

MIKAL KEEFER &  
CHARITY KAUFFMAN

MAKER  
FUN  
FACTORY

# MADE By Me

Nativity



A Keepsake  
Christmas  
is born!



 **WARNING:**  
CHOKING HAZARD - Small parts.  
Not for children under 3 years.

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# INTRODUCTION

Merry Christmas!

You're about to have the funnest holiday season *ever*.

That's because—with this book and your creative spark—you're about to make a stack of insanely cool stuff happen.

All because you're you—and because of the *3 Christmas Secrets* that are keys to unlocking a splendiferous season.

Ready to discover those secrets? Lean in close and we'll whisper them to you...

**First, make this Christmas about others.** Sitting around imagining what gifts you might get—that's boring. *Far* better to look for ways to surprise and delight the people in your life: family, friends, neighbors, even strangers. You won't believe how much fun you'll have until you give it a try.

That's why this book is packed with gifts to make and give, new things to try, and parties waiting to happen.

Which leads to *Christmas Secret #2*...

**It's better together.** Even too-busy parents and too-cool big brothers will say yes if you ask them to join you in midnight gift-giving raids, decorating talking cookies, and inviting Mary to hop out of the nativity kit and join you for spaghetti.

Invite family and friends to join you in the adventures you find here. You'll talk about it all year long!

And here's *Christmas Secret #3*...

**It's all about Jesus.** He's not just the reason for the season; he's someone who wants to be your friend—all the time! That's why he came to earth in the first place, so make room for him this Christmas season. This book will help!

Ready to start making some holiday wonderfulness?

We're with you!

*Charity Mikal*

Charity and Mikal

# The World's Best Nativity



Best because *you'll* make it—and you can invite your family to help!

## Um, why make a nativity scene?

Because it's fun, that's why. And it gets you and your family together.

Plus, nothing does a better job of putting the Christmas story on display, out where everyone can see it. It's a reminder: Christmas is all about Jesus!

Getting Jesus front and center at Christmas was why St. Francis of Assisi (let's call him Frank) pulled together the first nativity scene way back in 1223.

Back then, paintings of the first Christmas were often stuck in big, fancy churches in big, fancy cities. Frank's friends lived in small Italian villages, and Frank wanted them to get a glance at the first Christmas, too.

So Frank set up a manger in a cave and trotted in an ox and donkey. No one is sure if anyone dressed up as Joseph or Mary, but we like to think that was part of the event.

When Frank's friends saw the cave, they loved it. They felt like they were in Bethlehem. Frank's idea was a hit—one that started a tradition that's alive and well in churches and homes today.

And that includes *your* home!

As you and your family make a nativity scene, you'll remember and celebrate that Jesus came for you. And for your friends. That Jesus came for everybody!

So, quick, go round up the supplies you'll need, and ask your family to sit down with you to make a family keepsake: your very own family nativity.

You'll also be making wonderful memories—and launching a new nativity tradition that even Frank would applaud. (We'll fill you in on the details later!)

**Oh yeah, and about the cave...**

Most nativity scenes put Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in a cheerful wooden barn. But people in Bethlehem at that time almost always kept their animals in caves out behind their houses.

Cold, drafty, nasty caves.

That's why you'll make a cave for your nativity. When someone asks you what's up with the cave, explain that the Bible never says that Jesus was born in a stable.

Go on, take a look. It's not there.

Your nativity may not look like an everyday, ordinary nativity, but it's going to be a conversation starter. Anytime a woman who's had a baby sees it, she'll make a scrunchy face. Have a baby in a cave? No way!

Except that's *exactly* what happened. And that's how much Jesus loved us—to go from a throne in heaven next to God to a smelly cave with a donkey living next door.

## ***Here are the supplies needed to make your nativity:***

We've already given you the most important pieces. Because we *like* you, that's why.

- 3 tall wooden pegs
- 1 baby-sized peg
- 1 fabric pack
- white glue (or Glue Dots, if you have them)
- fine-tip black marker
- safety scissors
- small cardboard box
- brown or gray paper



## ***Ready...Set...Create!***

### **First, make your nativity cave.**

You'll need a box about 4 inches high, 6 inches long, and 4 inches deep. Boxes sometimes hide in the back of your closet, down in the basement, or in the trash—check all those spots for a box.

So you know, you'll never find a box that's exactly the right size, so plan to carefully cut a box down to get a just-right cave. That's okay, and it's okay to just tape pieces of cardboard together to make your cave. Just make sure you claim a box you're sure someone else in the family isn't using.

