

**December 24, 2014 – 4:00 pm Vigil Mass with Children**

**God's Love – Our Love**

I have some questions for you younger ones and some for you older ones.

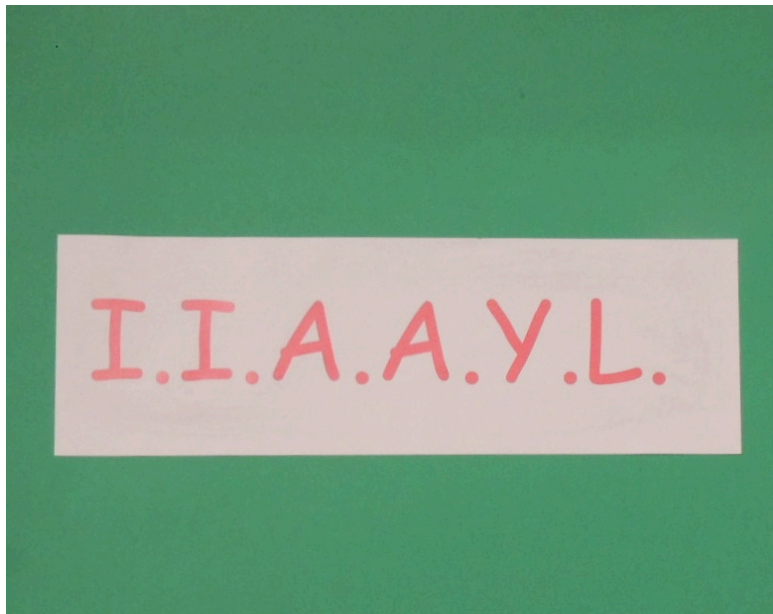
So, who is between the ages of 2 and 5?

Between the ages of 6 and 9?

Older than 9?

How many like to hear stories or read stories?

*[showing the cover of a large, home-made book with poster-board pages]*

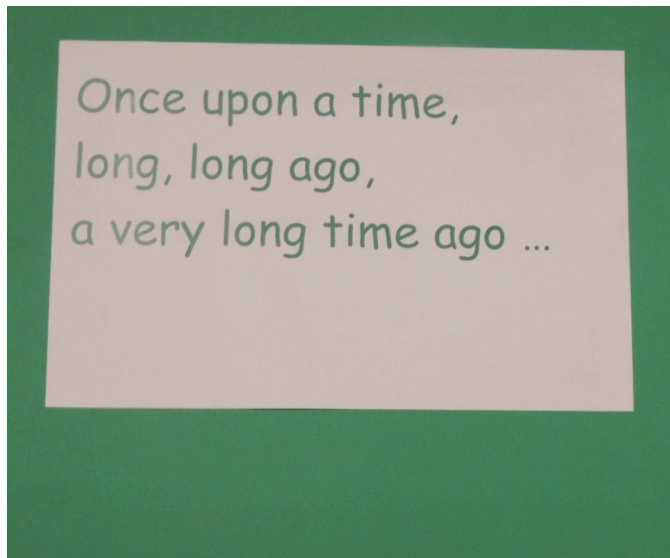


Have you ever heard of this one? I.I.A.A.Y.L.?

(no prompting from you adults!)

No? Well, then, let me tell you this story!

*[showing page 1 of book]*

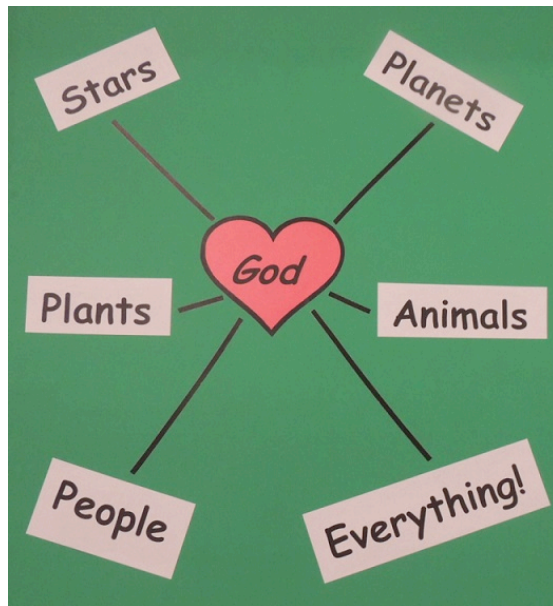


Once upon a time, long, long ago - a very, very long time ago

How long ago?

Well scientists' best estimate is about 14 billion years ago ...

*[showing page 2 of book]*



God was a very, very loving God.

I'll use a heart to be an image of God.

A question for younger ones, ages 2 - 5:

"Why did I make God in the shape of a heart?"

Right!-- because the most important thing we know about God is that God is all about love!

Because God was so loving he created the whole universe:

- All the stars and galaxies
- All the planets - we had to have stars before we had planets!
- All the plants, trees, bushes, fruits and vegetables
- All the animals
- And finally all of us people!

Yes, God made everything!!!!

And, because God made everything, God loved everything.

How about you? How many of you ever make things?

