

Before you start, tell the children that you will need their help to tell the story. They need to pretend to be little woodland creatures - get them to think what they might be - and then to practise some actions: knocking; waving hello; 'running away' (in their seats!); shivering; cheering.

Narrator I'd like you to meet my friend, Theo. As you can see, Theo is a bear. And not just any old bear. Theo is an ENORMOUS bear!

Theo Hello, everyone. Have you opened your Advent calendars today? I'm really looking forward to Christmas this year.

Narrator Don't you look forward to Christmas every year, Theo?

Theo Yes, but this year's special. This year I know what Christmas is all about.

Narrator What do you mean?

Theo Do you know the story about the special baby who was born at Christmas?

Narrator Yes, of course I do. God came to earth as a human baby, and Christmas is his birthday. Does anyone know the name of the special baby who was born at Christmas?

[take answers]

That's right: Jesus.

Theo Well, I knew that story too, but it didn't make any sense to me. Why would *God* be born as a human baby? God can do anything he likes! Why would he come to earth and be born in a stable? But then one day last winter, I found out why.

Narrator What happened, Theo?

Theo I was at home on my own. I was nice and warm in front of the fire, but outside the snow was falling fast.

Narrator Oh, I like the snow, Theo! Does anyone else here like snow? What do you like best about it?
[take answers]
You said it started to snow, Theo. So what happened next?

Theo Well, then something made me jump. It was a sound like someone knocking on the door.
[get the children to make a knocking sound]
Or maybe someone throwing snowballs at the window.
[knocking sound again]
I looked out of the window, and what do you think I saw?

Narrator I don't know, Theo. What did you see?

Theo I saw a crowd of little creatures.

Narrator Little creatures like these, Theo?
[get the children to wave hello]

Theo Yes - just like those. They'd got lost in the snow and somehow found their way to my house. They were freezing cold, and the knocking noise was them banging into my door as they tried to shelter next to my house.

Narrator Poor little creatures! What did you do?

Theo Well, I wanted to bring them in out of the cold, but as soon as I opened the door they ran back and tried to hide behind some bushes.

Narrator [*get the children to 'run away'*]
Didn't you ask them to come in?

Theo Yes, of course I did, but they didn't seem to understand me. But then I had an idea. I went back into the house and found some nice fruit and chocolate, and I made a trail from the door out towards the bushes where the little creatures were hiding. I thought they might follow the trail and come into the house.

Narrator Good thinking, Theo. Did it work?

Theo No. The little creatures just sat in the snow and shivered.

Narrator [*get the children to shiver*]
Those poor little creatures! What did you do?

Theo Well, I tried to get them to follow me into the house, but they just ran away from me.

Narrator [*get the children to 'run away'*]
Oh no! The little creatures were frightened of you.

Theo That's right. To them, I was just a very big, powerful, scary bear. I thought: if only I could find some way to let them know that they can trust me - that I just want to help them.

Narrator But how? They wouldn't follow you or listen to you, because they were too scared.

Theo I know. And then I thought: if only I was a little creature like them. If I could be one of them and speak their language, then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to the nice warm house. But I'd

have to be one of them, so that they could see me and hear me and understand me.

Narrator But Theo, if you were one of them, then you'd be shivering in the snow too.

[get the children to shiver]

Theo Yes, but I'd be able to help to save them.

[pause]

And then I thought: *now I understand*. That's what God did, wasn't it? He became a human like us, so that we could see him and hear him and understand him, and we'd let him look after us.

Narrator That's right, Theo. God had something special to tell us, and the best way of telling us was by being born as one of us.

Theo When Baby Jesus grew up, he told everyone how much God loves us. And that's why I'm looking forward to Christmas so much this year. Because I *love* Christmas presents and I *love* Christmas dinner - but Baby Jesus tells me that what God loves most is me - and you - and everyone.

Narrator Theo, what happened to the little creatures in the end? I don't like to think of them shivering in the snow.

[get the children to shiver]

Theo One of them was very brave. She realised that I was trying to help them, and she brought all the others into the house.

Narrator Hurray!

[get the children to cheer]