

## **LEARNING FOR ALL AGES**

**"Today, we look at the animals. How many of us have animals in our Nativity sets? These are the animals from our nativity. (Show them)**

We imagine there could have been all sorts of animals present at that first Christmas.

Those shepherds did not come alone. Their sheep would have come along with them.

The Magi we imagine traveled by camel.

Of course, there was the donkey that Joseph and Mary travelled with to Bethlehem.

Then there would have been whatever animals we'd expect to find in a stable or barn, including such creatures as mice and spiders. Other legends also place a dog and a cat in there as well.

We can imagine there could have been quite a lot of conversation going on in animal noises!

There is a Christmas legend from Europe that at the stroke of midnight all the animals were gifted with the power of human speech, telling the story of their witness and the gift they bring. Their part in the story reminds us that we have a gift to bring, a gift to share, that is unique to who we are.

This carol, "Jesus our Brother," tells the Christmas story from the perspective of the animals that we imagine are part of the Mystery of Christmas, and the gift they each offer."