

The Christmas Nativity Play at Home

With Scripts, Songs, & Costume List



Do Not Be Afraid: Good News of Great Joy!

**Adapted from Illustrated Ministry's Christmas Pageant: 'Do Not Be Afraid.'*

During the Christmas season, add this tradition!

Acting out the Nativity play for the adults, with the adults, adding some audience members on the zoom/facetime/skype screen will be the new highlight of Christmas for your family.

Here is a script, costume list, and songs even!

To get ready think of some items that would double as costumes, set up your favorite way to play music, and find/make some props!

Try doing the whole script over the course of several nights as we approach Christmas. Discuss as a family during family meal time some ideas about how your dramatization could come to fruition.

If you are up for it, video yourselves and send it to Pastor Becca or Ms. Natalie

*Don't forget to film sideways ☺ we can't wait to see what you come up with!

Some Costume Ideas

Mary- A robe of some kind with a pillow around her belly (if desired) and a hood or towel, fabric, etc. draped over her head or

Joseph- A robe of some kind with a towel, bandana, or scarf on his head

Baby Jesus- A doll or baby in a white towel, muslin, or blanket.

Angel- Anything white, clothes, robes, or white sheets. Maybe some fairy/angel wings, tiaras

Animals- Donkeys in grey sweats, sheep in white or grey, camels in brown. Make some ears out of a headband. Sheepskin rugs, faux fur vests, or animal print clothing also work. Also the family pet could make a cameo.

Shepherds- robes, towels, fabric draped over heads secured with a belt, fabric or bandana. Bonus for walking sticks, canes or use a candy cane since that is what they reference anyway.

Herod the King or the 3 wise persons/kings: crowns, robes,

Child- usual clothes or Christmas PJ's for a festive touch

Adult- usual clothes

Star- something that twinkles, consider how one might wrap up a family member in Christmas lights.

Optional props:

Manager- borrow one from your nativity set, use a breadbox, shoebox, dog water bowls also work

3 boxes or bottles- presents to Jesus.

SCENE: WHEN THE WORLD FEELS SCARY

SONG OPTIONS: (There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays & It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

SCENE: CHILD'S BEDROOM - BEDTIME - EVENING

GROWN-UP and CHILD sit on Child's bed as they finish reading a bedtime story. The cast can also be a mix of two Children and a Grown-up or two Grown-ups and a Child or more Children.

GROWN-UP: ...And they all lived happily ever after. The End. That was a good one.

Grown-up tucks child into bed.

GROWN-UP: Goodnight, [*name or term of endearment*]. Sleep tight.

CHILD: Wait a minute, [*name*]. Don't leave yet. Can you stay awhile longer?

GROWN-UP: What's going on, [*name*]? You need to get some sleep.

CHILD: I'm scared. That book made me nervous. And now I'm thinking about all the things I'm afraid of.

GROWN-UP Like what?

CHILD: (*for a simpler version when listing fears, use the underlined words only or adapt to work best for you*)

Well, let's see. There's...

(Child takes a deep breath and recites fears in rapid succession)

...airplanes, bees, coronavirus, dogs, electric shock, fire, ghosts, hexes, invertebrates, judgment, knives, lice, mice, nighttime, orthodontists, poison, questions, roller coasters, spiders, teasing, under-my-bed, violence, worms, x-rays, yellow fever, and...

(Child takes a big breath) ...Zoom.

GROWN-UP: Did you just list your fears in alphabetical order? Whoa. I can relate. I feel afraid sometimes.

CHILD: So how do I feel better right now? I can't sleep when I'm scared.

GROWN-UP Well, stories help.

Grown-up gestures to the book they just read.

GROWN-UP (CONT'D): When I'm afraid or I am worrying, I remember that I am a part of a story that is way bigger than myself. And God's story is full of people who were sometimes afraid. You know, I think I have time to tell you one more story tonight. This part of God's story is during a time when many people were afraid of many things. Just like us. It all begins in Nazareth, a town in Galilee, with a woman named Mary.

SCENE: MARY, THE FAVORED ONE

SONG OPTIONS: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus & Breath of Heaven

SCENE: MARY'S HOME - DAYTIME

MARY is working around the home. She is wiping down a counter or preparing food.

OFF-SCREEN CLATTER OF POTS AND PANS

Mary is startled by the noise. An ANGEL pops up from below the counter beside Mary or a different screen. Mary jumps back in alarm.

THE ANGEL GABE: Pardon me. Let me start over: Greetings, favored one! God is with you!

