**Press release**
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## Christmas & Cribs

**Baby Jesus is depicted in many different ways: sometimes lying naked on straw, sometimes sitting on his mother's lap, and sometimes dressed as a king blessing people. This year's traditional crib exhibition is all about the central figure in the Christmas story, showcasing the different ways he has been portrayed over the centuries and across cultures.**

The biblical stories about Jesus's birth leave a great deal of room for interpretation, and so artists have used their imagination to fill the gaps. As a result, cribs have been created that reflect not only religious beliefs, but also social values, feelings about family, and local traditions.

This variety is reflected in some striking exhibits: on a late medieval household altar, Baby Jesus lies defenceless on the cold ground. By contrast, a group of figures, which are around 600 years old and on public display for the first time, portrays him as a cheerful toddler with Mary and the Three Kings. Some examples of cribs from Peru, Brazil and Canada illustrate how the Christmas story is rooted in different contexts and ways of life.

The nativity scenes and their figures not only tell the story of Jesus's birth, they also relate a tale of humanity, care, poverty and hope. The exhibition also includes historical Christmas tree decorations, a musical journey through the tradition of crib songs and a varied supporting programme for the whole family.

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