

SHOWCASING YOUR NATIVITY AT HOME

Over the past 12 years working on the display of nativities for No Room at the Inn has been a wonderfully creative challenge. The set-up team works to display each nativity as a unique representation of God's love made manifest on earth. We thank you for trusting us with showcasing your precious nativities in the past and for helping us raise funds to aid those near and far for whom there is inadequate or lack of shelter. We look forward to sharing our exhibit next year in person.

In the meantime, we thought we'd share a few tips we have learned along the way (and secrets of the trade, so to speak) so you can have a taste of your own 'No Room at the Inn' this year at your home.

- ❖ **Consider your pets and children when you are deciding where the nativity will be showcased safely.**



- ❖ **Why not set your nativity up in a different area than you usually have placed it? Perhaps on a side table instead of the mantle this year.**



- ❖ **If you have more than one nativity you could set each one up in a different room.** When I was growing up each of my sisters and brothers had a small plastic one piece nativity that we had at our bedside.



OUR BEST TIP.....When all the nativity figures face the holy family or the baby Jesus you don't get to see the expressions on their faces. Try turning them OUTWARD to face YOU, the viewer instead.

Now everyone can see the reverence on the Wiseman's faces, the adoration of the shepherds, and the delight in the happy sheep, cows and camels.





Place your figures facing outward....to face you, the viewer.



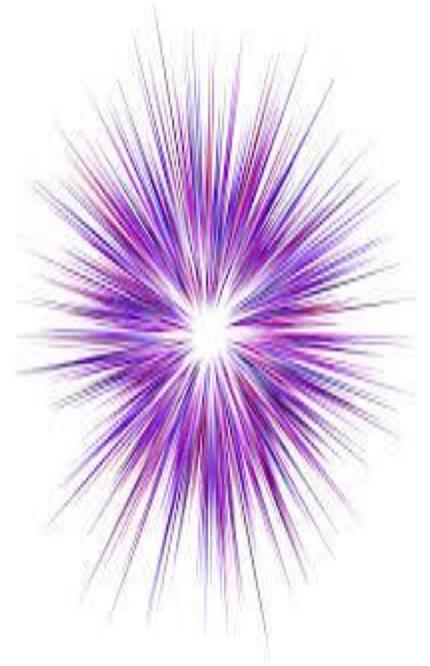
Happy camels and sheep...

- ❖ **Traditional Christmas colors of red and green can be used and may coordinate especially well with some nativities.**



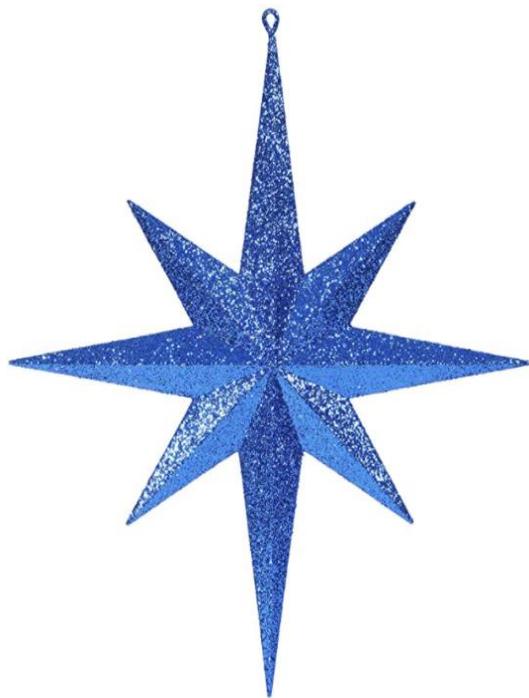
- ❖ **You don't need to limit yourself to red and green Find a color of fabric that coordinates with your figures or even a print or patterned fabric that draws the colors out from the figures in your particular set.** Depending on the size of your nativity set a 1/2-1 yard piece of one or two fabrics can make a big difference in your final set up. Even a pretty woman's scarf can be called into service.





Let your fabric print or solid color accent your figures.





- ❖ **Do you have a solid color nativity, perhaps all the pieces are white or all the pieces are wood?** It can be a blank slate and any color base fabric can work with it and show the pieces off beautifully. You could take your cue and choose colors that coordinate or accent the colors in the room it will be placed in or in the other decorations you might be using..





This intricately carved wood nativity is accented by a simple piece of open mesh ribbon and set on a deep purple cloth.

- ❖ **Fabric can be used at the base, as a backdrop or wrapped at the back of the stable and swirled forward. Let your fabric 'puddle' tucking ends under and nestling figures in the flat areas between the creases. (Avoid heavy or thick fabric as the folds or creases can make the nativity pieces wobble).**



- ❖ **Not good at coordinating or picking colors?** You could carefully wrap or box up a representative figure to take with you to the fabric store, Hobby Lobby or even Walmart fabric section. Ask for an associate to help find a fabric that coordinates. (Most creative people love that sort of challenge). Consider checking the remnant section for small pieces that would work with your colors.