MARY: Um... What kind of greeting is that?

THE ANGEL GABE: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you are going to have a baby boy! You will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High and his kingdom will have no end!

MARY: How can this be? How is this going to happen?

THE ANGEL GABE: The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Also, your relative Elizabeth is going to have a baby, even though people thought it would be impossible.

But nothing is impossible with God!

MARY: *(looking at the angel)* Was all of that...*(pause, raising an eyebrow)* ...a question?

THE ANGEL GABE: *(takes a beat)* Oh. Hmm.

Mary crosses her arms.

MARY: Well? Are you asking me if I want to do this?

The Angel Gabe nods head slowly.

THE ANGEL GABE: Good question. Uh. Yes!

Mary taps her index finger to her chin, then nods showing she has made her decision.

MARY: Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to this message.

The Angel Gabe disappears.

SCENE: TOUGH QUESTIONS

CHILD'S BEDROOM - BEDTIME - EVENING

Child and Grown-up sit on Child's bed and discuss all the questions Child has surrounding this mysterious story.

CHILD: *(skeptical and asks questions in quick succession. For a simpler version, use the underlined lines only or adapt to work best for you)*

Hold on. I have questions. Why is Joseph packing a bag?

Why was Joseph afraid about Mary having a baby?

Do angels still visit people in dreams?

Why did Mary stay at Elizabeth's house?

Who names a kid "God saves"?

Why is everyone making such a big deal about this? It's just a baby!

This story is so weird, I just...

GROWN-UP: *(interrupts)* Yeah, I don't know the answer to most of those questions. This is a bigger-than-life kind of story and there are a lot of unexplainable and miraculous parts.

(shrugs)

CHILD: That sounds like what Pastor Becca and Mrs. Natalie say when I ask tough questions.

GROWN-UP *(feeling relieved)* Good. I'm glad I sound like them because we just don't have all the answers.

Now, I do know the answer to one of those questions: "Why is Joseph packing?" Caesar Augustus, the emperor of the time made a decree that everyone needed to return to their hometowns to be counted, in something called a census. We still do a census today! We can do a quick census of our household now.

Counts members of household...

SCENE: MARY AND JOSEPH ARRIVE IN BETHLEHEM

SONG OPTIONS: O Little Town of Bethlehem, Away in a Manger, What Child is This?

SCENE: OUTSIDE/ALONG A PATH - DAYTIME

Joseph and Mary arrive in Bethlehem and find a place to stay after a very long journey.

Joseph returns from off-screen.

JOSEPH: Okay, the good news is I think I found us a place to stay.

MARY: Finally. This baby is not going to wait much longer. Where are we staying? Oh! Did you get a room at that nice inn I like? The one with the good breakfast?

JOSEPH: Um. Not exactly. It was full.

MARY: *(feeling disappointed)* Oh no. What are we going to do? Sleep outside with shepherds? Stay in a stable with donkeys?

JOSEPH: *(trying to reassure Mary)* What?! No. Who would do that?!

MARY: Joseph, this baby is coming soon!

JOSEPH: *(trying, again, to reassure Mary)* I know, I know. The guest rooms are full, but I found an innkeeper who will let us stay in a small space in his home.

MARY Oh, good.

JOSEPH: *(trying to sell it)* Yeah! It's a nice space. Lots of hay.

(quietly)

Maybe a few animals...

MARY*(closes her eyes in exasperation and breathes deep)* Alright. Let's do this.

SCENE: THE SHEPHERDS HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

SONG OPTIONS: Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Joy to the World, Angels We Have Heard on High

SCENE: A FIELD - NIGHT

SHEPHERDS are watching over their sheep. Sheep can be additional roles for actors, pets, or stuffed animals. The Shepherds lines can be delivered by 1-3 people (or even more.) For additional parts, add additional angels into the Angel Chorus and divide/repeat any and all Angel Messenger lines as little or as much as you'd like. For an additional role, include a STAR character to end the scene.

The Angel Messenger enters.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: *(announces loudly and over-the-top)* Glory to God in the highest!

The Angel Messenger looks around, seeing the shepherds staring with looks of disbelief.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: *(CONT'D)* Eh hem! Eh. Hem. Glory. To. God...

ANGEL CHORUS: Glory to God!

The Angel Messenger looks around to find the scared stiff shepherds and sheep staring blankly.

If recording this on Zoom, use the following grey section:

The Angel Messenger gets closer to the camera. Taps it to see if it's working.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: *(getting a little irritated)* Is this thing even working...? Am I on mute?!

