

TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is a series of excerpted scenes from the full script, which runs to 35 pages--about 30 minutes in performance.

If you purchase the rights to the play, I will send you a full script—as a PDF—from which you can make as many copies as are needed by your cast & crew. There is no per-script-fee.

If you wish to secure the performance rights to this script, pre-recorded music tracks and pre-recorded sound effects, contact Sales@RuyaSonic.com

THE NATIVITY PLAY

(30-minute stage-play)

Written for the stage by

Anthony E. Palermo

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BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Producers of *The Nativity Play* must give credit to Anthony E. Palermo in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play, and all instances in which the title of the play appears in advertising or publicizing the production, including programs and playbills. The name of the Author must also appear on a separate line, immediately following the title of the play, and must be in type size not less than 30% of the size of type used in the title of the play.

Billing shall be in the following form:

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presents

THE NATIVITY PLAY

Written for the stage by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Long bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is a dramatist, radio performer, and educator based in Los Angeles. His work is heard on NPR and Satellite Radio as well as in audiobooks and on-stage with L.A. Theatre Works, California Artists Radio Theater, numerous theatre troupes, and on national tours. His holiday-themed plays, *A Christmas Carol*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Auntie Scrooge--a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol*, and *The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow* have seen productions around the world since 1998. Tony's sound effects work on Yuri Rasovsky's *Sherlock Holmes Theatre* contributed to its winning the 2006 *Audie Award*--the Oscar of audiobooks. Tony directed the 60th anniversary production of Norman Corwin's *On a Note of Triumph*--for which he also re-created Bernard Herrmann's orchestral score. Recently, Tony provided live SFX for shows such as Eric Idle's *What About Dick?*, CART's *Ray Bradbury's Leviathan '99*, LATW's *Hamlet* and *Frost/Nixon*, as well as performing 65 solo shows at the California State Fair. Tony's *Sonic Storytelling Studio* at San Francisco's Exploratorium is a permanent exhibit that has seen thousands of visitors since 2006. His *Sparx Audio Adventures* assembly programs and workshops are popular with schools and colleges across California, the U.S. and the world. Tony also hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

Short bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is an Audie Award-winning performer, dramatist, composer and educator who has produced dramas and workshops for broadcast, stage, and schools. Tony hosts the RuyaSonic website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

NOTE: Up-to-date text of the bios is available at www.RuyaSonic.com/tp2bio.htm You can cut & paste the text into your playbill or program and thus not have to worry about typos.

The Nativity Play

(30-minute stage-play – with carols)

CAST

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| NARRATOR | The narrator (Male or Female) |
| MARY | 16 year-old farm girl (F) |
| JOSEPH | 20 year-old carpenter (M) |
| ANGEL #1 | Angel messenger(Gabriel) (M/F) |
| ANGEL #2 | Angel messenger(M/F) |
| ANGEL #3 | Angel messenger (M/F) |
| ANGEL #4 | Angel messenger (M/F) |
| ELISABET | Mary's aged kinswoman (F) |
| ZAKARIAS | Elisabet's husband (M) |
| HEROD THE GREAT | Tyrannical "King of the Jews" (M) |
| MALKIOR | Persian Magi (M/F) |
| GASPAR | Indian Magi (M/F) |
| BALTAZAR | Assyrian Magi (M/F) |
| INN-KEEPER | Crusty inn-keeper (M/F) |
| SIMEON | Pious old man (M) |
| ANNA | Old Prophetess (F) |
| AMBASSADOR LIVIUS | Roman Ambassador (M) |
| BO'AZ | Old, wizened shepherd (M/F) |
| EFRAYIM | Cynical shepherd (M/F) |
| SHEP | Young shepherd (M/F) |
| RACHAB | Inn-keeper's kindly slave (M/F) |
| ETAN | Herod's minister (M/F) |
| QUEEN MALTACE | Herod's wife (F) |
| LAMBS/INFANTS | Bleating lambs, infants (M/F) |

Small cast: 6 actors (2 male, 2 female, 2 male-or-female)

Large cast: 24 actors (5 male, 3 female, 15 male-or-female)

See the appendix for suggestions for doubling roles.

This script refers to pre-recorded sound effects are available as downloadable MP3 tracks for a fee. Contact Sales@RuyaSonic.com for information.

OPTIONAL SONGS TO BE INTERWOVEN WITH NARRATION AND DIALOGUE:

You may choose to have cast members and/or a choir sing carols at several moments in the play. These have been indicated in the script. Using the carols will add 6 to 10 minutes to the 30-minute running length of the play. Carols may be used or skipped without impacting the flow of the drama.

- 1) God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
- 2) Ave Maria (verse 1. Sung by Angel #1)
- 3) O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1 only)
- 4) O Little Town of Bethlehem
- 5) The Coventry Carol (verse 1 only. Sung by Mary only)
- 6) Away in A Manger
- 7) Angels We Have Heard On High
- 8) The First Noel (verse 1 only)
- 9) The First Noel (verse 2 & 3 only)
- 10) O Come All Ye Faithful

Lyric hand-out sheets for these carols are included in the appendix to this script.

Sheet music is NOT included, but can be found through an on-line search—in a variety of keys.

NOTE: The playwright fully allows the above carols to be skipped or other songs to be substituted.

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

I offer two stage-play versions of *The Nativity Play*—a 70-minute and a 30-minute. Both dramatize Mary and Joseph's life, mixing reverence and humor to make for an uplifting and entertaining show.

The 30-minute version begins B.C. (*Before Christ*) with several shepherds lamenting life after The Fall and wishing for a Redeemer, then shifts to Nazareth where a pious and charitable Mary receives the Annunciation. Then, Mary's visit to Elisabet and Zakarais, Mary's return home, Joseph's dilemma, his angel dream, and a reconciliation between Joseph and Mary. Act 2 includes the Journey to Bethlehem, No Room At The Inn, the Birth of Jesus, the shepherds and the Host of Angels, the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, the Adoration of the Magi, Herod's fury, the Slaughter of the Innocents, The Flight to Egypt and the Return from Egypt. This version has trimmed versions of the canticles from Luke: Mary's "Magnificat" and Simeon's "Nunc Dimittis"--all in English, of course.

The short version is intended for productions with time limitations: worship services, theaters, classrooms or radio stations.

The 70-minute version includes everything in the 30-minute version, but extends most scenes and includes several that were omitted in the shorter version. In Act 1, it adds a Nazareth marketplace scene--with the meeting of Joseph and Mary, a scene after The Annunciation with Mary's mother, Joseph's carpentry work on King Herod's palace, the birth and naming of John The Baptist, Mary's difficulties with her family upon her return home, and Joseph's deciding to "divorce Mary, quietly." Act 2 adds King Herod's plotting the census with the Romans, Mary and Joseph deciding to journey to Bethlehem, and Herod questioning/tricking the Magi. This long version includes the full canticles from Luke: Mary's "Magnificat", Zakarias' "Benedictus" and Simeon's "Nunc Dimittis."

The longer version adds 4 more female roles and 7 more male roles--most of which can be handled through doubling. It also greatly expands Joseph as a character as well as King Herod and Roman Ambassador Livius. Plus, it adds two interesting characters who serve as major foils for Mary and Joseph: Mary's stern Aunt Morag and Esdras, Joseph's cantankerous/comical carpentry mentor. In the 70-minute version there are many more Biblical references, more emotion and humor. However, the 30-minute version still holds up as an emotional and spiritual experience.

For information about the stage-play versions of *The Nativity Play*, visit www.ruyasonic.com/stageplay-the-nativity-play-script.html

For a full listing of Anthony E. Palermo's plays, including *Christmas Carol*, *It's a Wonderful Life!* and *Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol*, visit www.ruyasonic.com

SCENE 1 - THE WELCOMING
EXT. THE HOLY LAND - DUSK (JANUARY)
(NARRATOR)

SETTING:

The stage is split between a Pastoral backdrop (STAGE RIGHT) and a town square/courtyard (STAGE LEFT).

The Pastoral area has some olive trees amidst the green hills. When the shepherds are in this area, it is a hillside in Bethlehem. When Mary and Joseph are there, it is an olive grove in Nazareth.