- ❖ **Thrifty shoppers** could visit a thrift store or yard sale and get a woman's solid color or patterned scarf, or cut smaller sized fabric pieces from or a woman's blouse or a skirt for larger pieces. Or consult your better rags in your rag bag at home.



- ❖ **Try setting your nativity figures up on different levels.** Stacked books make a good solid base, small study boxes (taped and seam side down) or wood blocks and pieces of sturdy board can create different levels and can be wrapped loosely in burlap, draped with your own fabric or just accented with fresh or silk greenery.



Mike Michalowicz
My Nana proudly displayed this Nativity in her living room for many years. I found the Nativity as a kid in some old boxes in the basement of the house my Nana bought. It was one of her most cherished Christmas items and holds a big place in my heart as my Nana is now with Jesus in heaven.



Wife
ly, made by my
d over the years of
several other sets
ceramic made, but
that it is hardly
from her pull their own

Sturdy cardboard or wood boxes are stacked and arranged as a base and draped with fabric.

Different heights and shapes can add interest and lets you notice each individual figure in the nativity scene.

You can use other creative ways to display your nativity with or without fabric.

- ❖ You can set up a small nativity or a nativity with just three or four pieces on a cake stand, tray or plate to ‘ground’ your pieces. You can turn over a platter, bowl, planter or sturdy basket using the bottom as your ‘raised stage’ or just nestling the figures in the basket.



A tiny 14 piece nativity from Mexico is set simply on a black tray.

A small 5 piece set from Peru is nestled in a basket.

A glass block serves as a stable for this small detailed nativity.





Various size wooden trays
 (above) and an overturned
 decorative metal planter use
 accents of fabric, hay and lace.



A round basket top accented with holly gives another texture to display this natural handwoven nativity.



A pillar style candle holder displays this small clay nativity and a palm fan is a base that grounds a small nativity.



The owner of this nativity displayed it in a small terrarium.

- ❖ **For a table top nativity display consider using a blank picture frame laid flat. a mirror tile or framed mirror.** The frame could have a solid or print paper for its base, fabric, or even burlap or wrapping paper placed in it.





- ❖ Do you have wobbly or thin nativity figures or pieces that don't stand well on their own... like the set below? Consider taking a blank wood frame, taping a cardboard base to the bottom and setting it on a table. Use a layer of dried black beans, rice, sand or pea gravel as a base and set the figures in with material of the base to help hold them upright and in place. You might need to add some around the bases of the most wobbly ones to help them stand or lean them against a pine cone or small rock.





Pebbles accent this one piece carved trifold wood nativity— as do black beans in this small nativity from Mexico. Both pebbles and beans can also help wobbly pieces stay in place.





This basket supports soft figures that don't stand well on their own.

- ❖ **There is nothing like fresh greenery!** Use pine, fir or juniper branches, pinecones, straw, nandina sprigs, magnolia leaves, fresh holly, or other outside greenery as an accent around a nativity. See what your yard has or make friends with your neighbor first... then ask to clip some of theirs. It can be easily replenished and some greenery, like holly, dries beautifully.



- ❖ **Let there be light!** There are small battery operated light sets that can be used around and behind your nativity to draw your eye to it. These light sets come in various sizes and the smallest are often called fairy lights. They are available at craft and department stores. Just tuck them one or two stands of lights in and around your set and make the battery pack accessible, but tucked out of sight.



Just adding battery operated tea lights or electric candles around the display can help give your nativity set a safe glow when 'lit' in the evenings .



- ❖ **Accents and embellishments**.....adding other creative accents (bling!) can personalize your nativity. Try using sea shells you picked up on your weekend at the beach or a strand of pearls around a white or cream colored nativity, colored glass ornaments nested in with a colorful jewel-tone set. Other accents could be curls of ribbon, silk or glittered floral picks, or flat glass marbles. Christmas ornaments are great accents as are natural materials like pine needles, pinecones, wood slices, straw or hay, dried grasses, dried beans or small pebbles.



Gold poinsettia floral picks and fresh pine twigs accents.



Burlap and straw accents.



Small trees and a large Pine Cone 'tree' used as accents.

Eddie & Donna Baird
This Nativity displays the Holy Family in rustic simplicity.

Jane Castelvechi
This Nativity was handcrafted from Olive by an artisan in Bethlehem. She discovered this Nativity on her recent shopping trip.



Coordinating greenery and beaded 'bling' embellishment.

Stylized set accented by flat glass marbles and crystal bracelet.



Roberta Martin
I love color but the simple beauty



- ❖ Consider using other Christmas decorations you might already have. This tree shaped Christmas card holder was put to new use.



Accented with swirled gold brocade ribbons and small battery operated fairy lights.

Be Imaginative! Be Creative!

Remember, your nativity is transitional art, since most nativities are only up a few weeks a year.

The Birth of Christ is the reason we celebrate this season...

Make this year EXTRA special!