

A Traditional Nativity

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This program is a combination of a nativity and a traditional hymn sing, allowing people to enjoy the familiarity of the classic, beloved hymns at Christmas while hearing the whole gospel presented in drama form. Much of the script is taken directly from Scripture, intending to be as accurate as possible, telling the story as the Bible tells it, without too many imagined details.

It is intended to use the talents of the congregation as they are available. The music can be a classic hymn sing or incorporate more variety if some of the songs are presented as solos, ensembles, children's choir, or instrumental.

The script also may be entirely read by narrators, with no costumes or set, or it may be acted with sets, costumes, props, and additional non-speaking parts as available. If you're using this play, I'd love to know how it went and maybe see photos! Email : briannasiegrist@gmail.com

If you would like to edit this script for your program PLEASE make a new copy, do not "ask for permission to edit." Just choose "make a copy" or "download" from the file menu. Hundreds of people use this script every season and I can't give access to everyone to edit it here.

Props: Baby John, Baby Jesus, slate or sign for Zechariah, clipboard for innkeeper, candles, stable, swaddling clothes, manger

Cast:

Narrators (1,2,3) (May be one person or the part may be divided among more than 3.)

Moses (may be in character or just a reader)

Daniel (may be in character or just a reader)

Isaiah (may be in character or just a reader)

Zechariah

Gabriel

Mary

Elizabeth

Joseph (non-speaking)

Innkeeper (non-speaking)

Shepherds (one line)

Sheep (optional)

Angel 1 (one line) (may be combined with Gabriel)

Angel 2 (one line) (may be combined with Gabriel)

Angels

Simeon

John the Baptist (adult)

Baby Jesus and Baby John (may be a doll, or may be played by the same child)

Props: Baby John, Baby Jesus, slate or sign for Zechariah, clipboard or scroll for innkeeper, candles, stable, swaddling clothes, manger

SCENE 1

(Stage is dark. Narrators may be lit and stand to one side of the stage.)

SONG: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

NARRATOR 1: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He created man in his own image, and set him in a garden.

NARRATOR 2: God told the man to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and every living creature. And he gave him every fruit of the trees to eat, except for one tree. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

NARRATOR 3: But the man and his wife disobeyed God. They chose to eat of the tree. They chose to turn away, listen to the voice of a serpent, and their sin caused a rift to come between them and their heavenly Creator.

NARRATOR 1: But God, in his mercy, gave them a promise: One day, a Savior would come to crush the serpent, and the sin that held the world captive.

SONG: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

NARRATOR 2: Years passed, and the earth began to be filled with the sons and daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of this first man and woman. Some people chose to seek God and his ways, but others rebelled further. God spoke through his prophets and called the people to walk in righteousness, and he also reminded them of his promise.

(Enter Readers)

Reader 1/Moses: The Lord said through Moses, "I will raise up for you a prophet from among your fellow men, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell

them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name."

Reader 2/Daniel: The Lord said through the prophet Daniel, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. "

Reader 3/Isaiah: The Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

(Exit Readers)

SONG: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

SCENE 2

INTERIOR OF TEMPLE.

(Zechariah enters, lights a few candles, and kneels to pray.)

NARRATOR 3: For many years, the people of God had waited for the Redeemer, the Anointed one of God, to come and fulfill God's promises. They served God according to the laws he had given them, but even with the knowledge of his goodness and mercy, they often turned away into sin and rebellion. Sin had a hold on the entire world, and no one could escape it. As much as they tried, all men fell short of the glory of God. All were like sheep, each turning to his own way. But the Lord God is a promise keeping God. Zechariah, a priest of God, well advanced in years and having no children, was serving in the temple when an angel of God appeared to him.

SONG: Silent Night

(Enter Gabriel)

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

ZECHARIAH: How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is will along in years.

GABRIEL: I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.

(Exit Gabriel. Enter Elizabeth, who crosses to meet Zechariah. He stands.)

NARRATOR 1: The people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. He returned home and his wife became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.

ELIZABETH: The Lord has done this for me. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.

(Exit Zechariah. Elizabeth sits at the rear of the stage. Enter Mary, downstage.)

NARRATOR 3: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel again, this time to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be

married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

(Enter Gabriel)

GABRIEL: Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you!

(Mary is afraid)

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever, his kingdom will never end.