Leave one 4x6-inch side of the box open—that's the mouth of your cave.

Next, cover the box with brown or gray paper so it looks more like a cave. Going for a rugged, rocky look? Lightly crumple craft paper (paper grocery bags work), and then glue the crumpled paper in place.

Or glam up your cave with colorful wrapping paper. After all, for a while the cave *did* hold the greatest gift of all—Jesus!

### **Other ways to plus your cave:**

- Pull dead grass out of your lawn to put on the cave floor.
- Draw and glue animals inside. If you went through a farm phase and still have small animal toys, pop them inside.
- Scatter a bit of dirt around—it wouldn't have been swept clean to be ready for visitors.

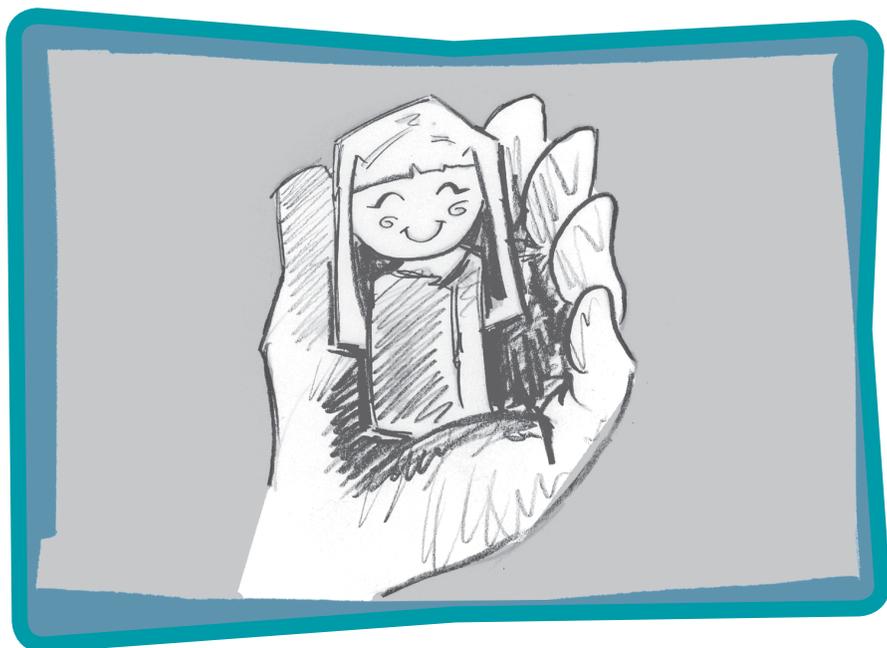


## ***Talk about this:***

If you've asked a family member or two to help you create a cave, talk about these questions as you work together. Or if you're caving on your own, here's something to think about:

- Where's your favorite place to hang out?
- Where's someplace you like hanging out that others might find surprising?
- Why do you think God chose a cave for Jesus' delivery room?





## ***Made-by-Me Mary***

**Design a Mary for your nativity scene.**

**Meet Mary...**

The Bible doesn't say much about Mary. How tall was she? What was her favorite color? Was she happy to marry Joseph, or did she wish she could just be a kid a while longer?

But here's what we *do* know:

We know God liked her and picked her to be Jesus' mom. Which is kind of a big deal. *Definitely* a big deal.

And we know Mary was young. Most girls' parents found them someone to marry when they were, like, 12...maybe 14 years old. That's right: In Jesus' day, your parents usually picked who you'd marry. You didn't get to decide for yourself.

So Mary was promised to Joseph. And then Mary was told by an angel that she'd be the mother of a baby boy who was really the Son of God.

Wow...*that's* a lot to handle!

But Mary didn't get upset. She asked a question and then said, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true" (Luke 1:38).

Want to know more about Mary? Read about Jesus' mom in the Bible: Luke 1:26-38.

## Ready...Set...Create!

Here's how to bring Mary to life for your nativity:

1. **Gather supplies:** You'll need glue (or Glue Dots), safety scissors, and one of the tall wooden pegs. Grab the fabric pack while you're at it.
2. **Select a piece of fabric from the fabric pack, and make Mary's robe.** What color do you think Mary would choose? Measure and carefully cut the fabric so you can wrap it around the peg and secure it with a Glue Dot or white glue.

