

Danny the Shepherd and the very first Christmas Eve



I want to tell you about the very first Christmas Eve and what happened that night.

Danny was only a boy, but he worked as a shepherd. During the day it was his job to lead the sheep around the countryside. He helped them find green grass to eat, plenty of fresh water to drink, and places to rest. When wild animals came along, he had to be brave and strong and scare them off. Danny had to lead and protect the sheep because it was his job, but he really did it because he loved those soft, woolly little animals.

At night, he would gather with the other shepherds in the area and together they would eat and rest while they kept their sheep safe. One night when Danny was sitting beside the campfire, eating his dinner, some thing amazing, something fabulous, something absolutely mind-blowing happened!

Danny noticed that the night seemed to be getting lighter and lighter. He looked up and dropped his plate in surprise. In the sky overhead he saw lights, big, bright lights, much brighter than the stars, brighter than the full moon, almost as bright as the sun, first thing in the morning. As they got closer, Danny realised that they looked a little like people, but they had wings and they were so very shiny.

He wasn't sure whether to be excited or afraid. Then, one of them started to speak. He said, "Don't be afraid, I'm here to tell you about something wonderful that has happened, something that is good news for everyone. A baby has just been born and he is going to save the whole world! You can see him for yourself. You will find him in a stable in Bethlehem." Then the angels began to sing. It was the most beautiful music that Danny had ever heard.

Well, the angels disappeared again and the shepherds, after they had recovered a little from their shock, began to talk together. They decided that they would go together to find this baby that the angels had told them about.

When they arrived at Bethlehem they searched for the right stable. Danny was still not sure why they were looking for a stable. Usually, stables were full of animals, not new-born babies. In the first stable, he heard a cow, mooing. Moooooo. In the second stable he heard the familiar sound of a sheep baaing. Baaaaaaaa. In the third stable he heard the sound of a horse neighing. Neigh. In the fourth stable he heard the sound of a donkey braying. Ee-aw, ee-aw. In the fifth stable he heard a chicken clucking. Cluck, cluck, cluck. And finally he came to a stable that was full of animal voices, all the animals were awake. Moooooo, baaaaaaaa, neigh, ee-aw, ee-aw, cluck, cluck, cluck. But mixed in with the voices of the animals, he heard another sound. It was the sound of a baby crying. Waaaagh.

Quietly, the shepherds began to peak in at the door. They saw a young mother, and a young father and a tiny baby, all wrapped up, lying on a bed filled with hay. It was certainly a strange and wonderful night for Danny, one he would never forget. The mother looked up and saw them. She looked very tired but she smiled and asked them in out of the cold. They found out that her name was Mary, the father was Joseph and that tiny baby was called Jesus. She told them that she had seen an angel too. He had given her a message. God had sent this baby, Jesus into the world to care for people in some of the ways that Danny cared for his sheep. He was going to lead them and protect them, but most of all, he had come to love them.



This was the first Christmas Eve. Today we continue to remember Christmas each year to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, who still loves each of us.