The town square/courtyard has adobe walls and a functional doorway--preferably with a top/bottom split door--but a regular door will serve.

AT RISE:

No one is on-stage.

THE NARRATOR ENTERS from LEFT to introduce the story. THE NARRATOR takes CENTER STAGE and addresses the audience directly.

NARRATOR: This is the story of The Nativity; How--amidst darkness and despair--there came a Light from Heaven; A Light of salvation, of forgiveness... And of joy!...the birth of Jesus Christ. A birth into the world and a birth within our hearts...

SONG-01 "GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN" (VERSE 1)
SUNG BY ALL PERFORMERS
(OPTIONALLY, INCLUDING AUDIENCE)

NARRATOR: However, our tale does not begin on Christmas morning. No, it winds through the months before the birth of the Divine Child.

SFX TRACK: [FX-01] WINTER WINDS, SHEEP, THUNDER--UNDER NEXT
SCENE

NARRATOR: This world--B.C. Before Christ--was in need of redemption.
We begin here--one Winter's night, on a hillside near
Bethlehem, amidst "certain poor shepherds in fields where
they lay..."

SCENE 2 – THE SHEPHERDS' LAMENT
EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLSIDE – NIGHT (JANUARY)
(EFRAYIM, SHEP, BO'AZ, SHEEP #1)

EFRAYIM & SHEP ENTER from RIGHT. SHEP plays a jaw harp--under, until his line

EFRAYIM: (SHIVERS) Oh! Winter! Such terrible weather!

BO'AZ ENTERS from RIGHT.

BO'AZ: (APPROACHING) 'Tis true, Efrayim!
("eff-ray-EEM") So cloudy! I have not seen such weather
since... well.... since Noah.

SHEP: (AMAZED) Noah? Of the Ark?

BO'AZ: Yea! It looked like rain then, too!

EFRAYIM: (SKEPTICAL) What...? Noah...?

SHEP: That was thousands of years ago! Tell me, Bo'az? ("BO-
ahhz") How old are you?

BO'AZ: Me? Errrr... quite old, Shep! ("SHEP") Hmmm, Let me
recall... (COUNTS ON FINGERS) Eighty... eighty-one...
eighty-two... a thousand! Yes! Yes! I am very old. Very old!

EFRAYIM: (SCOFFS) A thousand? Bah! You are a mere shepherd--and
all that you say is but ill-spun wool!

ALL THREE SHEPHERDS: (LAUGHTER--AD LIB) oh-oh-oh!

SHEP: Ah, but what a filthy, cold life this is!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-INDIGNANTLY) Baaaaa!

SHEP: Is there no hope, Bo'Az? Why?

BO'AZ: Why? Well, I can still recall the story... (RECALLING)
HMMMM... In the Garden...

EFRAYIM: Yes! Long ago, the Lord created the first man and woman...

BO'AZ: I said, I can still recall the story, you jackal! (SWATS EFRAYIM)

SHEP: Oh, but I know that story! Adam and uh...

BO'AZ: ...Eve! At first, they were One with the Lord, and he did provide all they needed. There was no want, no toil, no fear...

EFRAYIM: The Garden of Eden.

SFX TRACK: [FX-02] (CROSS-FADE) DESOLATE WINDS, MORE THUNDER--
UNDER SCENE

BO'AZ: But..., they were not satisfied--even in all they had; even being One with the Lord.

EFRAYIM: They were greedy! Fearful!

BO'AZ: They did betray the Lord...

EFRAYIM: Yes! They ate from a forbidden tree. (PAUSE) An.... apricot! A juicy, sweet...

SHEP: Apricot? But I heard it was a pomegranate!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-SKEPTICALLY) Baaaaah!

BO'AZ: Fools! The fruit and the cause did not matter! Adam and Eve... betrayed the Lord! They separated themselves from the Lord. And so, were cast out of the Garden. As are we.

EFRAYIM: Then came toil, disease, murder. Look upon us today... bereft and despoiled. Where is the Messiah--the "anointed one"--to deliver us from this world of woe? (SIGHS)

BO'AZ: Yes. We are sheep... preyed upon by wolves.

SHEP: That tyrant, King Herod! And the Romans!

BO'AZ: King Herod and the Romans are only the most obvious evil-doers. The wolves are man-kind! Wickedness burns in every heart! For we are separated from the Lord... alas... (SIGHS) for-ever.

SHEP: (SIGHS) Then life is hopeless.

EFRAYIM: That is why we labor here, close to nature. Better the real wilderness--this mountainside--than the wilderness of spirit, amidst the towns and villages.

SHEP: Oh, what a dismal world! A night-mare! How shall I ever sleep again?

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS--INNOCENTLY) Baaaahh.

BO'AZ: (CHIDING) Um... Well... have you tried... have you tried... counting... sheep?

SHEEP #1: (BLEATS-DERISIVELY) Baaaah.

ALL THREE SHEPHERDS: (LAUGHTER--AD LIB) oh-oh-oh!

EFRAYIM, SHEP and BO'AZ EXIT, RIGHT. NARRATOR ENTERS, from LEFT to DSC.

SCENE 3 - THE ANNUNCIATION
EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT (LATE MARCH)
(NARRATOR, MARY, ANGEL #1)

SFX TRACK: [FX-03] (CROSS-FADE WITH PREVIOUS SFX TRACK)
MARCH WINDS, CRICKETS--UNDER SCENE.

NARRATOR: But far north, near the village of Nazareth, a pious young woman named Mary came unto a verdant olive grove--a place of great peace and contemplation...

NARRATOR EXITS, LEFT.

MARY ENTERS, from RIGHT, carrying lamb (toy). An off-stage voice will deliver the lamb's lines below.

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaaaah.

MARY: Ah! There you are, my little one! (PICKING UP THE LAMB) We were all searching for you... But I have found you! Father shall...

SFX TRACK: FADE WINDS AND CRICKETS--UNDER

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaaaah.

MARY: Hush! (WHISPERS) It has become so quiet... Look! (PUZZLED) Oh! The moon grows bright! What... what be this? This... light?

ANGEL #1 ENTERS, from LEFT.

AUDIO NOTE:

Try using hidden wireless mics for all the angel appearances throughout the play, so their voices can have a reverb effect applied. The first line of their dialogue in a scene will specify [REVERB].

ANGEL #1: [REVERB] Rejoice, Mary! Hail thou--that art highly favored! The Lord is with thee! Bless-ed art thou among women!

MARY: (FEARFUL) Bless-ed...? Me...? Oh, sir. What manner of salutation is this? Who...? Wha...?

ANGEL #1: Fear not, Mary. Rejoice! For thou hast found favor with The Lord.

MARY: (PUZZLED) Favor...? But...

ANGEL #1: Behold! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son!--the anointed one--the Christ! And thou shalt call his name... Jesus.

MARY: (REALIZING) Conceive... The Messiah...?

ANGEL #1: He shall be great! And shall be called “The Son of the Most High.” And the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his ancestor, David.

MARY: (IN AWE) King...? King David...?

ANGEL #1: And he shall reign over the House of Jacob... for-ever. And of his kingdom, there shall be no end.

MARY: (HUMBLY) But... divine sir--messenger of The Lord--how... how shall this be? ... conceive a child...? Um... I know not a man! I am only just betrothed... to Joseph! We have but yet...

ANGEL #1: The Holy Spirit of The Lord shall come upon thee. The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee! Fill thee... with Grace! And the child... shall be Holy. He shall be called “The Son of God.”

MARY: (GASPS) Ahhh... The... (HUMBLY, GRATEFULLY--WHISPERS) “The Son of... God...” Oh...

ANGEL #1: And, behold! Thy kinswoman... Elisabet. She hath also conceived a son--in her old age. She, who was called “barren!” Yet, with The Lord... nothing shall be impossible!

MARY: (GRATEFUL) Oh, heavenly messenger... (UNSURE) I... I... (CONSENTING) Yes! (INHALES) uh... uh... (TEARFULLY JOYOUS) Behold... the handmaid (INHALES, WHISPERS) of the Lord! Let it be unto me... according to thy word. (BOWS HER HEAD IN PRAYER) Yes.

