Good tidings of great joy

Dear Jess
Are you free on Friday the 22nd? If so, do come and watch Evie perform in her school’s nativity play. Evie would be thrilled to have her favourite auntie in the audience.

The past few days have been nerve-racking. Of course, Evie had hoped to be cast as Mary but an older girl got the leading role. First-year pupils are usually just given bit parts. Evie was worried she might have to play a sheep or a star. But she was lucky: she’s the angel who announces Christ’s birth to the shepherds. She’s already learned her lines to perfection.

All the mums and dads have been assigned various tasks. Guess who has to make Evie’s costume! Luke is helping with the props. He’s just gone to the shops to try to buy some hay for the manger.

Well, I’d better sign off now and drive Evie to her rehearsal. Hope to see you on Friday.

Love from us all, and a big hug from your sister

Polly xx
Exercise 1

Insert the correct words in the definitions below.

A. A(n) __________ is a play about the birth of Jesus Christ, usually performed by children at Christmas time.

B. The __________ consists of Jesus, his mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph.

C. A(n) __________ is a circle of light around or above the head of a holy person in religious art.

D. In old-fashioned British English usage, a donkey is also called a(n) __________.

E. A(n) __________ is an object used by actors in a play or film.

Exercise 2

Choose the correct option to complete each sentence.

A. Evie was thrilled to see her aunt in the performance / audience.

B. Most first-year pupils were given bit parts / roles.

C. Evie spent hours learning her words / lines.

D. Evie played an angel. Her costume / custom was a long white dress with a pair of wings.

E. Evie’s dad had difficulty finding hay / hey for the manger.

Exercise 3

Study the picture and text on the opposite page. Then find the right words to complete the paragraph below.

There was no room at the inn, so Mary gave birth to her son in a (A) __________ and laid him in a (B) __________ instead of a bed. An angel announced Christ’s birth to the (C) __________, who were watching their flocks by night. They brought their (D) __________ along to worship the newborn baby. Led by the Star of Bethlehem, Three (E) __________ Men came, bearing gifts of gold, (F) __________ and myrrh.

More Christmas vocabulary

Exercise 3 contains further useful words for talking about the birth of Jesus:

- An inn is a small hotel or house with rooms, food and drink for travellers. The phrase “no room at the inn” refers to the innkeeper’s refusal to give shelter to the pregnant Mary.

- A flock is a group of sheep. The sentence quotes the Christmas carol “While shepherds watched their flocks by night”, which, in turn, is a quotation from the Bible (Luke 2:8).

- To worship means “to show one’s love and respect for a god”. The verb can be used with or without an object.

- To bear something means “to carry something somewhere”. This verb is used mostly in formal or literary contexts.

Answers


Christmas carol

- ‘Christmas'kal

- ‘Weihnachtslied

Frankincense

- ‘Franzkin_sens

- ‘Weihrauch

In turn

- ‘wiederum

Pregnant

- ‘schwanger

Shelter

- ‘Schutz

Vocabulary

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