MARY: How can this be? I am not even married.

GABRIEL: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, therefore the child to be born will be called holy- the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called Barren. For nothing will be impossible with God!

MARY: Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.

(Exit Gabriel)

Mary: Elizabeth!

(Mary crosses to Elizabeth and embraces her.)

ELIZABETH: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

MARY: My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

SONG: O Come Let Us Adore Him

NARRATOR 2: Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

(Enter Joseph, stage left.)

NARRATOR 1: Now Joseph was engaged to be married to Mary. And when she was found to be with child before their wedding, he had in mind to put her away quietly. But as he considered these things, and angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

(Enter Angel, crosses to Joseph)

ANGEL 1: Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

(Exit Angel. Mary crosses to Joseph, he takes her arm, and they exit.)

NARRATOR 2: So Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

(Enter Zechariah with baby John, crosses to Elizabeth and hands her the baby.)

NARRATOR 1: The time came, and Elizabeth bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said,

ELIZABETH: No, his name is John.

NARRATOR 3: And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote,

(Zechariah holds up a pad or tablet that reads "His Name is John.")

NARRATOR 2: They all wondered, and immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue was loosened.

ZECHARIAH: Bless the Lord!! Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(Exit Zechariah and Elizabeth)

SONG: O Come all Ye Faithful

SCENE 3 :

BETHLEHEM, OUTSIDE, OR OUTSIDE THE DARK STABLE.

NARRATOR 1: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

(Enter Mary and Joseph, opposite Innkeeper. They meet in the center and Joseph appears to ask a question. The innkeeper looks at her book and shakes her head and points to the stable, and the lights are raised on it. She exits and they cross to the stable and sit down in it.)

SONG: O Little town of Bethlehem

NARRATOR 2: While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

(The baby may be concealed in the hay or behind the stable in some way and brought out.)

SONG: O Holy Night

SCENE 4 :

OUTSIDE ON A HILL

(Shepherds and sheep are lying down, sleeping.)

NARRATOR 3: And there were, in the same country, shepherds, abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night,

(Enter Angel)

NARRATOR 2: And Lo, the angel of the Lord was upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid, but the angel said unto them,

ANGEL 2: Fear not! For behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

(Enter more angels)

ALL ANGELS: Glory to God in the Highest! And on earth peace, and goodwill to men!"

SONG: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

(Exit all angels)

Shepherd: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this thing that happened which the Lord has made known to us!

(Shepherds run to the stable and kneel before the baby)

Narrator 1: And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

SONG: Away in a Manger (suggested: shepherds/children's choir song)

(Lights down, shepherds/sheep exit. Stable is darkened or hidden.)

SCENE 5:

Narrator 3: When the time came, Mary and Joseph brought the baby to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according to what the law required.

(Mary and Joseph rise with baby and cross stage. Simeon enters.)

Narrator 2: Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the promised one of God.

Narrator 1: And he came in the Spirit to the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

SIMEON: Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.

SONG: Joy to the World.

*(Simeon hands the baby back and exits. Mary and Joseph stand center stage, looking at the baby.)
(Enter John the Baptist, who stands stage left and looks towards the baby.)*

Narrator 3: Not only did Simeon recognize God's great gift, but there were others who also did. Zechariah and Elizabeth's son, John, grew to be a prophet. He was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!"

Narrator 2: When he saw Jesus, as a grown man, he cried out,

JOHN: Behold! The lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world! I have seen and bore witness that this is the Son of God.

(Mary and Joseph, with the Baby, exit the stage, and the cross is lit in the center.)

JOHN: *(pointing to the cross)* In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

(Exit John)

NARRATOR 1: This is the story of Christmas: That God, in his mercy, made a way to restore what was lost.

NARRATOR 2: He allowed his own Son to come and pay the price for our rebellion.

NARRATOR 3: His perfect gift bought our freedom from the sin we had chosen.

NARRATOR 1: This is the good news, the glad tidings of great joy, which are for all people.

NARRATOR 2: Unto YOU is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

NARRATOR 3: Wonderful !

NARRATOR 1: Counselor!

NARRATOR 2: The mighty God !

NARRATOR 3: Everlasting Father!

NARRATOR 2: The prince of Peace!

NARRATOR 1: Emmanuel, God with us!

NARRATOR 3: Born is the King of Israel!

SONG: The First Noel

(END)

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