***A Christmas to Remember: Make Your Own Nativity***

**Advent Scripture:** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2: 10-12)

**Lesson #1: What can we learn from the Cow at the Manger?**

**Leader:** Welcome! We are spending Advent learning from the animals who were there on the night Jesus was born! Let’s begin with a very special song!

(Play or sing the song *The Friendly Beasts.)*

**Leader:** And now (get out a microphone)… welcome to the News!!

**INTERVIEWER**: Good Morning and welcome to the Morning News. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (to children) What kinds of animals do YOU think there were at Jesus’ birth? (Let several children respond.)

**INTERVIEWER:** Today we are going to interview an animal that was at the birth of Jesus.

Our first guest is a… COW! We are going to go to his home and interview him!

Let’s go… (Invite the children to walk in a big circle and sit back down)

And here we are… Mr. Cow?

**COW:** Hello… thanks for coming to visit me!

**INTERVIEWER:** We are spending Advent (the four weeks before Christmas) making a very special Nativity Set so that we always remember Christmas 2020! Today we are making our stable and I wonder if you could tell the children what a stable is.

**COW:** What a stable is? It is my home! I live in a stable with lots of other animals. They are my friends! I live with my friend the horse, my friend the pig, my friend the rooster, my friend the sheep and my friend the mouse. We love our home. It is wonderful.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you like this home?

**COW:** Of course, I do. I know what you are thinking. I know it is cold because it doesn’t have heat… but animals don’t need heat. We have fur and it keeps us warm.

And it is filled with hay which is scratchy to people, but to animals it is warm and smells good! And it tastes delicious!!

And it smells of animals! People don’t like how animals smell but we don’t mind at all! It is just how we are… sort of stinky. But we don’t even smell it anymore!

**INTERVIEWER:** So it seems like a nice home for animals.

**COW:** It is! A stable is a wonderful home and do you want to know what our favorite part of the stable, our home, is? It is the manger! The manger is a great thing… it is huge bowl! Yep, the farmer comes and puts our food into the manger everyday and we eat and eat! We animals LOVE to eat! And the manger is our big food bowl!

**INTERVIEWER:** Nice! Thank you for teaching us about your home. Is there anything else you would like to share before we end this interview?

**COW:** Yes, Do you know that my home is talked about in the Bible? It is! It was my home that helped on the night that Jesus was born! Those poor people had come such a long way and had no place to stay. All the hotels were full and it was cold and just an awful night. We, my friends and I were all bedded down for the night. And then our farmer came in and he had a woman and man with him. We were confused at first, but then we understood. Those people were going to stay the night with us! So we all moved over to make room and then the baby was born! And there was no place to lay him. It was my idea to lay him in the manger!

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow… they were lucky to find your stable to stay in!

**COW:** Yes, they were. The stable kept them warm and safe. There were criminals on the streets and it was cold. They could have been hurt or become very sick, but my home, the stable kept them warm, safe and dry! It gave them protection!

We all need protection! We all need a safe and loving place! I wonder if the children here today have a safe and loving place to live. Do you?

(Let the children respond)

**COW:** Good! I hope you always have a safe and warm home and I am glad my home could be that for Jesus!

**INTERVIEWER:** Well, I hate to end this interview but we have to get busy! Guess what we are making today? A stable of our very own! And whenever the kids look at it I know they will remember you, Cow, and also be thankful for their homes and parents and all of those who keep them safe and warm and protected!

Kids, let’s thank the Cow for showing us his home!!

(Kids all clap)

**Scripture and Reflection:**

**Scripture:**

**Leader:** It is now our sacred time.Let’s light our candle and set it in the stable. This represents the light of God. Now let’s get still … breathe in, breathe out. Listen to our Advent Scripture**.** *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.**Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.**This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”* (Luke 2: 10-12)

**Question of the Day:**

**Leader:** The stable kept baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph protected. Who or what keeps you safe and protected? (Kids share in person or if on line, type it into the chat box).

**Craft:** (Make the Stable roof (save the fence and straw for next week). Cut out the cow and the Holy family add them to the stable.

Remind the children that the stable was the home to animals and a safe place for Mary and Joseph. When they look at the stable, we hope they will remember to be thankful for their homes and for all the people in their lives who keep them safe and warm and protected!

**Blessing:** (Bless the children as they leave).