SONG-02 “AVE MARIA” (VERSE 1)
SUNG BY ANGEL #1 ONLY

ANGEL #1 EXITS, LEFT.

SFX TRACK: [FX-04] FLOURISH, THEN WIND & CRICKETS--UNDER SCENE

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaaah!

MARY: (COMING OUT OF DAZE) Oh! (TO LAMB) Little one.
What...? A... dream? How... how could I--a country girl--be
“favored... by The Lord?”

LAMB #2: (BLEATING) Baaaaah.

MARY: How can I serve the Almighty? How...?

SFX TRACK: [FX-05] (CROSS-FADE) WINDS, THUNDER--UNDER SCENE

MARY: (WHISPERS) How...?

MARY falls to her knees, lowers her head, clasps hands in prayer.

NARRATOR ENTERS from RIGHT.

NARRATOR: (SLOWLY, DESCRIBING WHAT IS HAPPENING--IN
REAL TIME) And Mary was humbly trans-fixed! ...A soul...
in wonder..! (PAUSE) The Holy Spirit came unto her... And
filled her... with the Grace of The Lord... (PAUSE) And she
felt the joy, the harmony of The Christ within her heart.
(PAUSE) ...A soul... in wonder!...

MARY looks skyward.

MARY: (HUMBLY PRAYING) Lord, I... feel... thy loving-kindness...
a... “lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.”

SFX TRACK: [FX-06] (CROSS-FADE) CLOUDBURST, RAIN--UNDER SCENE

NARRATOR: And thus, through a simple farm girl, the Lord’s divine plan
for the Salvation of Human-kind was set forth: The Son of
God would become... The Son of Man!

Under the narration below, MARY rises and slowly EXITS, RIGHT.

NARRATOR: Upon returning home, Mary discovered that--indeed--her kinswoman, Elisabet had conceived a child, just as the angel had foretold. So... with her father's approval, Mary left with a caravan the next morning... bound for the village of Ein Kerem ("INE ka-REEM"), near Jerusalem...

SCENE 4 - THE VISITATION TO ELISABET
EXT. ELISABET'S COURTYARD - DAY (EARLY APRIL)
(NARRATOR, MARY, ELISABET, ZAKARIAS)

NARRATOR: Despite being old and stricken in age, Elisabet would--in three months time--bear the future John The Baptist. It was to this house that Mary did arrive...

MARY ENTERS from RIGHT, to stop in the courtyard, STAGE LEFT. ELISABET and ZAKARIAS ENTER from LEFT. ZAKARIAS carries a slate tablet and marker with him.

MARY: Ahh! (EXCHANGING KISSES) Elisabet! Zakarias! Peace be unto you and your household. Oh, Elisabet! My mother told me you were with child. What a blessing!

ELISABET: But, Mary! Blessed art thou! And blessed is the fruit of thy womb!

MARY: (STARTLED) My...? Then... you know of the miracle? How could the...

ELISABET: (JOYFULLY) Miracles abound, my dear! When you spoke--just now--the babe within me leaped for joy!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS IN ASSENT) Hmm-mmmm!

MARY: Oh, Zakarias, you must be so proud.

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Yes but...") Mmm-mmmmmm.

MARY: (TO ELISABET) Elisabet, what has happened? Why joy admixed with sorrow ..from Zakarias? Can he not speak?

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "No") Mmm.

ELISABET: Oh, but Mary, that is part of how I came to be with child! Six months ago, Zakarias was chosen to offer incense in the Temple Sanctuary. But once within, he had a vision! An... (AMAZED) an angel of the Lord... appeared unto him.

MARY: (PUZZLED) To Zakarias? (AMAZED) As with me! An angel of the Lord? I saw--

ELISABET: Wait! The angel promised that I--after twenty years of being barren--would conceive a son! But, Zakarias doubted the prophecy! He did! And--in rebuke for his lack of faith...

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Hey!") Hmm!

ELISABET: (INSISTING) ...his lack of faith, Zakarias was rendered mute!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS a troubled "yes") Mmmm!

MARY: And so he cannot speak?

ELISABET: He cannot. But I have come to realize... (SMILES) that--in a husband, silence... is a virtue!

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Hey!") Hmm!

ELISABET: (CHUCKLES) Heaven-sent!

MARY: (LAUGHINGLY) Oh, Elisabet!

ELISABET: But, come... Mary... tell us of your life. Your mother and father--are they well?

MARY: They are. And they send their blessings. As for me? Umm... I am... betrothed.

ELISABET: Betrothed? Oh! To whom? A kinsman?

MARY: No! To a young man named Joseph. He is from Bethlehem... a carpenter's apprentice, who has been...

ZAKARIAS: (HUMS "Yes but...") Mmm-mmmmmm.

ZAKARIAS marks upon his slate tablet: "Speak of Angel!!"

- MARY: A... What? Zakarias is writing. But I cannot read.
- ELISABET: Since he was made mute by the angel, Zakarias marks on a slate. Let me read it... (READS) "Speak of angel!" Yes. Zakarias is very respectful of angels... now.
- MARY: Angels... Well... just over a week ago... I was in an olive grove. Suddenly, a magnificent angel appeared unto me and--as with you--prophesized that I would conceive a child... (WHISPERS) the Son of God! (AMAZED) Then, I came to be filled with the most rapturous, wonderful...
- ELISABET: Radiance? Yes! The Holy Spirit! It dwells within us too, here. (HUMBLY) Oh... how the mother of my lord should come to me! This is all so...

ZAKARIAS marks upon his slate tablet: "Let us pray!"

- ELISABET: Wait! Zakarias writes... (READS) "Let us give thanks." Oh, yes. Pray, my dear.
- MARY: I... I-I.. Yes! The Spirit! Uplifting me...
- MARY: (JOYFULLY)
Ohhh! My soul doth magnify the Lord!
And my spirit rejoices in God--my Savior.
For he has regarded the meekness of his handmaiden. And from henceforth, all ages shall call me... blessed.
The Mighty One hath done to me great things, and Holy is his name;
And his mercy is upon them that honor him-- from generation to generation. (HUMBLY) Amen.

MARY and ELISABET and ZAKARIAS EXIT, LEFT.

NARRATOR ENTERS from RIGHT.

NARRATOR: After three months' time, Elisabet gave birth to a son-- naming him John. And immediately, Zakarias regained his power to speak. But now Mary did return home unto Nazareth. However, her family was much vexed to find her "with child." Alas, good news is not always greeted as such...

NARRATOR ENTERS, from RIGHT.

Prompted by the narration, MARY ENTERS, from LEFT to sit upon a box in the workshop--thereby concealing her now-prominent baby bulge.

SCENE 5 - JOSEPH'S HEARTBREAK
EXT. ESDRAS WORKSHOP YARD - DUSK
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY)

SFX TRACK: [FX-07] NAZARETH SUMMER AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

NARRATOR: And Mary did go unto the carpenters' yard in Nazareth. She sat and waited, hoping her espoused husband would accept her great, good news. Mary knew she had not sinned against Joseph, but did not know how he would feel about a child who was not of his seed...

NARRATOR EXITS, RIGHT.

JOSEPH ENTERS, from LEFT with slightly concealed "suarish wheel" and a hand saw.

JOSEPH: (ENTERING) Look, Master Esdras! ("EHZ-druhs") I have just... (STARTLED) Oh, Mary! My darling! You are returned! It has been months...

MARY: (SEEKING TO EXPLAIN HER PREGNANCY) Errr... Joseph, I...

JOSEPH: Wait, Mary! All Spring, I apprenticed in Caesarea ("see-zuh-REE-uh") and I learned much about carpentry. Behold! Today... (JOKING) I have invented... the wheel! Look! (HOLDS UP SQUARISH WHEEL)

MARY: (LAUGHS) Ha-ha! Oh, Joseph... But... that "wheel" is not quite round enough.

JOSEPH: (JOKING WITH HER) What? It is... not? Forsooth! You are right! Well, that is why I have a saw! (PULLS OUT SAW)
And thus, I shall now re-fashion it.

