





# Nativity Figures and Facts

BY PAT GRAHAM

This matching game offers some interesting ideas about the figures of the Nativity. Most of the information is found in the scriptures. You can learn something new while you have fun playing this game with your family or friends.

**Instructions:** Glue the rectangles on heavy paper, and cut them out. Begin the game with the rectangles

spread out facedown. The first player turns over two rectangles. If the figure and the fact do not match, the rectangles are turned facedown again, and the next player takes a turn. If the figure and the fact match, the player reads the fact aloud, keeps the pair, and takes another turn. Play until all the rectangles are matched. The player with the most matches wins.

	<p><b>Star of Bethlehem</b></p> <p>The heavenly sign of Jesus's birth had been foretold by prophets in Israel and in the Americas. The Wise Men in the East knew the meaning of the star (see Matthew 2:1-2, 7, 9).</p>
	<p><b>Jesus</b></p> <p>The scriptures refer to Jesus by many names: Messiah, Redeemer, Savior, Jehovah, Firstborn, Good Shepherd, Lamb of God, Light of the World, Only Begotten Son, and Son of God. Can you name any others? (See Topical Guide, "Jesus Christ," 240; Guide to the Scriptures, "Jesus Christ," 127.)</p>
	<p><b>Mary</b></p> <p>Although Jesus's father was Heavenly Father, Jesus's birth fulfilled the prophecy that Jesus would be a descendant of King David, because Mary was a descendant of King David.<sup>1</sup></p>
	<p><b>Angels</b></p> <p>Angels appeared to Mary, Joseph, and shepherds (see Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-27; 2:8-9).</p>



**Stable**  
 During this time, inns were rectangular with a courtyard in the center for animals. Because the rooms surrounding the courtyard were filled, Joseph may have cared for Mary's delivery in that center courtyard.<sup>2</sup>



**Manger**  
 Joseph and Mary placed the baby Jesus in a manger probably filled with sweet straw (see Luke 2:7). Many artists have shown the Christmas manger as a wooden trough. But it may also have been carved from rock.<sup>3</sup>



**Shepherds**  
 The work of a shepherd was to lead the sheep to food and to protect them. Often the shepherd slept at the entrance of the stone-enclosed sheepfold.<sup>4</sup> Those who help with the Lord's work are like shepherds. Jesus asks them to feed His lambs and sheep (see John 21:15-17; D&C 112:14).



**Joseph**  
 Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a noble, kind man. He was a carpenter. It is thought that he died before Jesus began His ministry.<sup>5</sup>



**Wise Men**  
 The Wise Men came to worship the Savior. They did not go to the stable but to a house some time after Jesus was born.<sup>6</sup> They received revelation not to report the whereabouts of the child to Herod but to return to their own country (see Matthew 2:12).

**NOTES**

1. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 86.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, "Christ the Savior Is Born," *New Era*, Dec. 2006, 4.
3. See Madeleine S. and J. Lane Miller, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 8th ed. (1973), "manger," 416.
4. See *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, "shepherd," 675.
5. See *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, "Joseph," 351.
6. See *Jesus the Christ*, 97-99.

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