THE NATIVITY

1. Bethlehem Town

Materials Needed: Large pieces of white paper, red, yellow, blue, gold, black and white ready mixed paint, sponge rollers, pieces of card to use as palettes for paint, thin strips of card, small white doilies, travel brochures or old Christmas cards showing buildings in the Holy Land as a stimulus.

What to Do: Put blobs of white, red and blue paint on a card palette, use a sponge roller to irregularly mix and pick up the colours before rolling it across the large sheet of white paper to cover it with colour. Return to the card palette to reload with paint from time to time. Allow the paint to dry before rolling a second irregular colour mix over the top. Use white red and yellow paint this time and allow patches of the first colour-cover to show through for a rich background on which to print. Use black paint and the edges of strips of card to print and drag paint to create the shapes of roofs, minarets, steps, doorways etc. after looking carefully at the buildings in travel brochures. Highlight the windows and doors by dragging white paint first and printing details on top. Drag some lines of gold ready mixed paint to echo the shapes of part of the buildings. Use a sponge roller to cover the doily with gold paint before sticking it as a star above the scene.

2. The Stable

Materials Needed: White paper, paint-brushes, pieces of card as palettes for paint, red, yellow, black and white ready mixed paint, black felt-tip pens and pictures of the stable scene as illustrated on cards and in books featuring the Nativity. The Jan Pienkowski Nativity story is an excellent source for silhouettes.

What to Do: To create the drip grid background for the stable silhouette, attach a piece of white paper to an easel or tilted piece of card, load a paint-brush with runny red paint and drag it across the top of the paper encouraging the paint to dribble and run downwards. More paint or water may need to be brushed across the same edge to achieve plenty of runs. Turn the paper and repeat the same procedure along the other three edges in turn. An irregular grid should now have been created. Once the grid is dry, fill in the shapes between the lines with different shades of red, yellow and orange that you have mixed on a card palette. Outline the filled shapes with a black felt-tip pen. Use a paint brush and black paint to draw the silhouette of a stable on this rich, brightly coloured background.

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