- How many of you have built a sand castle on the beach?
- How many ever created a drawing?
- And, how many of you ever built a house or a rocket with Legos?

When you make something you want to keep it safe,  
maybe protect from others so they don't mess it all up.

If it is really special you might even say "I love it!"

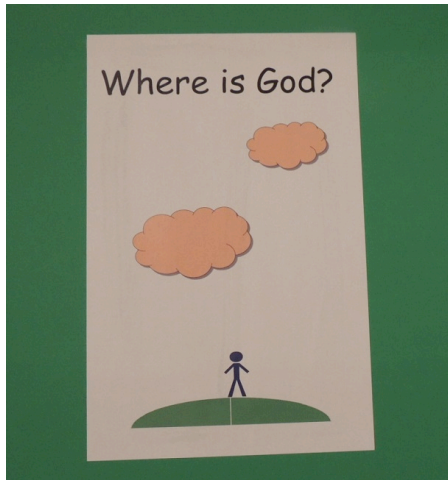
So it is with God.

God made us, he loves us, and God wants good things for us.

Wow, this God is really great!

Now, here is a question for one of the older kids:

*[showing page 3 of book]*



Where is God?

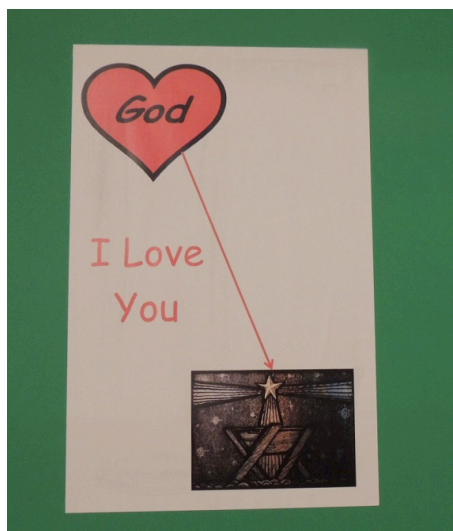
Where else?

God is a spirit so we don't see God.

Lots of people wondered about God and what God wanted us to do.

God had a solution to that problem.

*[showing page 4 of book]*



God sent us Jesus, God's son who was a person like us.

It was God's way of saying "I love you!"

We have many names for God's son.

What are some of them?

- Jesus
- The Christ
- The Lord

Another question for the anyone between age 3 and 6:

"On what day do we celebrate the birth of baby Jesus, Jesus the Christ?"

*[showing page 5 of book]*



Here's a calendar, and sure enough Christmas, December 25<sup>th</sup>, is when we celebrate the birthday of Jesus, the Christ child!

Here's one for the those older than 7:

Now, what do you think of this nice house where Jesus was born?

Oh! Baby Jesus was not born in such a nice house?

Where was he born?

You say he was born in a stable?

And they put him in a manger? What's a manger?

A manger is big tray where we place the food for the cattle.

*[showing page 6 of book]*

A stable is place for keep animals - cows, donkeys, etc.

So, it looks something like our stable here in the back of church?

If Jesus was born today it would be like us saying Jesus was born in our garage!

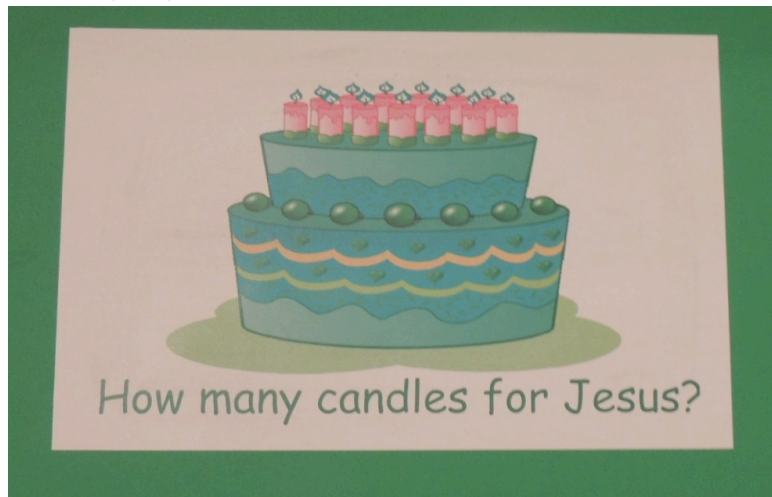
Good grief!

Such a great person born in such a small, dirty, unheated place!

Now that we are sure **when** Jesus, the Christ, our Lord, was born and **where** he was born how about this question?

"How many candles should we put on his birthday cake?"

*[showing page 7 of book]*



Wow! How many?

Yes, one for every year!

This year is 2014 so Jesus' cake should have 2014 candles.

Jesus was so, so important that we count the year of his birth as year zero.

The the actual date of Jesus' birth was a little earlier.

The person who first figured this out made a mistake in the counting.

Based on more evidence, Jesus is really a few years older than 2014.



But, what really matters is that our calendar is still based on when Jesus was born.

Now, finally, we get to the title of this book we are reading!

