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MERRY CHRISTMAS everyone!

CHRISTMAS DAY 25/12/17

(Monday – ALL)

Messy PLAN

Luke 2:1-21

Big Idea: The manger is given as a sign to the shepherds – to find the right baby. Lying in *a manger* in Bethlehem – the “house of bread” - it’s a great sign of the one who will *feed souls* – when he again is wrapped in cloths after his death for our sins – in God’s plan the messy manger leads to a messier cross. His resurrection brings the great feeding at Pentecost (bread festival) – and the great cleanup through God’s Spirit.

Key Verse: Luke 2:16 *So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in THE MANGER.*

Story: the mess of our plans at Christmas... so much to plan we can forget the purpose. Also: when you try to point out something to your dog, the dog just looks at your finger, not where it’s pointing.

Qn: Do we do that with the manger?

CTA: When you see the manger on a card, yard, or shops...don’t stop at the crib. See what it’s pointing to... that this baby is already being spoken of as God’s true Saviour and King.

Metaphor: Manger Danger

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I hope today brings you some GREAT GIFTS from under the tree.
But I wonder if you've ever got a present that's... you know... *NOT THAT THRILLING. NOT GREAT.*

[#BAD GIFT STORY]

Like this HORSE – if that's what it is – some thing TROJAN inspired?

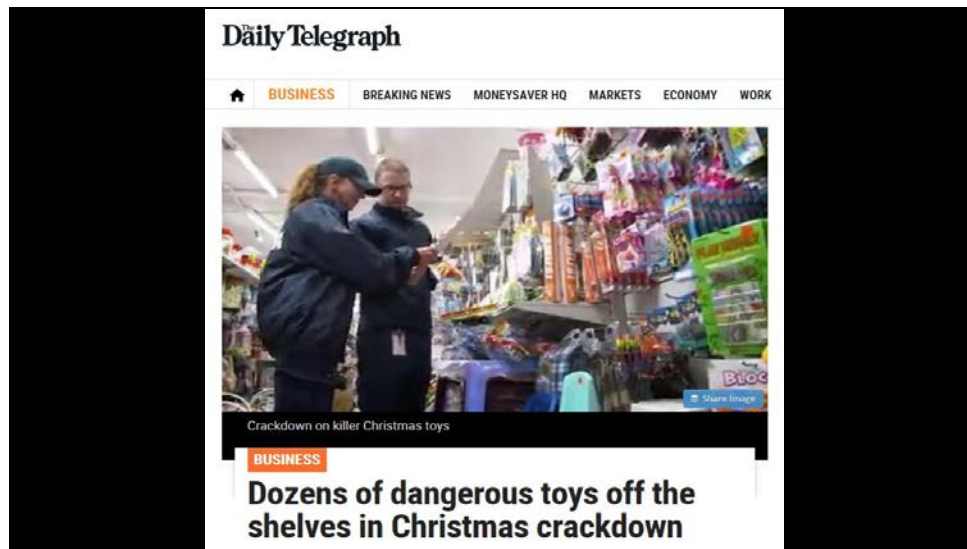
I'm pretty sure the person who gave me this isn't here – but if y'are – Merry Christmas!

Peace on Earth! What Child is This?

...can't even say "it's practical"... it's impractical ...it's ugly... and it's DANGEROUS!

*...these little metal bits... I think that's what they call "CHOKING HAZARDS" – **VERY DANGEROUS!***

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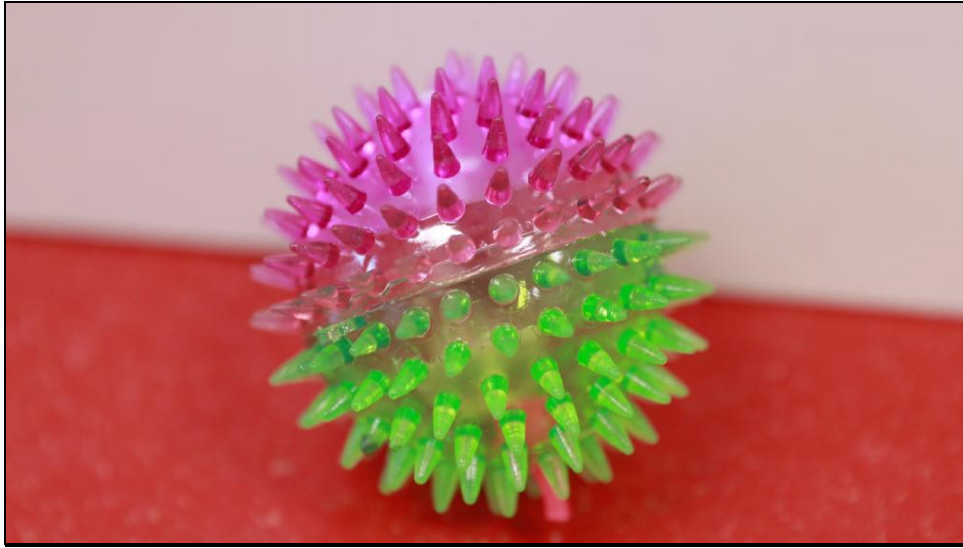
You need to BE CAREFUL don't you??

...every year they're telling us about **DANGEROUS GIFTS**.

...this report talks about **SEVERAL TOYS** taken off our shelves this year...

...GIFTS WITH A **HIDDEN DANGER**

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Like the ***LIGHT UP SQUEAKY BALLS***
...which contain SMALL parts
...which could CHOKE a child.

That's just *ONE*...

