



Week 1: A Stable

Introduction

Let's play the "Opposite Game" today! I'll say a word, and then you say its opposite. If I say hot, you say cold. If I say big, what would you say? (*Little, small.*) What if I said daytime? (*Nighttime.*) If I said tall? (*Short.*) If I said on? (*Off.*)

Christmas is all about opposites. Listen, and I'll explain. See how many opposites you can hear.

Getting to the Heart

When God first made the world, it was perfect. There was no sin, no pain, no tears. No one cried. No one got hurt or sick. No one died. But then Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Because they sinned, God's perfect world became imperfect. Now, God's happy world was sad. God's perfect world was imperfect.

God still loved the world he had made. He loved his sad, sinful world so very much that he made a happy, holy plan. God planned to send a Savior to rescue us from our sins. The Savior would be both a king and a servant. Here's what the Bible says about that: (*Read Isaiah 49:1 and 3 from your Bible.*)

A king is the opposite of a servant. A king lives in a palace—a wonderful, beautiful, comfortable place. A king has power. He rules over others. A servant's home is not always comfortable. A servant has no power. A servant doesn't rule others.

Jesus was born in a stable. Does a stable seem like a home for a king or for a servant? Really, a stable is a place for animals! Not even a lowly servant would usually stay in such an uncomfortable, humble place. Yet that's where our Savior, King Jesus, was born. Jesus will be a servant, God said, "in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49:3).

Jesus, our Servant-King, was born that first Christmas night in a lowly manger. He never did anything wrong, but Jesus, our Servant-King, was punished for all of our sins on his cross. Jesus died in our place and came alive again. Now, God forgives our sins. He is our Friend—our Best Friend forever! When our life here on this earth ends, we will live with Jesus in heaven.

Taking It Home

A *miracle* is something that only God can do. We're going to learn about a lot of miracles that happened when Jesus was born. This week when you place the stickers on your Countdown-to-Christmas card, you'll start to see the very beginning of a stable. As you complete the activities on the back of the card, remember the miracle of the Savior-King, Jesus, and thank him for all he has done for us.

#MIMXXDF