Because we are celebrating the birth of Jesus

Because we use his birth to count the years on our calendar

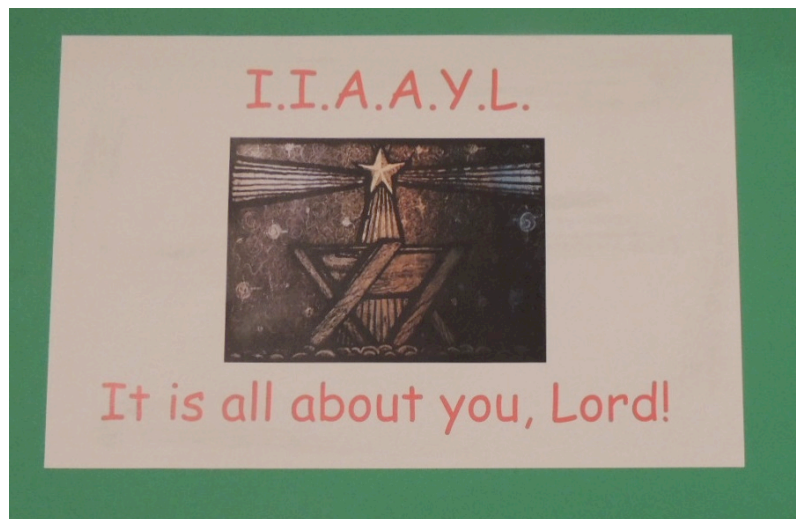
Because he is the most important person who ever lived

Because Jesus is God's very own son

Because God loves us so much

We should call this book:

*[showing page 8 of book]*



***IIAAYL***, that is

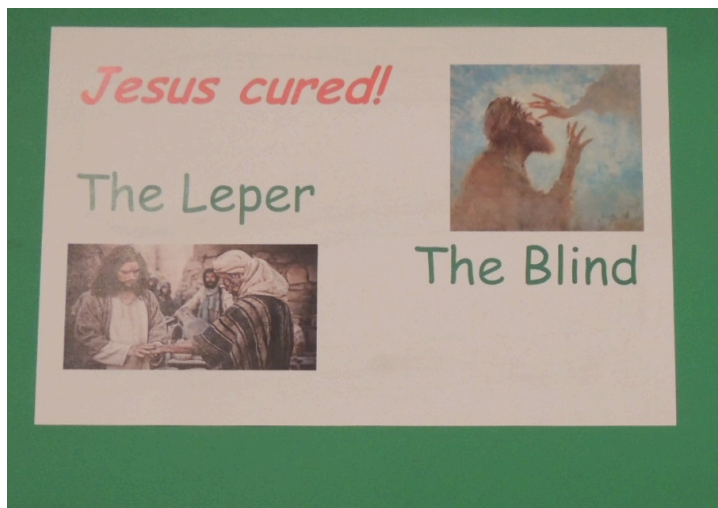
***It is all about you, Lord!***

Yes, today, Christmas, is all about Jesus, the Christ, the Lord!

But, there is a little more to this story.

Jesus grew up to be a man and did amazing things.

*[showing page 9 of book]*

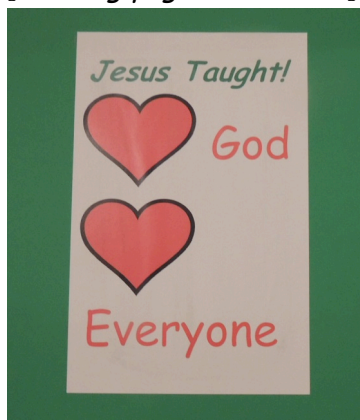


Jesus cured the blind and the leper!

Have you ever heard of any doctor who can make immediate cures?  
Even with all of today's technology, doctors can't make immediate cures!

What other amazing things did Jesus do?

*[showing page 10 of book]*



Jesus also was known for his preaching.

He taught us what was most important to God.

He taught us that God wants us to do two things:

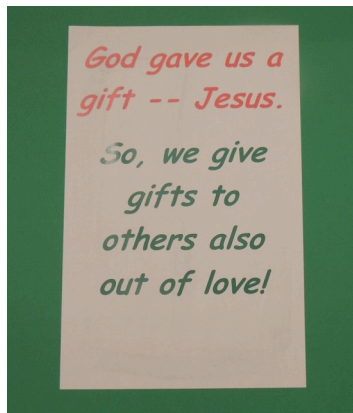
Love God

and

Love Everyone - our family, our neighbor, our friends and people we don't even know!



*[showing page 11 of book]*



So, our very last page in the book tells us more about Christmas.  
 God loves us so much God gave us Jesus, God's own son.  
 Jesus is God's gift to us.

And that is why today, on Christmas we give gifts:

To others.  
 To our families  
 To our friends  
 To the homeless  
 To families who are less fortunate.  
**We love them!**

Remember why your family is giving you gifts ... they love you!

Now I want you to do two things:

1. Give your family a big hug to show them that you love them!
2. And then tell them the Good News: "God loves you!"

OK, what are you going to tell them?

OK, go back to your pews and tell them!