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Of **FORTY-ONE** toys in the report
...that pose a **real DANGER**
...**DEADLY danger**

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Hey if y'RECOGNISE ANY OF THEM – still under your tree

...y'might want to TAKE ACTION

...sometimes a gift can be a DANGER

...& sometimes it's surprising **WHAT** can be a danger

Like say... a...

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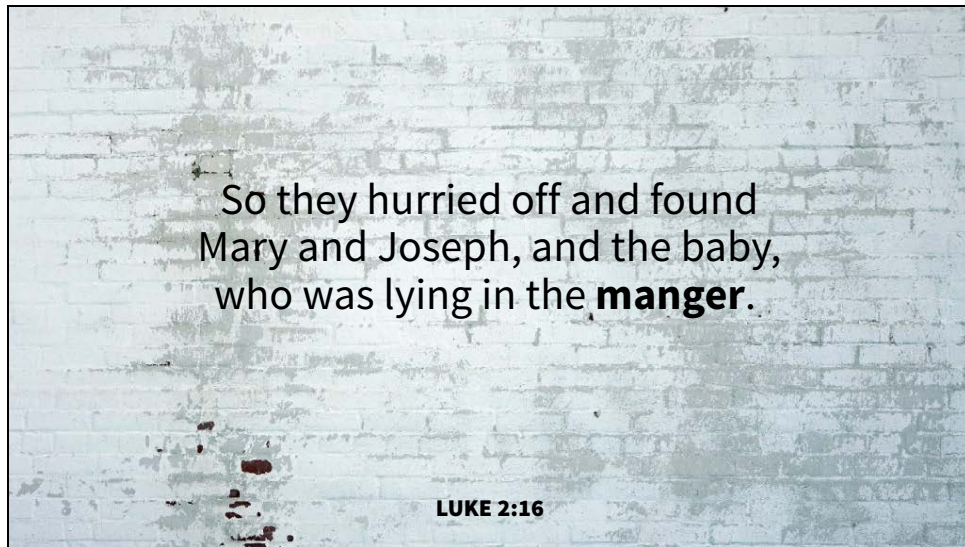


MANGER

The ***manger*** in the story we just heard read by _____

With these HARMLESS sounding words...

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So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the **manger**.

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WONDERFUL STORY! - but I reckon there's A DANGER here

...it's not *STRANGER* danger...

...no, it's more the danger of the **FAMILIAR**

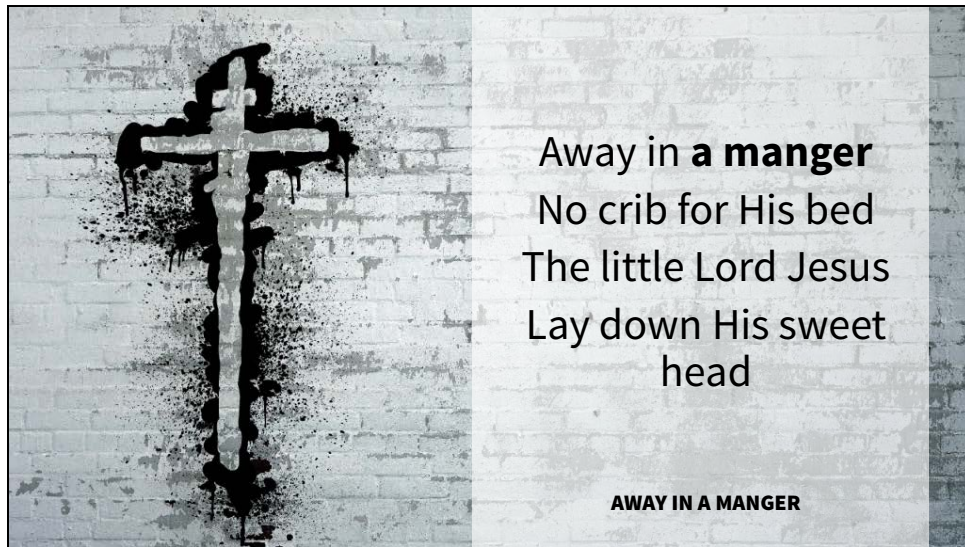
Call it "**MANGER DANGER**" if you like

....'cause most of us – every year it's the same

...the Christmas RITUALS... the *tree*, the *presents*, the *food*

...and this quaint little story of the BABY IN THE MANGER

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There's the BEAUTIFUL SONG *ALL ABOUT* the manger we just sang – *NAMED* for the manger:

Away in a manger
No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head

It's BEAUTIFUL! ...but *HERE'S* THE DANGER...

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The danger is WE JUST SEE THE MANGER

...the *AURA* of it... the *SENTIMENT*... all the *FEELS*

...and hey there's *PLENTY GOOD STUFF* to feel about this birth

But it's only when we stop and think BEYOND THE MANGER

...lift our eyes to where this manger IS POINTING

...that we then see the TRUE BEAUTY of it

I mean let me ask this: WHY IN ALL THE EARTH IS THIS BABY, JESUS, BORN...

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In a FOOD TROUGH??!!

...cause that's what a manger IS...

...to complete the picture – there should be SOME ANIMALS having a feed...

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A SHEEP or two

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Or a COW

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Some PIGS... well, maybe not pigs...

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But *ANIMALS* FEEDING here, y'see?

NOT

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A **BABY** LYING HERE

WHY?

Why a MANGER?

Why a FOOD TROUGH for a crib?

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If you've just joined us at Creek Road – over this Christmas week

...we've been looking at the **SURPRISES** of the Christmas story

...especially - how **MESSY** it all is

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Messy PEOPLE

...stinky shepherds were first to meet this baby

