

The origins of the crib



L.O – I know about the origins of the Christmas Crib

At Christmas, we have many traditions. We decorate our houses, put pretty lights up and decorate our Christmas trees. We make our list for Santa and get excited about getting and receiving presents. It is very easy to get distracted in all of the excitement of Christmas to forget the real meaning of Christmas.



The tradition of the Christmas crib dates back to 1223. St Francis was a deacon in a town called Greccio in Italy. Greccio was a small but beautiful town on hillside. The church in the town was too small for everyone to go to so not everyone could attend mass together.



As Christmas got closer, Francis had an idea to bring everyone together for Christmas mass. He wrote a letter to his friend asking him to spend Christmas time with him. He asked him to build a stable like the one in Bethlehem so everyone could celebrate mass together and his friend kindly agreed.



At the Christmas midnight mass, everyone gathered together. Torches and candles were lit and a special surprise was waiting for the people. Francis had arranged for the nativity scene to be set up with people acting the parts of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds and angels. The people were overjoyed to see the nativity scene. Mass was celebrated, hymns were sung, prayers were said and everybody truly remembered the real meaning of Christmas.



The Christmas crib idea spread quickly across the world. It reminds us that Jesus was born in a poor lowly stable to save us from sin.



The symbolism of the manger is very important. When Jesus was born he was placed in a wooden manger. When Jesus died, he was on a wooden cross.



Activity – Draw a picture of the nativity scene and write about how it first began

