

How the Christmas Story DIDN'T Happen, or “What's Wrong with this (Christmas) Picture?”

We're so used to the Christmas story that we forget how startlingly unusual it is. The Son of God, born of a woman? The King of Kings, arriving from heaven in a stable? No room at the inn for the newborn Son of God? You can help children think about this remarkable story by telling it the way it might have happened, if Jesus had been given the princely treatment He deserved at His birth. I love telling the Christmas story this way with a completely straight face with no warning or prelude, waiting for the children to discover, one by one, that this is no ordinary retelling of the Christmas story. (Hint: one of these facts below actually IS true, just slightly disguised.)

Read this:	Here's the truth:	Scripture reference:
It starts with Mary who was about to have her first baby, who was Jesus. Because He was the Son of God, King of the Jews, King of Kings, everyone in the entire country of Israel knew He was about to be born.	Mary's cousin Elizabeth knew. We assume that Mary and Joseph's family and neighbors probably knew. We don't know of any other Israelites who knew Jesus was about to be born. (Simeon in the temple knew it would happen in his lifetime, but he didn't know when – see Luke 2:26)	Luke 1: 39-45 (The Nephites in the New World knew Jesus was about to be born: see 3 Nephi 1:13, 15)
His mother Mary and his stepfather Joseph were well known throughout the land. Joseph was a wise and good governor of Judea.	Joseph is indeed Jesus' stepfather, with Heavenly Father as Jesus' real father. Joseph was a humble, unknown carpenter.	Mark 6:3
Jesus was born in the royal palace, wrapped in the finest linen and laid in a cradle of the most prized Lebanese cedar wood overlaid with pure gold, fitting for the Son of God.	Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, which is a food box for animals.	Luke 2:7
The first to hear of Jesus' birth were the governors of all the provinces. Angels appeared to all the provincial governors to announce that their King was born.	The first to hear of Jesus' birth were humble shepherds. Angels did announce to the shepherds that Jesus was born.	Luke 2:8-14
Everyone knew the way to the palace where Jesus was born.	The shepherds found the baby Jesus, but the wise men followed the star to find Him, stopping to ask directions of the wicked King Herod in Jerusalem.	Matthew 2:1-3, 9-11
The provincial governors scheduled a visit to baby Jesus when Mary had a little time to recover from giving birth. The governors were very pleased to meet their King.	The angels said that Jesus was born “this day.” The shepherds came “with haste,” presumably the same day or night. The wise men came some time later, when the holy family was in a house, not the stable, and Jesus was a young child, not a baby.	Luke 2:11, 16 (shepherds) Matthew 2:11 (wise men)
In fact, three wise men came from the East to bring Jesus gifts: which were gold and two different kinds of tree resin, which is like tree sap only thicker.	This is actually true. The resin from the frankincense tree was burned as incense at the temple as a symbol of prayer because of the sweet smoke that ascends to heaven. The resin from the myrrh tree was used in holy anointing oil at the temple. (See Bible Dictionary for frankincense, myrrh, also “Tasting the Bread of Life,” Dec 1998)	Matthew 2:11(wise men) Exodus 30:34-36 (frankincense) Exodus 30:23-31 (myrrh)
That's the way the Christmas story happened, right?	This is a good place to bear your testimony of Jesus Christ, if you feel prompted by the Spirit.	