JOSEPH begins sawing the squarish wheel--under his dialogue.

JOSEPH: Ohh!--my dear one--Esdras said that, as this workshop is my “home”, you can come live here too. It shall be modest--just a room in the back--but it is my “house” and so... living here together, we shall formally be “husband and wife.”

MARY: Mind your sawing... my “husband.”

JOSEPH: Fear not, Mary! Yet I was surprised when--a week ago--I went to make a bride-money payment to your father, and was told you had traveled to Ein Kerem three months ago.

MARY: (REALIZING THE DIFFICULTY) I... I... did. My kinswoman--Elisabet--had a son. It was a wondrous gift from the Lord but... but I... (FALTERING) Oh, Joseph... Hold me!

MARY stands up, revealing her 3-month- pregnant belly.

JOSEPH sees and stops sawing.

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) Mary! You... you....

MARY: (WHISPERS) Yes...

JOSEPH: (DEFLATED) You are... with child!

MARY: I am. (TRYING) Joseph... It was the most miraculous...

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) You are... with child.

MARY: Um... Late at night.... In the...

JOSEPH: Mary! (PLEADING) Have you... betrayed me? (HURT)
There was... another? ...love?

MARY: No.

JOSEPH: (WOEFULLY) Then... You are not whom I contracted to marry. You bear someone else's child.

MARY: My husband... please. (SIGHS) In the Spring, at night...

JOSEPH: And now you will be a mother! My mother died... birthing me... (SIGHS, MUSING TO HIMSELF) Ohhh! “Before I ever knew her... I lost her. She was suddenly... gone...”

MARY: Joseph, I... (PLEADING) Please. I... have not been unfaithful.

JOSEPH: (NOT LOOKING AT HER, DEVASTATED) Un... (SIGHS) ..faithful...

MARY: (IN TEARS) Oh, Joseph. This is not as it appears...

JOSEPH: (DESPONDENT) I can see... (TURNS AWAY) Mary... be...gone. (HURT) Go!

MARY crosses RIGHT and begins to leave.

MARY: (IN TEARS) But I... did not.... (SOBS) Oh, Joseph....

JOSEPH: (HANDS COVERING HIS FACE) “Before I ever knew her... “

MARY EXITS, RIGHT

MARY: (DISTANT SOB) oh....

JOSEPH: (LOST) ... ever! (BURIES FACE IN HIS HANDS)

NARRATOR ENTERS, from RIGHT--and remains in scene, observing--when not speaking.

SCENE 6 - JOSEPH'S ANGEL DREAM
INT. ESDRAS WORKSHOP - NIGHT (JULY)
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, ANGEL #2)

SFX TRACKS: [FX-o8] WORKSHOP NIGHT AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

NARRATOR: Trouble came upon Joseph. His grief was very great. Esdras, his mentor, quoted Deuteronomy about “wives who betray” and called upon Joseph to divorce Mary, quietly.

NARRATOR: But Joseph still felt kindly towards her. And it came to pass--at evening-tide--that Joseph's sleep provided no rest.

JOSEPH tosses and turns in bed--UNDER.

JOSEPH: (MUMBLING) No! No! Mary! (AD-LIB) Mother!

NARRATOR: His mind was awash with stirred feelings and great dread. And--at this dark moment--lo!, an angel of the Lord spoke to him in a dream...

ANGEL #2 ENTERS, from LEFT.

ANGEL #2: [REVERB] Joseph--of the House of David! Hearken now unto my voice! Fear not to take unto thee Mary as thy wife, for the child conceived within her is of the Holy Spirit!

JOSEPH: (MUMBLING) Mary... Mary...

ANGEL #2: And she shall bring forth a son! And thou shalt call his name Jesus--for he shall save his people from their sins. And The Lord shall be with man-kind, once again...

ANGEL #2 EXITS, LEFT.

Prompted by narration, JOSEPH arises and crosses RIGHT into pastoral set, remaining there for the next scene.

NARRATOR: Joseph did awake, but questioned if perhaps his dream was but an idle thought within his head. He arose--while still night--and went unto the countryside to contemplate his dilemma...

SFX TRACK: [FX-09] _____ (CROSS-FADE) CRICKETS, WIND--UNDER SCENE

SCENE 7 - THE RECONCILIATION
EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT (JULY)
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY)

NARRATOR: And Joseph did walk until he came to find himself in a grove of olive trees. And there--under the stars--did he ponder she who had died while giving birth to him...

JOSEPH: (HEAD BOWED) Mother, I wonder about you, down in the pit of death. You did name me Joseph--which means "God give increase"--but all I see... is loss.

MARY quietly ENTERS, from LEFT and watches Joseph.

JOSEPH: I am betrothed to a woman... who bears not my child. Why, Mother...? Why? Did you not love me? Does the Lord not love me?

MARY: (DISTANT) I love you, Joseph. I always have.

JOSEPH: (STARTLED) Mary! How do you come to be here?

MARY: (APPROACHING) I, too, could not sleep, Joseph. My life at home is troubled. I came here to pray. It is special--this grove.

JOSEPH: I came here because I saw this place in a dream--one that I do not understand.

MARY: This is where the angel of the Lord appeared unto me--just after we were betrothed. You had left for Caesarea. The angel promised that the Holy Spirit would infuse me with God's grace.

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) An angel! Appeared unto you?

MARY: I was also puzzled--at first. He proclaimed that the Lord had chosen me to bear his Son--a redeemer. And that... his name shall...

JOSEPH: ...his name shall be... Jesus.

MARY: (GASPS) Ahh! (STUNNED) Yes! Jesus. Jesus! How can you have known such...?

JOSEPH: Then my dream was true! In it, a voice said you had conceived of the Holy Spirit and that this child shall be named Jesus!

MARY: An angel in your dream, my husband?

JOSEPH: Yes! And that this son would “save his people from their sins.”

MARY: Then... do you... forgive me, Joseph?

JOSEPH: (STUNNED) Forgive... you? (REALIZING) Oh, Mary. Please forgive me! For I did doubt you. Esdras, my mentor pressed me to divorce, yet... I cannot but love you. (THEY EMBRACE)

MARY: See how the stars shine? God’s grace is painted across the sky.

JOSEPH: Beautiful!

MARY: And the stars are there all day! We cannot see them, but we know they are there. That is how I love you, Joseph... And that is how the Lord loves his people. Always there.

JOSEPH: (HUMBLY) May I prove worthy of your love, Mary.

MARY: As we vowed at our betrothal, Joseph:
“We shall be happy together, drink deep and lose ourselves in love.”

JOSEPH: “My lover is mine... and I... am hers.”
(THEY KISS)

NARRATOR: And so... Mary and Joseph were reconciled under the light of Heaven. They found themselves--through faith and surrender. And it would come to pass that together, they should carry forward the Lord’s purpose of the reconciliation of God and Man!

SONG-03 “O COME, O COME EMMANUEL” (VERSE 1 ONLY)
SUNG BY CHORUS (OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

--END OF ACT 1--

--START OF ACT 2--**SETTING:**

The town square backdrop remains STAGE LEFT. Once the story moves to Bethlehem, a temporary stable will sit DOWNSTAGE and LEFT of the town square.

AT RISE:

NARRATOR ENTERS, from RIGHT.

SCENE 1 - COME UNTO BETHLEHEM**EXT. BETHLEHEM INN - NIGHT (DECEMBER 24TH)****(NARRATOR)****NARRATOR:**

And it came to pass in those days--as Winter neared--there was a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed--each returning to their tribal village. And Joseph--being a Bethlehem-ite--went out from Galilee. And he took with him his wife, Mary--who was now great with child.

SFX TRACK: [FX-10] _____ DESERT WINDS--UNDER SCENE

During narration, JOSEPH and MARY quietly ENTER from LEFT. They will rest, at the LIP of the stage--EXTREME STAGE RIGHT. A donkey can be tethered UPSTAGE of them. JOSEPH has a jug of water he's just drawn from a well. Mary offers him a cup.