The scared stiff Shepherds and sheep still stare blankly, shaking their heads no.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: *(CONT'D)* ...are you people even listening?

Stunned, Shepherd and Sheep regain their composure, still afraid, and slowly nod with wide eyes.

The Angel Messenger sighs.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: *(CONT'D, with joy and assurance)* Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people!

(or ANGEL CHORUS and break up these lines however you see fit to allow for more speaking roles)

Today in the town of David,
a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.
This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby
wrapped in cloths
and lying in a manger.

ANGEL CHORUS *(OPTIONAL)*

(these are extra lines that can be said or read together or by individual angels)

Good News for all the people! The Messiah is born! A savior!

Glory to God in the highest heaven!

And on earth, peace among those whom God favors.

Angels stop abruptly and look at Shepherds.

THE ANGEL MESSENGER: That is all. Goodbye.

Angels exit.

The Shepherds look around at one another and at their sheep.

SHEPHERD 1: Sooo...you both saw that, right?

SHEPHERD 2: Um...yes. Yes, I did.

SHEEP: Baa.

SHEPHERD 3: Yep. That happened.

SHEEP: Baa.

SHEPHERD 2: Well...we are going, right?

SHEPHERD 1: Yes, we are going. We have to go.

SHEPHERD 3: Do we bring the sheep?

SHEPHERD 2: I think we have to.

SHEEP: Baa. Baa. Yeah! We want to come! Take us with you! Baa. Baa.

SHEPHERD 2: What were those signs again?

SHEEP:(*can split these lines between any number of sheep*)

A baby.

Wrapped in strips of cloth. Lying in a manger.

Baa.

SHEPHERD 1: We won't forget. Let's go.

SHEPHERD 3: You, too, sheep. Come on!

Display transition sign "A Little While Later" either by holding it up or using it as a slide in your recording.

Shepherds and Sheep sitting together in awe, pondering their experiences.

SHEPHERD 2: That was a miracle.

SHEPHERD 3: It was exactly how the angel had described! The baby was wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger!

SHEPHERD 1: Friends, we have seen something amazing tonight. I don't know about you, but it feels like the world is changing.

SHEPHERD 2: Yeah, but why do you think we got to see it? Nobody cares about us, shepherds. We're poor, and we don't have very much power.

SHEPHERD 3: I have no idea. But the baby's mother, Mary, acted like this was exactly what was supposed to happen, like this was meant for people like us. Maybe this baby will lift up the lowly!

SHEPHERD 1: And bring down the lofty! Wouldn't that be something?

SHEPHERD 2: It sure would. I believe there is no limit to what this baby can do.

Shepherd 3 points to the sky.

SHEPHERD 3: Hey, shepherds...was that star there last night? I don't think I've ever seen that one before...

Star twirls or sways in front of the camera.

STAR: Twinkle, twinkle...

SCENE : THE MAGI AND KING HEROD

SONG OPTIONS: We Three Kings, O Come All Ye Faithful
SCENE: MAGI'S OBSERVATORY - DAYTIME

The MAGI have quick comedic timing. They are like triplets who think alike and always talk right on top of each other, practically interrupting each other. The Bible does not name the number of magi, so you may have any number of magi and break up the lines differently, keeping the same rhythm.

*This scene happens in three parts. The **first part** takes place in the Magi's observatory. In the **second part**, the Magi meet King Herod in Bethlehem. You can make your own Welcome to Bethlehem sign, including "Local King: Herod." The **third part** takes place back at the Magi's observatory.*

MAGI 1: *(looking at the camera)* Hello, and welcome to our observatory. We are the wise men.

MAGI 2: *(looking at the camera)* Wise people.

MAGI 3: *(looking at the camera)* The Magi.

MAGI 1: *(looking at the camera)* We are really more like scientists.

MAGI 2: *(looking at the camera)* Astronomers. We study the stars.

MAGI 3: *(looking at the camera)* We study the stars so well that when something changes, we notice immediately!

MAGI 1: *(looking at the camera, with great excitement)* And we just noticed a new star. We must follow our scientific instincts and find out why there is a new star in the sky.

MAGI 2: We now begin our journey.

Display Transition Sign: "Several Months Later" either by holding it up in front of the camera or using it as a slide in your recording AND/OR do a montage of the journey-- three different shots.

MAGI 3: Are we there yet?

MAGI 2: You literally just asked that.

MAGI 3 ...now!?