Glue Dots are cool because they don't drip, but white glue works, too. With white glue you'll just have to be patient and wait for it to dry. Try singing "Jingle Bells" while you wait. Three times through the song should do it.

3. **Bling out Mary.** Use another piece of fabric, a bit of string, and whatever else you want to give Mary a belt and a head scarf. Glue everything in place.

You may need an extra pair of hands to hold fabric in place while you glue. Real (wo)men ask for help. You can, too.

4. **Draw Mary's face.** Keep it simple!

## Talk about this:

If you're working alongside a family member or two, talk about these questions. If it's just you and Mary, here's something to think about:

- What do you think about a parent picking your future husband or wife? Why?
- What do you wish you knew about Mary that the Bible doesn't tell us?
- If you could ask Mary one question, what would it be?



## *Gratitude Stockings*

Sometimes people are so busy being busy that they miss out on feeling grateful.

But thanks to you, no more!

You'll give those busy buddies a stocking full of reminders of reasons they can feel grateful today...and tomorrow...and all through the year. There are 54 slips for you to tuck in each stocking you create—one per week, all year long, with two bonus slips for especially hard weeks.

First, make your friend or family member a stand-up stocking. And, no, even if your gym socks can stand up on their own, you can't use them.

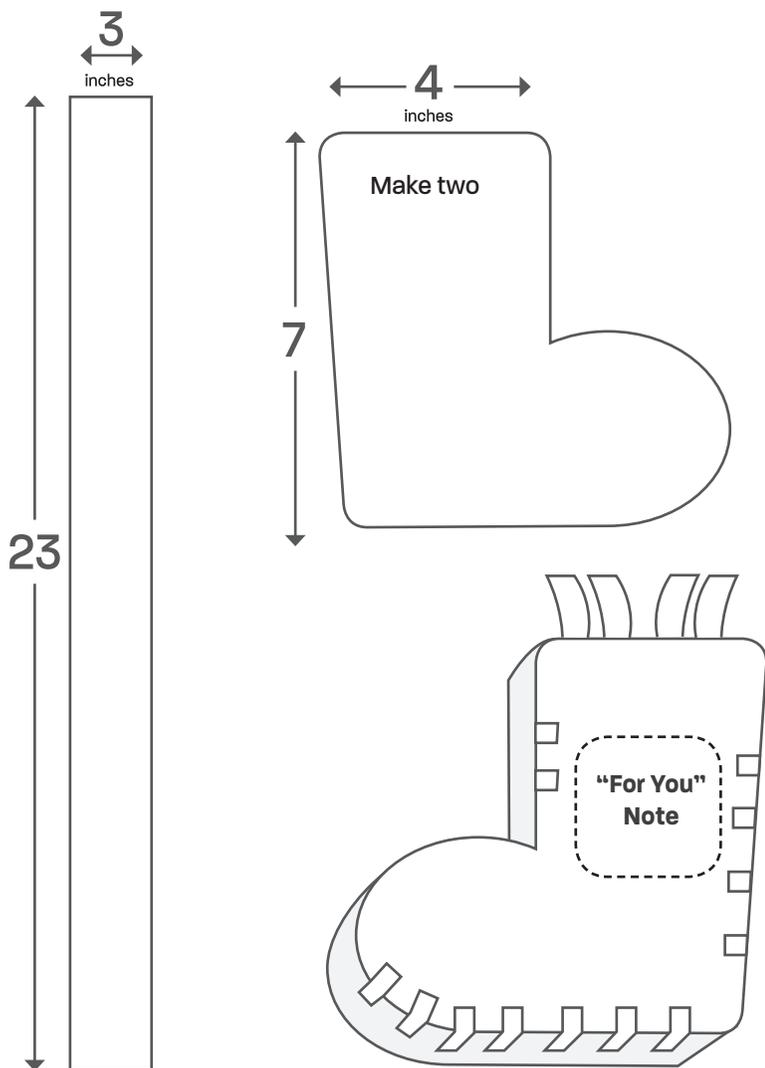
Then fill the stocking with slips of paper, each listing a reason to feel grateful. Use what we've given you, or make your own. Up to you.

Copy, sign, and tape the "For You" note to the stocking, and leave it where your friend or family member can find it.

You're giving the gift of an instant attitude adjustment!

## Here's how to make a stand-up stocking:

You'll need stiff paper and tape—that's it! This diagram will help you assemble your stocking.