SCENE 2 - THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**EXT. ROAD TO BETHLEHEM - DAY (MID-DECEMBER)****(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY)****NARRATOR:**

Traveling south, they slept beside the road or in sheepfolds--guests of lowly shepherds. And they stopped briefly where the Patriarch, Jacob, dreamed of a ladder ascending to Heaven. As elsewhere, Joseph rested his young wife often--to ease the discomfort of riding upon a donkey...

NARRATOR CROSSES to EXTREME LEFT and observes the conversation.

NARRATOR remains, quietly observing, for the next three scenes.

MARY: (SIPPING WATER) This well-water is bitter, Joseph, but welcome nonetheless. It will do--for now. There is sweet water ahead. And better days in our future...

JOSEPH: (SIGHS) You think of the future, my wife... I merely feel this moment. (QUIETLY) But if you do carry the Son of God--within your womb, what thence shall come?

MARY: Trust the Lord, Joseph. Share my faith!

JOSEPH: I do! But to be parents of... (WHISPERS) the Messiah...? Are we worthy of such a task? Will he be a prophet? A priestly-king?

MARY: It is puzzling, yes...

JOSEPH: I am a mere carpenter! You, a farmer's daughter! How can we foster... a king? Raise... a king? What do we know of ruling over people?

MARY: Rule? (SIGHS) We only know how to serve others.

JOSEPH: And what could we possibly teach the Messiah?--He that shall bring justice to all.

MARY: Justice? I know only mercy.

JOSEPH: I worry. How can we--poor people--be the ones to...

MARY: The Lord has called upon me--upon us--to serve him. I surrendered myself to God. And though his ways are beyond our knowing, I shall not waver from the path he set me upon.

JOSEPH: Indeed... I shall serve you--and The Lord--as well as I am able. Let us continue now...

SFX TRACK: [FX-11]

BETHLEHEM WINTER WIND--UNDER SCENE

SCENE 3 - NO ROOM AT THE INN
 EXT. BETHLEHEM INN - NIGHT (DECEMBER 24TH)
 (NARRATOR, JOSEPH, INN-KEEPER, MARY, RACHAB)

SETTING:

DOWNSTAGE LEFT of the town square backdrop is the Stable/Cave: just some wooden poles with a cross-beam, and perhaps, even a peaked roof--like a traditional Christmas crèche. It is open-faced DOWNSTAGE, with hay bales or boxes inside--and a manger. An Ox and donkey can be seen UPSTAGE standing in stalls. Straw can litter the stable floor.

AT RISE:

JOSEPH and MARY begin CROSSING LEFT, towards the-(UPSTAGE) doorway of the Inn--the functional split door in the town square backdrop.

SONG-04 “OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM” (VERSE 1)
SUNG BY CHORUS
(OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

NARRATOR: And--at the end of nine days travel--they did arrive at the tiny village of Bethlehem. But it was crowded with other pilgrims, seeking to enroll. Joseph and Mary came unto the only inn to be found in the village.

JOSEPH leaves Mary and approaches the door. He knocks (3X). The INN-KEEPER opens it and leans out. Behind him we HEAR raucous travelers dining--beneath the scene.

RACHAB--quietly--ENTERS, from STAGE LEFT. She stops and observes the conversation.

JOSEPH: (APPROACHING) Excuse me, inn-keeper, sir. Do you have lodging available for my wife and myself? We have traveled--many days--from Galilee and are weary.

INN-KEEPER: (WEARY) No! There is no room. No room! Every straw pallet is full! People are sleeping in the courtyard--even on such a windy night. There is no room for any-more travelers!

JOSEPH: But, you see, my wife is expecting a child.

INN-KEEPER: Sleep in the fields below. Or the road!

JOSEPH: She is due to bear the child... soon. Perhaps to-night.

INN-KEEPER: (TAKEN ABACK) Uhh.. I am sorry. (EXITING) But... I cannot help you. Go!

INN-KEEPER EXITS, shutting door--cutting off the raucous traveler voices abruptly.

JOSEPH: (TO HIMSELF) Oh... What shall I do? (CALLS OUT) Mary?

MARY: (DISTANT) Yes, Joseph.

JOSEPH: They have no room. We shall have to look elsewhere.

MARY: (DISTANT) There is not much time...

RACHAB CROSSES to CENTER STAGE.

RACHAB: (APPROACHING) Wait! Sir! Ahaz (“AY-hez”)-- the inn-keeper--is my master, but I think you could lodge in the stable.

JOSEPH: The stable? But my wife...

RACHAB: The stable is dirty, yes. But it is dry--and out of the cold. Go down that path, there!

JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you for your generosity...

RACHAB: Rachab (“raw-CHOB”) is my name. Ahaz may beat me for my “generosity”, but you need some-where to stay. I was homeless once, myself.

JOSEPH: Thank you, Rachab.

RACHAB: If you should require anything, come ‘round the kitchen. (WHISPERS) But avoid Ahaz. He angers easily. Now, go!

JOSEPH gets Mary and begins to lead her and the donkey LEFT, towards the stable.

JOSEPH: (EXITING) Mary! We have found respite...

As they go in, RACHAB watches.

RACHAB: (TO HERSELF) Ohh! What a life they must lead, the poor wretches. And bringing a child into such a world! (SIGHS)
Fools...

SFX TRACK: [FX-12] LATE NIGHT AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

SCENE 4 - THE BIRTH OF JESUS

INT. CAVE/STABLE - AFTER MIDNIGHT (DECEMBER 25)

(NARRATOR, INFANT JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH)

NARRATOR steps forward--still LEFT of the stable.

JOSEPH hangs a linen sheet across the top of the stable façade, covering the DOWNSTAGE opening. JOSEPH EXITS, LEFT.

A light from behind Mary will allow her to give birth with some privacy. MARY--illuminated as a shadow behind the linen curtain--performs the actions described in the narration.

NARRATOR: While a rustic stable was hardly where one imagined the Savior of man-kind to come into the world, this was all the poor couple could provide. (PAUSE) Yet... just after midnight, it came to pass that Mary gave birth to her child...

INFANT JESUS: (NEWBORN CRY) Waaaah!

MARY: (HOLDING HIM UP) There, there, now... my beautiful boy...

NARRATOR: And she named her son, Jesus--thereby fulfilling the prophecy of the angel of the Lord.

MARY: (TO JOSEPH) Joseph! Come see!

SONG-05 “THE COVENTRY CAROL” (VERSE 1)

SUNG BY MARY ONLY

During the song, JOSEPH ENTERS, from LEFT, but pauses to watch the mother and child's private moment together. At the end of the song he joins Mary, who continues to follow the actions described by the narration.

SHEPHERDS--quietly ENTER, from RIGHT to occupy the Pastoral set. They pay no attention to what's taking place STAGE LEFT.

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING--FRIGHTENED) “Baaahhh!”

BO’AZ” Shep! Wake! Wake up! We must flee!

SHEP: (WAKING) ZZZZZ--Wha...? (SCREAMS) Ahhh!

ANGEL #3: [REVERB] Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy!

EFRAYIM: (FRIGHTENED) J-J-Joy?

ANGEL #3: [REVERB] Unto you is born this day--in the city of David--a Savior!

SHEP: City of David? That is here! Bethlehem!

BO’AZ: (TO SHEP) Hush! (TO ANGEL) A... a savior?

ANGEL #3: [REVERB] A redeemer! Christ, the Lord!

EFRAYIM: (STUNNED) The... the... Messiah! He has come!

ANGEL #3: [REVERB] You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING) “Baaahhh!”

SHEP: A... a manger? A trough to feed animals?

A host of ANGELS ENTERS, from LEFT. (They can each hold a star aloft.)

BO’AZ: (SHUSHES SHEP) Shhh! The... the stars! Look! Angels!
(AMAZED) ...Angels!

ANGELS: [REVERB] “Glory to God in the highest! And--on Earth--peace and good will toward men.”

SONG-07 “ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH” (VERSES 1 & 2)
SUNG BY ANGELS & CHORUS
(OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

The host of ANGEL, EXITS, LEFT.

EFRAYIM: But... but.. (GASPS) Ahhh! They are gone!