MAGI 2: *(points to the "Welcome to Bethlehem" sign or holds up a separate "Welcome to Bethlehem" sign)* Yes, yes. It looks like we are here.

MAGI 1: Here it is, Bethlehem. Let's look up the local king so we can get some more information.

King Herod enters the scene in a dramatic way, maybe rising up from the bottom of the screen, looking from side to side and speaking slyly, or jumping on-screen and speaking with resounding confidence to win over the Magi.

KING HEROD: Did somebody say, king? *(He brings both thumbs to his chest.)* That would be me.

I'm the big cheese around here. Everybody is talking about it. They all say that I am a powerful king. The best king Bethlehem has ever seen.

MAGI 2: We got it. Best king ever.

Magi 2 bows, sarcastically.

MAGI 3: *(with great excitement)* So. We are here because we are looking for the newly born king.

MAGI 1: *(speaking in a way that Magi 1 knows will get under King Herod's skin)* The child born king of the Jews.

Magi 2 raises arms up into the air.

MAGI 2: We observed his star at its rising.

King Herod squirms and looks irritated.

MAGI 3: *(almost giddy)* And we have come to honor him!

KING HEROD: *(stares at the Magi, squints his eyes at them, then holds up his index finger and responds)* Ah! Would you excuse me for a moment? I need to make a call.

King Herod makes a call on his phone:

Hey. Put me through to my smart people. Hi. This is your king. The very best king. I need to know, according to your research, where is the Messiah supposed to be born? Uh-huh...uh-huh... Bethlehem? Are you sure? Bye.

King Herod turns back to the Magi.

Hi wise folks. So, yeah, this is great. Go on and find this child and pay him honor. And get back to me about this so that I, too, can honor him.

MAGI: *(feeling skeptical)* Uh, sure, okay.

MAGI 2: *(sarcastically)* We can do that.

MAGI 3: *(feeling a little creeped out)* Let's get out of here.

As the Magi walk away...

KING HEROD: *(sings, ala Hamilton)* "You'll be back..."

MAGIS: *(whispering close-up to camera):*

No, we won't.

OR

Will we, though?

Display Transition Sign: "Several Months Later" by holding it up in front of the camera or using it as a slide in your recording.

MAGI 3: Herod felt very threatened there was a new leader that people were excited to meet.

MAGI 2: But we found Jesus and brought gifts to this special child.

MAGI 1: We brought gold,

MAGI 2: ...frankincense,

MAGI 3: ...and myrrh.

MAGI 1: Usually, these gifts are for royalty.

MAGI 2: Powerful people.

MAGI 3: Grown men.

MAGI 1: But we brought these gifts to a tiny, weak, oppressed child.

MAGI 2: Even though we didn't know exactly what was going on, we knew he was important.

MAGI 3: This good news would turn everything upside down.

MAGI 1: Oh, and by the way, we didn't return to that treacherous King Herod.

MAGI 2: Nope! No way. We were warned in a dream to take a different way home.

MAGI 3: You might say we took the scenic route...

MAGI 1: And now we return to watching the stars...

Magi look up at the stars through binoculars or with one hand over their eyebrows looking into the sky.

SCENE: THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

SONG OPTION: Go Tell It on the Mountain

SCENE: CHILD'S BEDROOM - BEDTIME - EVENING

Child and Grown-up discuss the "end" of the story.

CHILD: Those wise people were really brave. They honored the king God had chosen, brought him presents, disobeyed the orders of King Herod, AND made it home safely.

GROWN-UP: Yes, they were brave and determined. Everyone in the story was, I think. From Mary and Joseph to the shepherds and the magi, they all recognized that the birth of Jesus was going to change the world.

[Name], are you feeling safe and sleepy yet? Our story is coming to an end.

CHILD (*yawning*) Yes, I feel safe and sleepy. But this isn't really the end.

GROWN-UP: No? Why not? It's bedtime. We need to get some sleep.

CHILD: [name], this is just the beginning! Jesus is born, he grows up, he changes water to wine, he teaches, he heals, he flips tables, he...

GROWN-UP: (*interrupts*) Yes, yes, you're right. Jesus' birth IS just the beginning! We have a lot to talk about. But it's late. Tonight let's focus on this one special moment, this one night that brought us Jesus.

CHILD: Okay. That makes sense. This is a good story.

GROWN-UP: God's story is unfolding more good news every day. And in the end, all things will be made right. That doesn't mean we won't be afraid along the way, but we can trust that love and justice will have the final word. Speaking of the final word, let's have a final word from Mary, the mother of Jesus.