**Note:** Decorate your stocking *before* you tape it together.  
Trust us on this.

**"For You" Note**



To: \_\_\_\_\_

These are for you.

They're reminders of reasons to be grateful.  
Pull one out each week or if you're having a hard day.

By the way, my Gratitude Stocking holds a slip of paper  
with your name on it.

I'm grateful for *you*!

From: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gratitude Slips to copy and cut apart:**

.....  
Be thankful you're alive—and you can choose to enjoy today.  
.....

Be thankful for the beauty of stars overhead. Stop and notice them tonight.  
.....

Be thankful for friends. Especially the ones you can trust with anything.  
.....

Be thankful for smoothies. Yum!  
.....

Be thankful for old stories you love to hear again and again.  
.....

Be thankful for the clothes you have to wear.  
.....

Be thankful for your pet—who thinks you're pretty special.  
.....

Be thankful for happy memories that bring a smile.  
.....

Be thankful for hugs. Let me know if you need one.  
.....

Be thankful that you're loved. I love you.  
.....

Be thankful for blue skies—even if they're cloudy today.  
.....

Be thankful for the beauty of freshly fallen snow. Or crunchy leaves.  
Or fields of grain.  
.....

Be thankful for exercise—so let's take a walk together.  
.....

Be thankful you can watch sports on TV. Or that you don't *have* to watch sports on TV!

---

Be thankful for the freedom to move, skip, dance, amble, and twirl in a circle.

---

Be thankful for crayons and fresh sheets of paper.

---

Be thankful for crunchy apples and sweet peaches.

---

Be thankful for Jesus—who likes you a *lot*.

---

Be thankful for warm, relaxing showers. Ahhhh!

---

Be thankful for walks in the rain.

---

Be thankful for pie. Or cake. Or both!

---

Be thankful for music that lifts your spirits and maybe gets you dancing.

---

Be thankful for long bike rides.

---

Be thankful for being able to learn new things.

---

Be thankful for laughter. What a gift!

---

Be thankful for puppies. And kittens. Anything furry that's cute and loves to lick your hand. Except for tigers.

---

Be thankful for the satisfaction of doing something nice for someone else.

---

Be thankful for new pens and freshly sharpened pencils.

---

Be thankful for leftovers ready to pull out of the refrigerator.

---

Be thankful for cheerful colors—yellow, red, green.

---

Be thankful for relaxing, refreshing naps.

---

Be thankful for the whole world at your fingertips on the internet.

---

Be thankful for smiles...and smiling.

---

Be thankful for the wake-up tang of toothpaste in the morning.

---

Okay to Copy!

Be thankful for compliments—giving *and* getting them.

Be thankful for a wander in the woods.

Be thankful for meals with friends or family.

Be thankful for being forgiven—and forgiving others.

Be thankful for good books that run away with your imagination.

Be thankful for the first bite of just-perfect pizza.

Be thankful for the feel of warm sand beneath your feet at the beach.

Be thankful for the rich, smooth taste of chocolate.

Be thankful for the sound of a friend's voice. Call one today!

Be thankful for family. Ever. Always. Even if they're not perfect.

Be thankful for the health that keeps you alive.

Be thankful for clean drinking water—any time you want it.

Be thankful for the talents God's given you.

Be thankful for the gift of listening others give to you.

Be thankful for a roof over your head and pillow beneath it tonight.

Be thankful you can have hope for tomorrow.

Be thankful for your dreams.

Be thankful for teachers who've helped you discover the world.

Be thankful for people who push you to do better, to be more.

Be thankful for good news—like hearing that Jesus loves you.

**Okay to Copy!**

(You have our okay to make copies of these three pages if you'd like, as many times as you like. Because we think you're pretty wonderful for helping others feel grateful, that's why.)



## Time Capsule Ornament

One fun part of Christmas for many families is the stories that come after someone says "Remember when...?"

The problem: Usually there's at least one person who *doesn't* remember.

With the help of your family, you'll fix that by creating an official Time Capsule Ornament.

Time capsules aren't a new thing. Sometimes when a new school or skyscraper is finished, a big box of stuff is packed away to be dug up in 50 or 100 years. Newspapers, letters, photos—they're all sealed inside and then...ignored.

