
The Nativity



A Reader's Theater

Instructions

The base script for this Nativity Reader's Theater is found here:



If you want to modify this script, simply go to the linked QR code, and click "File, Make a copy."

Here are some suggestions to make this Reader's Theater a more meaningful experience.

- Adjust this script to meet your needs. For example, depending on your group, you might sing all the verses of each hymn, or sing just one.
- At the end of Reader's Theater, invite participants to share brief personal insights or testimonies related to the Nativity story.
- Introduce simple props, or costumes to make the event more memorable.
- If you're musically inclined, consider including instrumental interludes or solo performances to vary the musical experience.
- End the program with a prayer, with the intent to carry the spirit of the Nativity into daily life.

Assign the following characters to those present (people can play multiple roles, and the narrator can be played by multiple people if needed.)

Narrator
Angel Gabriel
Angel speaking to Joseph
Angel speaking to the Shepherds
Mary
Shepherds
Herod the Great
Wise men
Chief Priests

The below script is based on Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 (New Living Translation).

The Nativity Story

Narrator: Welcome to this sacred evening. Tonight, we gather to relive the story of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As we listen, imagine yourself in these moments—walking the dusty roads of Bethlehem, standing with the shepherds in awe of the angelic host, and bowing with the wise men before the King of Kings. Let us open our hearts to feel the love and wonder of that first Christmas night. We begin with the story of young woman named Mary. She lived in the small town of Nazareth and was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. One day, the angel Gabriel visited her to deliver a sacred message that would change the world forever.

Gabriel: Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!

Narrator: Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

Gabriel: Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!

Mary: But how can this happen? I am a virgin.

Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.

Narrator: Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

Angel Speaking to Joseph: Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Narrator: All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet Isaiah: “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. Bethlehem was a small and quiet town, yet it was chosen to host the greatest event in history—the birth of the Savior. This humble village became the setting for the arrival of the King of Kings. As we sing 'Oh Little Town of Bethlehem,' let us reflect on the peace and hope that Christ brings to even the smallest and most unexpected places.

{All sing, “Oh Little Town of Bethlehem”}

Narrator: He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. The King of Heaven came to earth in humility, born among animals and laid in a feeding trough. As we sing 'Away in a Manger,' let us picture that sacred moment and feel gratitude for the Savior’s willingness to empty himself of his power, and come into the world to save us from sin.

{All sing, “Away in a Manger”}

Narrator: Meanwhile, in the fields surrounding Bethlehem, a group of shepherds was about to witness something miraculous. That night some shepherds, staying in the fields nearby, were guarding their sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified.

Angel Speaking to Shepherds: Don’t be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.

Narrator: Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

Angel and everyone present: Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.

Narrator: As we sing 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,' let us join with the heavenly host in glorifying God for the gift of His Son.

{All sing, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”}

Narrator: When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other,

Shepherds: Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

Narrator: They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. As we sing 'Silent Night,' ponder the sacred stillness of that moment and with Mary, treasure these thoughts in your heart.

{All sing, "Silent Night"}

Narrator: The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About two years later, some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking,

Wise men: Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.

Narrator: King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked,

Herod the Great: Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?

Chief priests: In Bethlehem in Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote: "And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel."

Narrator: Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them,

Herod the Great: Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!

Narrator: After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying,

Angel Speaking to Joseph: Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother. Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

Narrator: That night Joseph left for Egypt with Mary and Jesus, and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt." Jesus would grow up and do many wonderful things--but that is a story for another night. Tonight we remember the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, who all came to worship the newborn King. Just as they gathered to adore Him, we are invited to come unto Christ with joy and faith. As we sing 'Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful,' let us remember the wonder of His birth and renew our commitment to follow Him.

{All sing, "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"}

Narrator: This Christmas, as we reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ, may we remember that His story didn't end in Bethlehem. His life, ministry, and ultimate sacrifice were gifts given to each of us. Tonight, let us recommit to following Him, to sharing His light, and to loving as He loves. Merry Christmas to all, and may the Spirit of Christ fill your heart this night and always.

THE END