SHEP: Yes. (SIGHS) In a twinkle...

BO'AZ: It was a flock! A flock of angels!

EFRAYIM: A multitude of angels!

SHEEP #1: (BLEATING) "Baaahhh!"

NARRATOR steps forward, CENTER STAGE.

SHEPHERDS follow along with actions in narration, CROSSING LEFT to Stable.

NARRATOR: It was a host of angels. And the peace on Earth they proclaimed was the harmony and wholeness found in the Lord! (PAUSE) The shepherds went up--out of the valley--unto Bethlehem. And, finding a light in the stable, did visit the family to see the Christ Child...

SFX TRACK: [FX-14] STABLE AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

JOSEPH: (APPROACHING) Mary, these shepherds have come. They say they saw... an angel!

MARY: Let them in, Joseph. (TO SHEPHERDS) Welcome! Peace be unto you. Here... is he...

SHEPHERDS approach the manger, gazing adoringly at the child.

SHEP: (APPROACHING) Oh! How small! How helpless he is!

BO'AZ: (TO MARY) Thank you, both of you. (STUNNED) How amazing! I recall... from the book of Isaiah:
(MORE...)

BO'AZ: (CONT'D) "For unto us, a child is born,
And his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince... of Peace."
(TO EFRAYIM) Come, Efrayim. Gaze upon... the Savior!

EFRAYIM falls to his knees, stupefied by the child.

EFRAYIM: (TIMIDLY) I... I... (TO MARY, WHISPERS) Thank you.

BO'AZ: (TO JOSEPH & MARY) Forgive my friend here. This is not the... “conquering” Messiah he expected.

ALL: (GENTLE LAUGHTER) Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha...

MARY rises and picking up the child, offers him to EFRAYIM.

MARY: (TO EFRAYIM) Here, then! Hold him.

SHEP: Go, Efrayim! Hold the child!

EFRAYIM: (TAKING THE CHILD) I... I...

INFANT JESUS: (NEWBORN CRY) Waaa-aaaa!

EFRAYIM: (GASPS) Ohhh! (PANICKED, GIVES CHILD BACK TO MARY) Here...!

ALL: (HEARTY LAUGHTER) Ha-ha-ha-ha!

BO'AZ: If this humble... infant can be the Messiah, then, surely, any of us may enter... the Kingdom of Heaven.

SHEP: (TO JOSEPH) I regret.... we have no gifts... other than our praise.

JOSEPH: Thank you! Your joy is our reward.

BO'AZ” Our joy comes from full hearts. Bless you!

SHEPHERDS withdraw, EXITING RIGHT.

NARRATOR ENTERS, from RIGHT, to CENTER STAGE.

NARRATOR: And the shepherds returned unto their flocks, glorifying and praising the Lord for all they had heard and seen....

SONG-o8 “THE FIRST NOEL” (VERSE 1)
SUNG BY SHEPHERDS & CHORUS
(OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

SCENE 6 - PRESENTATION AT THE TEMPLE
EXT. JERUSALEM TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY (EARLY FEBRUARY)
(NARRATOR, SIMEON, JOSEPH, MARY, INFANT JESUS, ANNA)

SFX TRACK: [FX-15] TEMPLE COURTYARD AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

MARY and JOSEPH gather up the child and CROSS RIGHT to stand DOWNSTAGE the town square set. "TEMPLE VISITORS" ENTER, from RIGHT, milling about.

Under the narration, SIMEON and ANNA ENTER--separately-- from RIGHT.

NARRATOR: And--after waiting the days prescribed by the Law of Moses--Mary and Joseph did journey, up to Jerusalem. There, to present the child at the Temple. But upon leaving the Temple, an old and pious man approached them. The Holy Spirit was upon him...

SIMEON approaches JOSEPH. MARY holds the child in her arms.

SIMEON: (TO JOSEPH) Peace be unto you, kind sir.

JOSEPH: And to you...

SIMEON: I am Simeon. And I have long awaited the Savior. May I see the child?

MARY: (STUNNED) Errr... Yes. (HANDING HIM THE CHILD) His name is... Jesus.

SIMEON: (TO THE CHILD) Ahh... Jesus. How suitable a name!
(LOOKING UP) Bless the Lord!
Now may I depart this life in peace,
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou hast prepared for all to see!
A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles,
and the glory of thy people, Israel.

MARY: Praise be unto the Lord, good sir.

SIMEON: Yea! Yet a sword... shall pierce through thy own soul also...

MARY: (STUNNED) I...

JOSEPH: Mary! Do not fret! I shall protect you.

SIMEON: The sword whereof I speak is not of metal, but of sorrow.
Lo, thank you for the service you do the Lord. (EXITING)
Farewell. Peace be unto you...

SIMEON EXITS, LEFT. ANNA CROSSES from RIGHT, approaching MARY.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: (APPROACHING) Pardon me, but I am Anna. I, too, have long awaited the Messiah. May I regard the child?

JOSEPH: Yes. Umm... He is called Jesus.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Ahh! Thanks be to the Lord! A fine, strong lad! You, and all the peoples of the world, are blessed by the presence of this divine child.

JOSEPH: How can you have perceived...?

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Be not afraid! The Lord watches over you. Listen with your hearts. Feel for others. Be ever-willing to give of yourself. This child--fragile as he is--shall, one day, do so! And he shall transform the world!

MARY: Thank you for your blessing, madam.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS: But depart thee from Jerusalem with haste! Some would postpone the redemption of the world... for their own needs... Go!

JOSEPH and MARY, EXIT, LEFT. ANNA EXITS, RIGHT.

NARRATOR ENTERS, from LEFT.

NARRATOR: The age-d prophetess spoke truth! For, that very day--at the jealous King Herod's palace nearby--there arrived three Magi ("MADGE-eye")--skilled in the science of astrology and ancient lore.

SONG-09 "THE FIRST NOEL" (VERSES 2 & 3)
SUNG BY MAGI & CHORUS
(OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

NARRATOR: They had come seeking the new Messiah, but Herod lied to them, saying he would welcome a successor to his throne. He made them promise to return with news of the Messiah, but secretly plotted to kill the Divine child.

Under narration, MARY and JOSEPH quietly ENTER--settling DOWNSTAGE the town square door. This is now the interior of a room at the Inn.

NARRATOR: Later that evening in Bethlehem, the Mary and Joseph were at rest. In exchange for carpentry chores, the inn-keeper offered a small room--for Joseph, Mary and their infant. The family planned to return unto Nazareth once the winter rains had abated...

NARRATOR EXITS, LEFT.

SFX TRACK: [FX-16] SHED AMBIENCE--UNDER SCENE

SCENE 7 - THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
 INT. INN-KEEPER'S SHED - DAY (FEBRUARY)
 (MARY, JOSEPH, INFANT JESUS, GASPAR, MALKIOR, BALTAZAR,
 NARRATOR)

MARY: Joseph, I am troubled by that prediction today: That a sword shall pierce my soul.

JOSEPH: Mary... the Lord called upon you to bear this child. He will not let you suffer. As the old woman said, "the Lord watches over you."

MARY: Yes. (CHEERING UP) As we watch over the Lord--this...
“little lord.” (TO CHILD) Ahh, my child?

INFANT JESUS: (COOS, GURGLES) Ooooooh!

JOSEPH: There are many years ahead. Once we have returned unto
Nazareth, I shall build a proper home and...

Behind the functional door--UPSTAGE--MALKIOR knocks (3X). JOSEPH opens the (full) door. The MAGI are outside the door.

JOSEPH: Yes? (TAKEN ABACK) Oh, pardon me...

MALKIOR: Peace be unto you, sir. Are you Joseph, the carpenter? The
kitchen slave said we could find Joseph--and his family--in
this tool shed.

JOSEPH: I am Joseph. This is my wife, Mary. And our infant son...
Jesus. He is but a few weeks old.

MALKIOR ENTERS, from door.

MALKIOR: Newborn! Just a few weeks? (TO OTHER MAGI) We are
correct, my colleagues. He is here! (TO JOSEPH) May I--
and my companions--enter?

