

A CHRISTMAS NATIVITY PLAY FOR CHILDREN

(Script adapted/quoted from the New International Version of the Bible; Luke 1 and 2)

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

MARYmother of Jesus
GABRIELangel who tells Mary about pregnancy
INNKEEPERowns inn and stable
JOSEPHMary's husband
MESSENGER ANGELangel
SHEPHERD #1herds sheep
SHEPHERD #2herds sheep
SHEPHERD #3herds sheep
WISE MAN #1brings gift to baby Jesus
WISE MAN #2brings gift to baby Jesus
WISE MAN #3brings gift to baby Jesus
ANGEL CHOIR.....provides songs, worships Jesus

COSTUMES

- MARY: Long robe tied at the waist in a light color with a solid color scarf to cover her head
- JOSEPH: Long robe tied at the waist in brown, navy, or grey tied at the waist; headpiece made of a solid colored pillowcase held on the head with rope
- SHEPHERDS/INNKEEPER: Three-quarter length white sheet or piece of burlap with a hole cut for the head, tied at the waist with a sash or rope; headpiece made of a solid colored pillowcase held on the head with rope around the head
- WISE MEN: Floor length sheet in bold colors (crimson, purple, gold) with a hole cut for the head, tied at the waist with a contrasting colored sash; crowns made of cardboard or poster board covered in silver or gold glitter and optional faux gemstones; fake beard or makeup to create fake beard, optional
- ANGELS: White floor length sheet with a hole cut out for the head, tied at the waist with silver or gold tinsel; fabric may also be lined with tinsel, if desired; wings from cardboard and outlined or covered in silver or gold glitter; purchased halo or one of craft wire attached to head band

SETTING AND SCENES

This play assumes your church has a stage area or front altar available for staging and the ability to change lighting. If not, the play can be performed without the lighting effects, in any large area of your sanctuary or fellowship hall. All scenes will take place in the same setting.

SCENE: Stable: Strategically place wood fence sections in a square shape and fill the area with bales of straw. Place a trough or small crib in the middle to serve as the manger and scatter large, stuffed sheep, cows, and other animals around the area. You can also dress small children in animal costumes instead of using stuffed ones.

PROPS

- Three wise men gifts: Paint a small cardboard box gold or black and fill with gold coins for the "gold" and golden raisins for the frankincense and myrrh.
- Baby Jesus: A doll wrapped in a pillowcase, blanket, or sheet, which is placed underneath the manger out of sight but where Mary can easily access it later.
- A flameless candle or lantern for the innkeeper to hold.
- Small stuffed sheep and tall canes or "crooks" for the shepherds to carry.

APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME

30 minutes

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Instrumentals can be played on the piano or organ, or you can purchase a CD with instrumentals to play as the choir sings. The song list is as follows:

- *Little Town of Bethlehem*
- *Away in a Manger*
- *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*
- *Silent Night*
- *We Three Kings of Orient Are*
- *The First Noel*
- *Joy to the World*

SCRIPT

(Throughout the play, the narrator stands STAGE LEFT towards the front of the stage where he/she can be easily seen. The angel choir is positioned STAGE LEFT of the stable area and behind the narrator. The stable set up is CENTER STAGE. If possible, shine light on the narrator each time he speaks and dim the light each time he stops talking.)

Narrator: A long time ago, a young woman named Mary lived in a village called Nazareth. One day, an angel appeared to her.

(Lights come up on Mary and Gabriel who are standing STAGE RIGHT.)

Gabriel: Mary, you are blessed by God and will give birth to a son and name him Jesus. **Mary:** I happily serve the Lord, and His will be done.

(Lights dim on Mary and Gabriel and they exit STAGE RIGHT.)

Narrator: Mary married a man named Joseph who was a carpenter. One day, Joseph had to go to a town called Bethlehem to pay his taxes. Mary went with him on the long, hard journey, even though it was almost time for her to give birth to her baby.

(Lights come up on Mary and Joseph who are standing STAGE RIGHT. Lights follow Mary and Joseph as they walk slowly STAGE RIGHT to STAGE LEFT as the angel choir sings *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. Mary and Joseph stop in front of the innkeeper who is standing STAGE LEFT and waits as the choir completes the song.)

Narrator: When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, it was crowded and they looked for a place to stay.

Innkeeper (grumpy): What do you want?

Joseph: Please help us. My wife is about to have a baby and we need a place to stay. **Innkeeper:** There are no rooms left but you can stay in the stable with the animals.

Joseph: Thank you.

Mary: Thank you.

Narrator: Joseph led Mary to the stable where she gave birth to a baby boy.

(The innkeeper exits STAGE LEFT and the lights follow Mary and Joseph as they walk to the stable area. Mary kneels on one side of the manger and Joseph stands on the other side. The stable area and choir stay lit.)

Mary (takes the baby doll from its hiding place under the manger and gently puts it in the manger): His name is Jesus.

(Angel choir sings *Away in a Manger* and the lights dim on the stable scene at the song's end.)

Narrator: Nearby, there were shepherds in a field watching over their sheep during the night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and they were afraid.

(Lights rise on shepherds as they walk on STAGE RIGHT. The Messenger Angel approaches them from STAGE LEFT.)

Shepherd #1 (covers his face upon seeing the angel): Go away!

Shepherd #2: We are afraid of you!

Messenger Angel: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. A child is born today in Bethlehem – a Savior who is Christ the Lord. You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Narrator: The sky filled with angels saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Shepherd #3 (pointing to the sky): Look in the sky! Angels!

(The other shepherds look up and then the messenger angel exits STAGE RIGHT and the shepherds listen, still looking up, as the angel choir sings *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.)

Shepherd #1: Let’s go to Bethlehem and find the baby the angel told us about.

Shepherd #2: Good idea! Let’s go!

Narrator: The shepherds went to Bethlehem to find Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. They worshipped him as he slept.

(Lights follow the three shepherds as they walk to the stable and kneel on STAGE LEFT of the manger as the angel choir sings *Silent Night*.)

Narrator: Soon, three wise men arrived in Bethlehem.

(Lights come up on the three wise men as they walk onstage from STAGE RIGHT.)

Wise Man #1: Where is the baby who is King of the Jews?

Wise Man #2: We have been following a star in the East.

Wise Man #3: We want to give him gifts and worship him.

(Lights follow the three wise men as they walk to baby Jesus while the angel choir sings *We Three Kings of Orient Are*.)

Wise Man #1 (kneels and lays his gift on the ground): I’ve brought the baby frankincense.

(Wise Man #1 stands up and moves to STAGE RIGHT of the manger so the next wise man can approach.)

Wise Man #2 (kneels and lays his gift on the ground): I’ve brought the baby gold.

(Wise Man #2 stands up and moves to the side next to Wise Man #1 so the next wise man can approach.)

Wise Man #3 (kneels and lays his gift on the ground): I've brought the baby myrrh.

(Wise Man #3 remains kneeling.)

Mary: Thank you.

Joseph: Thank you.

Narrator: The birth of Jesus brought hope to many people; he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with both God and man. He was the Son of God, sent to save all those who believe in him from their sins.

(Angel choir and the entire cast sing *The First Noel* and *Joy to the World*.)