

25 Days of Advent

Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

ADVENT DAY 10: Dec. 10 – Manger Animals, the First Witnesses

Devotional

In his book, *An Angel's Story*, Max Lucado sets the scene for the animals.

"I've heated the water!"

"No need to yell, Joseph. I hear you fine."

Mary would have heard had Joseph whispered. The stable was even smaller than Joseph had imagined, but the innkeeper was right – it was clean. I started to clear out the sheep and cow, but Michael stopped me.

"The Father wants all of creation to witness the moment."

Mary cried out and gripped Joseph's arm with one hand and a feed trough with the other. The thrust in her abdomen lifted her back, and she leaned forward.

"Is it time?" Joseph asked.

She shot back a glance and he had his answer. Within minutes the Anointed One was born. I was privileged to have a position close to the couple, only a step behind Michael. We both gazed into the wrinkled face of the infant. Joseph had placed hay in a feed trough, giving Jesus His first bed.

All of God was in the infant. Light encircled His face and radiated from His tiny hands. The very glory I had witnessed in His throne room now burst through His skin.

Think about it for a minute...God wanted all creation to witness the birth – the cows and sheep, donkeys and goats. If you have a pet, you know how they become a part of the family. And this family, with no judgment or doubt or fear, happily gave up space in their small stable to make room for the King of Kings.

Look Up – Connect with God

Read: Luke 2:6-12

Key Verse: "This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12)

Pray: Father God, thank you for dogs and cats and goats and chickens that bring such joy and love to our lives; they help us learn what unconditional love truly is. May we show that same love and joy to each other as we prepare for Jesus's birth this Christmas season.

Look In – Family Memories

Discuss: If you have a family pet, talk about how you think he or she would have reacted had they been in the stable that first Christmas night. Remind yourselves that God created animals and gave them personalities too.

Activity:

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of a sheep, cow, goat, or donkey and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #10, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., take the family pet for a walk). [Family Activities](#)

Look Out – Connect with Others

Contact your local animal shelter and offer to volunteer as a family to help animals in need. Alternatively, if you have access to a farm, you could offer to help the farmer prepare for the holidays.