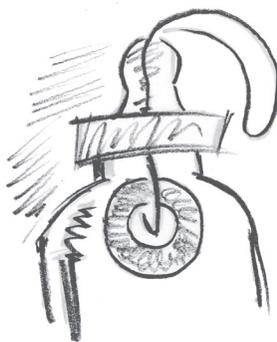
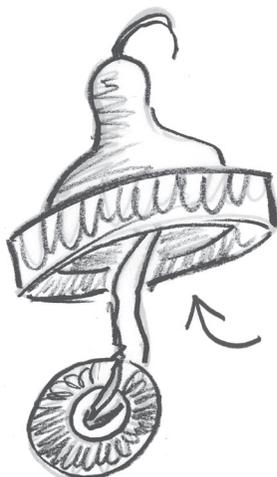
That won't happen with *your* time capsule!

For starters, you don't have much space—you'll fill a small baby bottle and hang it on your Christmas tree as an ornament. And you'll open it next year at Christmas...and the Christmas after that...and then the next Christmas. This is a family keepsake!

In fact, why not do a fresh time capsule each year? It'll be fun!

You can include whatever you'd like, but it all has to fit in a baby bottle. We suggest using a 5-ounce plastic bottle—a small, lightweight baby bottle!

Wait a minute...a *baby bottle*? Yup—because Christmas is all about a baby being born, remember? Plus, it will hang really well from a tree branch.



## Here's how to create your ornament:

1. Get a lightweight plastic baby bottle. They're usually on a shelf at the dollar store.
2. Cut a piece of paper—safely!—that fits snugly inside the bottle so you can't see what's inside the bottle. Write this year on the paper so it's visible through the bottle.
3. Collect what you'll put inside.
4. Attach the screw-on top, and either tie a thin ribbon around the top of the bottle so you can hang the bottle on your tree or create a stopper inside the bottle to let the ribbon come up through the hole in the top. We show you how to do that above.
5. Ta-da! A time capsule! In a year...or two...or 20, your family will treasure the reminder of this Christmas. You'll treasure what's in the bottle, but Mary treasured that first Christmas in her heart (Luke 2:19). Hold on to the treasure of Jesus' love in *your* heart, too!

## What to put in your bottle:

You can't add much weight, so ask family members to write their answers to these questions on small slips of paper that will fit into the time capsule. And because you'll forget who wrote what and why, include both the question and answer on each slip of paper, plus the name of the family member. Write small!

- What was special about this past year?
- What was your favorite song/TV show/band/snack food this year?
- What do you think will be the high point of the coming year?
- What's a lesson you learned this past year?
- What do you want to be doing in five years, and why?
- If you have a favorite activity or toy, what is it?
- Who's a good friend to you right now?
- What's the cost of a gallon of gas? a gallon of milk? a loaf of bread?
- Add a small family photo; ticket stubs to a movie or play you attended; and anything else that is small, lightweight, and will fit.

**Note:** If any family members aren't old enough to write or don't have the time, ask them a question and write down what they say.



# About the Authors and Illustrator



**Charity** is the undisputed Queen of Christmas Tree Decorating. She holds a Master's degree in Children and Family Ministry from Bethel Seminary. She loves snow, Christmas carols, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and Jesus—but not necessarily in that order.



**Mikal** is an old guy with a white beard, which means he's incredibly popular around Christmas. Yes, he's had kids he didn't know come up to him and announce what they want for Christmas. Awkward.



**Darrin** says he is NOT an Abominable Snowman; he just likes to hike snowy mountains on Christmas. He might be telling the truth. We're not sure. Investigations are underway. We'll keep you posted.





# MADE-BY-ME



## Nativity

A Keepsake Christmas is born!

### Get ready for the funnest Christmas season ever!

It starts with creating the world's best Nativity scene...including the guests of honor: Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and one especially excited angel!



#### THEN PICK AND CHOOSE FROM...

- **A dozen Make-'Em-Myself Gifts** for family, friends, teachers, neighbors—anybody! Family time capsules, holiday cards, gratitude stockings, and more all add up to hours of kid-captivating, parent-pleasing fun.
- **Friends and Family Fun** including offbeat activities, free field trips, a Christmas movie make-over, and more merry-making seasonal shenanigans.
- **Simple-to-Fix Christmas Kitchen Missions**—everything you need to know to make talking cookies...nutty nut baskets...and First Christmas Morning Mix.

Each project launches kids off the couch and into adventures of creativity, caring, and serving others. And parents have fun, too!

Best of all, your whole family will discover **Jesus isn't just the reason for the season—he's a friend who loves you!**

**BONUS:** These are *perfect* activities to plug into your family's Advent traditions!



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