MARY: (TO MALKIOR) Yes, but..? Such finely dressed men as
yourself... seek to visit us? How...?

BALTAZAR: We are Magi (“MADGE-eye”)--astrologers from the lands of
Persia, India and Assyria.

GASPAR: We have followed a star in the heavens, that has led us
here--to the Messiah.

INFANT JESUS: (COOS, GURGLES) ooh--ooooh!

MALKIOR: Although we--ourselves--are not Jews, we come... to pay
homage to the great Messiah of all nations.

JOSEPH: Homage? I... uhh...

MARY: Do! Do come in. We are but a poor family, yet you are welcome here. Truly!

GASPAR & BALTAZAR ENTER--from door.

MALKIOR: (TO OTHER MAGI) Behold! A Messiah not of glory and palaces, but of humility ...and loving-kindness!

GASPAR: (REALIZING) Of course! The Lord... come to Earth... as a son of man.

BALTAZAR: (PROSTRATING HIMSELF) Bow! Bow, my friends, before the Redeemer, the Christos!
("KREEST-os")

JOSEPH: Fine visitors, we have nothing... nothing to offer you. No wine, no food.

MALKIOR: Let us just behold him, please.

BALTAZAR: It is we who bring offerings to you--to him!

GASPAR: Here... gifts!

MALKIOR: (OFFERING) Gold dust... That he may transmute the baseness of man-kind into the gold of Heaven!

GASPAR: (OFFERING) Frankincense... the perfume of the Sanctuary--to drive away the stench of Evil.

BALTAZAR: (OFFERING) Myrrh... to infuse the scented oil for anointing this Divine Child.

INFANT JESUS: (COOS, GURGLES) oooh--ooooh!

MARY: We thank you. Thank you for these gifts--and that you... believe so. (SIGHS) May the Lord's blessing be upon you and all your people.

NARRATOR ENTERS, from LEFT. The MAGI EXIT, through the door.

NARRATOR: And the Magi--having bestowed their gifts, and feeling great joy--did depart. (PAUSE) But, while they had promised to bring the wicked King Herod news of the Messiah, they were warned--each--in a dream, not to return to the palace. And so, they traveled--by another route--to the East. (PAUSE) And thus, Herod's anger was greatly kindled against them...

NARRATOR EXITS, LEFT.

SCENE 8 - HEROD'S FURY

INT. HEROD'S JERUSALEM PALACE - THAT NIGHT (FEBRUARY)
(HEROD, AMBASSADOR LIVIUS, ETAN, QUEEN MALTACE)

SETTING:

Herod's throne room is STAGE RIGHT. It can be a temporary structure of stone columns with a drape between them, flanking a throne--preferably on a riser. The throne room is just a bit DOWNSTAGE of the Pastoral backdrop.

AT RISE: Herod and his court are in session.

HEROD angrily throws a goblet down.

HEROD THE GREAT: (SEETHING) They lied! (COUGHS) They betrayed my trust, Livius!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: (MOCK OUTRAGE) As the Roman ambassador, I am appalled! Can it be? Visiting Magi deceived... Herod the Great--King of the Jews?

HEROD THE GREAT: You mock me, Livius! As did they, (COUGHS) who promised to return. How could those astrologers know...?

QUEEN MALTACE: We have lost our chance to find this new Messiah--and kill him! And his destiny is to overthrow you--and the Romans! Are we doomed, Herod?

HEROD THE GREAT: Oh, hardly, my queen. (CLAPS HANDS 2X)
(TO ETAN) Etan! Go! Dispatch troops to Bethlehem. Have them kill all newborn sons. This “Messiah” will surely be among them.

ETAN: Newborns, sire?

HEROD THE GREAT: Yes... ..wait! One of those Magi (COUGHS) told me the star may have risen two years ago! Have... (COUGHS) Have the troops kill all male children up to two years of age! ...And anyone who resists! Go!
(CLAPS HANDS 2X) Herod so commands!

ETAN: (EXITING) Yes, sire. All males up to two years...

ETAN EXITS, RIGHT.

QUEEN MALTACE: Herod! Butchering peasant children? No!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: Herod! Why such worry? You are age-d and ill! You shall be dead before this child could ever threaten your rule!

HEROD THE GREAT: (BITTERLY) The Jews have always despised me-- (COUGHS)--throughout my reign. No matter what I did-- were it bringing peace, (COUGHS) prosperity, even rebuilding the Temple of Solomon! They reviled me. Hated me! (COUGHS)

QUEEN MALTACE: But many rulers are hated!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: Yes--even Caesar.

HEROD THE GREAT: However... since they detest me so... if this Messiah of theirs has come, I shall put him to the sword! ...Just to spite the Jews! And extinguish their hope!

AMBASSADOR LIVIUS: (IRONICALLY) Such is Herod’s “justice”?

HEROD THE GREAT: Yes! I may be dead soon, but Herod The Great shall outlive their Messiah! History... shall remember... Herod!
(COUGHS)

NARRATOR ENTERS, from LEFT.

JOSEPH, MARY and INFANT JESUS are asleep in the Inn.

SCENE 9 - THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS
INT. INN-KEEPER'S SHED - NIGHT, MINUTES LATER (FEBRUARY)
(NARRATOR, ANGEL #4)

NARRATOR: Yet, before King Herod's troops could depart on their wicked assignment, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph--in a dream... saying...

ANGEL #4 ENTERS, from LEFT.

SFX TRACK: [FX-17] SLAUGHTER DREAM--UNDER ANGEL AND
NARRATION

ANGEL #4: [REVERB] Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt! And be thou there until I bring thee word--for Herod will seek the child, to destroy him.

ANGEL #4 EXITS LEFT.

As the narration below describes, JOSEPH and MARY will gather the child and EXIT RIGHT .

NARRATOR: Immediately, Joseph arose. And he, Mary, and the child did flee that night. And departed into Egypt--as the angel of the Lord had instructed.

NARRATOR: Then went King Herod's soldiers unto Bethlehem... And there, did slaughter the innocents... sparing none! Evils were multiplied in the earth. And much mourning and lamenting was heard among the Bethlehem-ites.

SCENE 10 - THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
EXT. ROAD TO EGYPT - NIGHT, HOURS LATER (FEBRUARY)
(NARRATOR, JOSEPH, MARY, ANGEL #4, INFANT JESUS)

SFX TRACK: [FX-18] DESERT WINDS--UNDER SCENE

JOSEPH, MARY (holding INFANT JESUS) ENTER--quietly, from RIGHT and settle DOWNSTAGE from Pastoral set. They pause from their travels.

NARRATOR: But Mary and Joseph did join a caravan south... and so, escaped the violence. Later, Joseph did explain to Mary, once safely away...

JOSEPH: It was terrible! In my dream--Mary--I could hear the cries of the children and the weeping of the mothers. Terrible!

INFANT JESUS: (UPSET) “waaah”

MARY: Oh, Joseph! To hear of the suffering and death of those children! I feel such sorrow for those families.

JOSEPH: It shall not always be thus, my wife. As Egypt shall be a sanctuary for us--our family--so shall the Lord’s mercy hold promise of sanctuary... for all.

MARY: (THINKING) Yes, the Savior has been born to us to offer hope amidst a world of darkness such as this. I know it and I believe.

NARRATOR: The family dwelt for a time in the land of Egypt. And it came to pass that that the tyrant, Herod The Great did die.

JOSEPH, MARY (holding INFANT JESUS) stand--CENTER STAGE--facing the audience.

NARRATOR: And, so, Joseph, Mary and Jesus did return unto the land of Israel. And came and dwelt once more in Nazareth.
(MORE...)

NARRATOR:

(CONT'D)

And as the prophet Isaiah foretold: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: And they that dwell in the shadow of death..., upon them hath the light shined.” (PAUSE) Thus... did a new chapter in the life of Man-kind open; One with endless promise, divine mercy and eternal gain! (PAUSE) Rejoice, all people! The Savior had come--for now and ever-more!

