, 'Come in, I have no room in here but I can see you need help. What I can do is offer you a place to rest in my stable at the back.'

The inn keeper chose to help the couple when he could have shut the door on them. He made the decision to be generous and caring towards the couple.

Throughout our day just like the inn keeper, each of us will be given opportunity to be generous and caring to someone else. Maybe that will mean opening a door to someone, or helping someone who is lonely or upset, or maybe allowing someone to join in with our games, or maybe helping someone who is stuck on a class problem that we know how to solve. All of us will have opportunity to be generous and caring.

If the inn keeper had said "No room!" who knows what would have happened but he didn't, instead he chose to say "Come in"; because of that Mary and Joseph had a place to stay. The inn keeper's generosity was considered so important his part in the Christmas story was written down in the bible for people to hear about for centuries to come. Wouldn't it be amazing if this school became famous just like the inn keeper, for having a generosity and compassionate heart? Let's commit as a school to demonstrating generosity this Christmas and see if we can become famous for this in our community.

Finally you know what was special about the stable? There was probably no door on the front of it. If people wanted to go in and meet Jesus they could, there was no need to 'knock knock', because there was no door on the stable. Perhaps Jesus was born in a stable and was placed in a manger amongst the animals and the straw because God wanted everyone to meet him. If Jesus was born in a palace only posh people would have seen him, but because he was born in a stable even shepherd and Barney our sheep got to meet him too, and ordinary people like us could meet Jesus too.

## Pray

Dear God, Thank you for reminding us that being generous to others, and caring for those in need is important. Help us to be as generous and caring as the inn keeper. Thank you God that Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger to show us that anyone can get to know Jesus no matter who we are or where they live. Amen.

### Classroom follow up:

Discuss random acts of kindness and how when we are kind to someone it very often causes them to be kind to others. What does it mean to go the extra mile for someone? The inn keeper is a good example of this.

Perhaps discuss other people today and in history that have gone the extra mile for others like Mother Teresa. Investigate their stories and the difference they made.

