



A Christmas Donkey's Diary Adaptive Version by Rosie MacIntyre

Information for Teachers/Parents:

This is an adaptive version of 'A Christmas Donkey's Diary' written by Tony Bower, York Schools and Youth Trust. Language has been simplified or altered and songs and actions from the original have been redacted in an attempt to make this accessible for a variety of differently abled children.

Travel with donkey detective from Nazareth to Bethlehem as he seeks to unravel the Christmas story. Pick up clues along the way and store them on his saddle.

Teachers or parents can assemble the 3D donkeys and cut out the 6 clues ready to be glued onto his saddle bags ahead of the session.

Download the donkey cut-out sheet here:

www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-christmas-donkey

Teachers/parents may prefer to print the image of the donkey in a larger size to enable the children to see the clues being attached by the teacher for groups where children would benefit from this adaptation.

There are 3 parts and you could incorporate movement breaks in between each section to help children focus, or use separate parts throughout the day, if this would be more suitable for your group's learning style.

Introduction

In the Bible, our book about God, donkeys are very important. There is even one donkey, who belonged to a man called Balaam, who talked so that Balaam could hear God's message!

Today we are going to listen to the story of the first Christmas as told by Mary and Joseph's donkey!

Listen carefully to the Donkey's Christmas Diary and try to spot the 6 clues he picks up along the way. We have pictures of each of the 6 clues and when we find a clue we will stick it to donkey's saddle bags.

Donkey is going to tell the story now:



A Christmas Donkey's Diary

Part 1

There are 3 things you need to know about me:

I can understand what humans say.

I am very curious, like a detective.

I love eating beetroot.

My story begins in the middle of the day in the hot sun. I could tell something special was going to happen.

A feather lighter than any feather floated into my stable.

A feather brighter than a star landed in my stable.

I remember looking down at the ground and staring at the feather: I sniffed it with my nose and it smelt like it was from heaven. This was an important **clue**.

I decided to keep it with me always, so I scooped it up in my mouth and dropped it in one of my saddle bags

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

What does donkey say next?

I was still dazed when I heard Mary singing.

She was singing in the house and has a beautiful voice and is the kindest human I know.

She came out of the house and her face was shining. She was shining from the inside out.

Mary said: "I am the maidservant of God most high. May it be to me as you say." That's what I said to the angel"

An angel! That's what the feather is.

That night I slept with an angel's feather under my big head.

Mary loved a man called Joseph and Joseph loved Mary. They were very happy and were going to get married.



The next day I saw Joseph walk out of Mary's house and slam the door. Joseph never slammed doors. Joseph came over to me and stroked my head.

He said, 'I thought she loved me'.

I tried to say 'She does' but he was sad and went away.

Why was Joseph sad? I was confused.

The next morning, I saw him running. It was very early and everyone in Nazareth was asleep.

Joseph said, 'Last night I had a dream, an amazing dream. It was so real. It was all about Mary and the baby'

He said 'It was an angel who spoke to me and told me. An angel!'





A Christmas Donkey's Diary

Part 2

After the angel visits, I saw a lot of Joseph. He was very happy. One morning he said we were going on a journey to see a family friend of Mary's called Elizabeth.

When we got to Elizabeth's house her husband Zechariah opened the door to greet us.

Mary said 'Hello Zechariah'.

Zechariah signed 'hello'

Mary said 'It's good to see you again Zechariah'

Zechariah signed that it was good to see Mary too. He tried to talk but no words came out.

Elizabeth came to Mary and Zechariah and said,

'Zechariah was on duty as priest at the Temple. He was met by an angel. The angel said we would have a child and he would be a special messenger who would help prepare people for the coming of God's son. He didn't believe the angel so the angel said he couldn't speak until the baby was born'.

Elizabeth is going to have a baby and Mary is going to have a baby too.

Mary's words were beautiful. She said;

'My soul glorifies the Lord

And my spirit rejoices in God my saviour'

Elizabeth put some swaddling clothes into one of my saddle bags just before we left for home as gifts for Mary's baby. This is another important clue.

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

When we got home to Nazareth Joseph told Mary that we would have to go to Bethlehem.

Mary asked 'Why?'



Joseph said, 'The Roman Government want everyone to be counted and recorded so they know how many people there are.'

'But why Bethlehem?' Mary asked

'That's where my family come from' Joseph said.

'Joseph said 'It's time to get ready for the journey' and **he tied a shepherd's staff onto one of my saddle bags. This was another important clue.**

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

What does donkey say next?

We set off on our journey:

We walked by the hills,

We walked by the valleys,

We walked in the heat of day,

We walked in the cold of night.

I wondered,

'How far is it to Bethlehem?'

'How long will this journey take?'





A Christmas Donkey's Diary

Part 3

We had arrived in Bethlehem and it was a small town. It was busy and crowded and there were no rooms in sight. There was nowhere for Mary and Joseph to spend the night.

There was no room for us anywhere. Nowhere to stay, nowhere to lay and no hay!

I could smell hay though and I started to pull Joseph. I pulled and pushed in the direction of the hay and the street led me to an inn. There was a wooden door so I kicked it. There was the hay!

Joseph grabbed hold of me tightly.

I stuck my neck out and grabbed a mouthful of hay and tried to give it to Mary. I threw it into the air and some fell down and **landed in one of my saddle bags. This was another important clue.**

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

The man who owned the inn that the door belonged to came out to see what had happened. He said to Mary,

'It looks like you're going to have a baby and soon. I am sorry but my inn is full and I can't offer you a room'

He smiled and said 'I have an idea. You could spend the night in the stable. It's very warm with lots of hay'

'Thank you' 'Mary and Joseph said.

As we went inside, I saw a bright shining star. It was brighter than any star I had ever seen and it was so, so big. **This was another clue so I put a picture of a star into my saddle bag.**

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

I was looking forward to going to sleep but Mary's baby was born! His name is Jesus.

'Just as the angel told me' said Mary 'Jesus, the Son of God'.



I was eating a nice piece of beetroot when the stable door was flung wide open.

There were big, smelly shepherds and they were smiling. They were excited to see Jesus and they wanted to worship him. They said baby Jesus was a Saviour.

My heart was so full with love I think it could have spilled over into my saddle bags. **That is the last clue that something important was happening.**

(Teacher/parent to encourage child/children to find the right clue and to assist in sticking it to donkey's saddle bag)

This is my story of the love of God for all of us and I remember the sense of peace and joy as the star shone as bright as an angel on baby Jesus.

