

Greatest Gift

Christmas catalogue enclosed



Briathar Dé nochtaithe do chách
God's Word open for all

National
Bible Society
of Ireland

Child of Bethlehem Winter 2009

A section of the security barrier erected on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight*

'O little Town of Bethlehem', written in 1868 by Rector Phillips Brooks from Philadelphia, is a well known and loved Christmas Carol. One night as Phillips stood on the hills of Palestine, looking out over Bethlehem, he was inspired to write these lyrics. Witnessing a quiet little town with dark streets, it was easy to think back to the birth of Christ and imagine a peaceful night when Hope entered the world.

Yet if Phillips looked out over Bethlehem today he would see a very different sight. In a country of unrest and fear, Bethlehem has become a town of danger, borders and checkpoints. A huge concrete wall separates the people of Bethlehem from Israeli citizens. People's lives are filled with hurt and despair and hopelessness.

Christmas for children in Bethlehem remains a time of limitation as celebration is prohibited. The Palestinian Bible Society (PBS) however is reaching out to these children with a message of hope and love, to help them be children, laugh and experience the joy of Christmas. With a Bible-based programme of fun days, trips, conferences and puppet shows, PBS is encouraging children and helping them to understand the hope they can have in Christ.



The Bible Society's Living Hope programme is seeking to meet the spiritual needs of Palestinian children.

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Puppet shows are one way in which the Palestinian Bible Society's Operation Palestinian Child team brings biblical messages to children.

This project started in Christmas 2000, and has reached over 20,000 children in churches, villages and schools.

The 'Child Group' within the PBS has had to work very hard to get into Bethlehem, but the Lord has kept them safe and opened the way for them. Many children have been touched with the message of Christ. A clown show gives children back laughter that has long been lost, and stories of how much God loves and cares for them are related through puppets.

Sister Pia is a volunteer with different PBS projects. She felt blessed in a camp in Beit Jala near Bethlehem as she witnessed the smiles on children's faces:

"Children get the chance to know about their faith, their Bible, and also to feel that they are one family... with borders and checkpoints, these children cannot leave their village, but in these four days, they are united together".

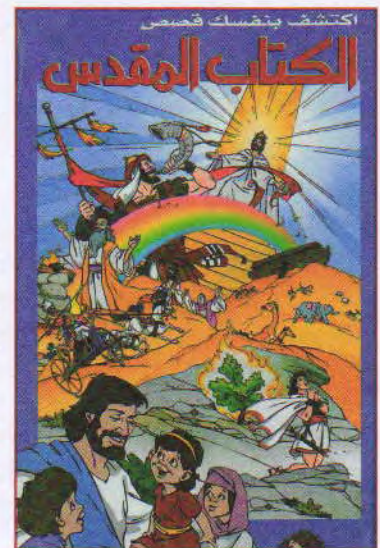
When children attend any of the PBS programmes, they receive a gift suited to their age. The gift is always accompanied by a portion of Scripture or a Bible. It is important that children don't just experience the love of God at these events but that through the Scripture gifts, they will go on to experience encouragement and blessing from God's Word every day.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (NIV) John 1:14

We celebrate Christmas in many ways, openly and without fear. We have seen the glory of God in our lives; but for many children in Palestine, this Christmas will signify another year of hurt, danger and fear. If you are touched by what these children are going through please share with them the hope that they can find in Jesus.

Pray that this Christmas will be a time of celebration for those living in Bethlehem, that they would give their fears to Christ and recognize the hope that comes only in him. Ask that this place of continued unrest and fear, which once saw the birth of a Saviour, will witness peace, and that many children would receive the gift of hope that would remain with them.

This important work is depending on your support. Your prayers and gifts of hope this Christmas can show children in Bethlehem that the Word of God truly makes 'his dwelling among us'.



'Discover the Stories of the Bible', the most favoured book given to the children.

Please use my gift to touch young lives in Bethlehem

Name: _____

Please accept my gift of:

Address: _____

€12

€25

€50

€95

Scripture
packs for 3
children

Towards training
Christian Youth
Leaders

Scripture
packs for 12
children

Towards a Day
trip to highlight
Bible teaching

Please send me a prayer booklet so I can pray regularly for this, and other Bible Society ministries throughout the world.

Tel: _____

I wish to place at least one Bible in the world each month. NBSI will offer you some options to consider.

Email: _____

Please complete the reverse of this slip and return it with your donation to:
The National Bible Society of Ireland, FREEPOST, 41 Dawson Street, Dublin 2
(NBSI pays the cost of your Freepost envelope. Using a stamp will reduce our costs.)

My gift will provide Scripture and gifts to hurting children in Bethlehem.

My cheque / postal order is payable to: 'National Bible Society of Ireland'
(Please do not send cash in the post.)

I wish to make a gift using my Credit Card
We can only accept the following cards:

Mastercard

Visa

Expiry Date: /

Card Number:

Security number:

Credit Card Signature: _____

Any gifts in excess of our pledge will support
Scripture projects in the region

To minimise cost, we will only acknowledge receipt if this box is ticked

With your help,
more children will
discover the hope of
the Gospel.

Thank You.

