

# O, Come, Little Children



The manger holds a peaceful, cherubic baby. He is lovely, in clean swaddling clothes lying peacefully in clean hay. Shepherds kneel in front, looking at the baby. Mary and Joseph smile in satisfaction. Angels hover, mouths open in beautiful song, as starlight pours in through a carefully placed window on the back wall.

This is probably not a very realistic picture of what was found in that cave in rural Bethlehem. The birth of a child amidst ruminant animals, complete with the sounds and smells that go with them, could not have been a comfortable experience. Yet, we willingly suspend our disbelief and call up this manger scene in our minds, on our mantel pieces, and in our artwork. And we annually teach it to our children.

There is nothing wrong with that. Re-creating the scene treasured in our own childhood is part of finding the child within us at Christmas time. We need to find a child within us so that we can once again open our eyes to the wonderful mysteries of which we sing. We have to find a child inside to get past the old traditions and the adult rush and the grownup's too-quick and too-simple answers to ask the questions, to see the mystery, and to wait with faith to hear the angels still singing their song. Where is that child? How do we find a child within us?

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

To find a child in us, I think we must be reminded to find *the* child in us. When we let that child's peace of mind find us, we once again see the mystery, share the wonder of the ringing bells, and, with the angels, sing "Alleluia" to our king in the silent night. We once again come, as we did as children, to Bethlehem's manger.

As little children come, they, and we, find the child. He is with us. He is our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace

Gloria in excelsis!

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