SONG-10

“OH, COME ALL YE FAITHFUL” (VERSES 1 & 2)

SUNG BY ALL PERFORMERS(OPTIONALLY, AUDIENCE JOINS)

==THE END==

CASTING EVALUATION: *The Nativity Play*

Date:

Small cast: 6 actors (2 male, 2 female, 2 male-or-female)

Large cast: 24 actors (5 male, 3 female, 15 male-or-female))

The plus symbol (+) indicates a role that can be doubled with the role listed above it.

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ | NARRATOR | The narrator (Male or Female) |
| _____ | + EFRAYIM | Cynical shepherd (M/F) |
| _____ | MARY | 16 year-old farm girl (F) |
| _____ | JOSEPH | 20 year-old carpenter (M) |
| _____ | + LIVIUS | Roman Ambassador (M) |
| _____ | HEROD THE GREAT | Tyrant "King of the Jews" (M) |
| _____ | + ZAKARIAS | Elisabet's husband (M) |
| _____ | + BO'AZ | Old, wizened shepherd (M/F) |
| _____ | + GASPAS | Indian Magi (M/F) |
| _____ | + SIMEON | Pious old man (M) |
| _____ | ELISABET | Mary's aged kinswoman (F) |
| _____ | + QUEEN MALTACE | Herod's wife (F) |
| _____ | + ANNA | Old Prophetess (F) |
| _____ | + RACHAB | Inn-keeper's kindly slave (M/F) |
| _____ | + BALTAZAR | Assyrian Magi (M/F) |
| _____ | + SHEP | Young shepherd (M/F) |
| _____ | ANGEL #1 | Angel messenger(Gabriel) (M/F) |
| _____ | + ANGEL #2 | Angel messenger(M/F) |
| _____ | + ANGEL #3 | Angel messenger (M/F) |
| _____ | + ANGEL #4 | Angel messenger (M/F) |
| _____ | + INN-KEEPER | Crusty inn-keeper (M/F) |
| _____ | + ETAN | Herod's minister (M/F) |
| _____ | + MALKIOR | Persian Magi (M/F) |

Off-stage voices for on-stage dolls

| | | |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ | SHEEP/INFANTS | Bleating sheep/lambs, infants (M/F) |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------|

CASTING MONOLOGUES: *The Nativity Play*

All actors are asked to read some lines, called “sides,” aloud, to audition. The director will cast the roles in our production based upon these readings. Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues can also provide some “back story,” giving an idea of who the characters are and what kind of story we are producing. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents when auditioning for the different roles.

- NARRATOR:** I am the Narrator and I speak in a measured style, often using a biblical syntax. For example: But--on the shore of the Great Sea--Joseph did now labor on Herod’s palace at Caesarea. He served the old carpenter of Nazareth, Esdras (“EHZ-druhs”), who, while he had lost the sharpness of his sight, had lost not the sharpness of his tongue...
- MARY:** Scripture says, “Despise not a thief, if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” It is not stealing if I give this man the pomegranates, is it? A little less for us shall suffice! I am not a simpleton, Aunt Morag! But that man welcomed the flogging! Why did he do that?
- JOSEPH:** He said, “no Galilean carpenter would work terebinth.” Well, I am not of Galilee. I am a Bethlehem-ite! I shall gladly work this terebinth lumber. But Wait, Mary! All Spring I did work in Caesarea and learned much about carpentry. And... today... (JOKING) I have invented... the wheel! (HOLDS UP SQUARISH WHEEL) Look!
- ANGEL #1:** Rejoice, Mary! Hail thou--that art highly favored! The Lord is with thee! Bless-ed art thou among women! Behold! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son!--the anointed one--the Christ! And thou shalt call His name... Jesus.
- SHEEP #1:** (BLEATING) “BAAAHHH!”
(BLEATING--FRIGHTENED) “BAAAHHH!”
(BLEATS-DERISIVELY) BAAAAH.

- HEROD THE GREAT: (COUGHS) Livius! (SARCASTICALLY) The court of Herod The Great is always eager to lick the (COUGH) boot of Rome. But, you have not come to merely warn me of the latest rumors of these “zealots” with their false-messiahs. (COUGHS) I smell... gold!
- BO’AZ: (OLD SHEPHERD) Yea! David--the great King David--was once a mere shepherd boy. But the Lord avored him, and David did great deeds... (SIGHS) So long ago... Herod and the Romans are only the most obvious of evil-doers. The wolves are man-kind! Wickedness burns in every heart! For we are separated from the Lord... alas... (SIGHS) for-ever.
- BALTAZAR: From the East, we saw a new star rise--a brilliant light in the Heavens--and we have followed it here. You see, the stars portend, “As above, so below”--therefore the Messiah shall come from Bethlehem. But you are wise, great Herod... for a king.
- ANNA THE PROPHETESS: Be not afraid! The Lord watches over you. Listen with your hearts. Feel for others. Be ever-willing to give of yourself. This child--fragile as he is--shall, one day, do so! And he shall transform the world!
- ELISABET: Oh, but Mary, that is part of how I came to be with child! Six months ago, Zakarias was chosen to offer incense in the Temple Sanctuary. But once within, he had a vision! An... (AMAZED) an angel of the Lord... appeared unto him. And the angel promised that I would--after twenty years of being barren--conceive a son!
- RACHAB: Wait! Sir! Ahaz (“AY-hez”), the inn-keeper--is my master, but I think you could stay in the stable. Ahaz may beat me for doing this, but you need some-where to stay. I was homeless once, myself. If you should require anything, come ‘round the kitchen. (WHISPERS) But avoid Ahaz. He angers easily.

SOUND TECHNICIAN'S NOTES: *The Nativity Play*

Electronic Effect:

A reverb effect on wireless microphones for the angels would be nice. This would be to depict the heavenly quality of the angels. It is not essential. Many mixing boards now come with on-board reverb effects..

Playback devices:

This show uses many pre-recorded sound effect background ambience tracks (crickets, rain, birds, etc). This may require TWO playback devices, so you can cross-fade between them at transitions.

Pre-Recorded SFX tracks

| | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 01 | Winter Winds, Sheep, Thunder |
| 02 | Wintry Winds, More Thunder |
| 03 | March Winds, Crickets. |
| 04 | Flourish, Then Wind & Crickets |
| 05 | Wind Picks Up, Thunder |
| 06 | Cloudburst, Rain |
| 07 | Nazareth Summer Ambience |
| 08 | Workshop Night Ambience |
| 09 | Crickets, Wind |
| 10 | Desert Winds |
| 11 | Bethlehem Winter Wind |
| 12 | Late Night Ambience |
| 13 | Wintry Winds, Sheep |
| 14 | Stable Ambience |
| 15 | Temple Courtyard Ambience |
| 16 | Shed Ambience |
| 17 | Slaughter Dream |
| 18 | Desert Winds |

Music listing with publishing info

Most songs are to be sung by the whole cast--and optionally, with the audience joining in. Two songs are intended for solo performers: #2 “Ave Maria” and #5 “The Coventry Carol.”

- 1) God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Traditional (1833) public domain
- 2) Ave Maria (verse 1. Sung by Angel #1 only)
by Franz Schubert (1825) public domain
- 3) O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1 only)
Traditional Latin hymn, translated by John M. Neal (1851) public domain
- 4) O Little Town of Bethlehem
by Phillips Brooks (1868) public domain
- 5) The Coventry Carol (verse 1 only. Sung by Mary only)
Robert Croo (1534) public domain
- 6) Away in A Manger (there are two different melodies—choose one)
Words by unknown (1885) public domain
Melody 1 by William J. Kirkpatrick (1897) public domain "The Cradle Song"
Melody 2 by James R. Murrey (1887) public domain "Mueller"
- 7) Angels We Have Heard On High (verse 1)
by James Chadwick (1862) public domain
- 8) The First Noel (verse 1)
Traditional (1833) public domain
- 9) The First Noel (verses 2 & 3)
Traditional (1833) public domain
- 10) O Come All Ye Faithful
John Francis Wade, ca 1743
Translator: Frederick Oakely, 1852 (public domain)

All these carols are in the public domain and sheet music can be found in a variety of keys--often on-line.

For full lyrics, MIDI files and history of these carols, see:

http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/HTML/full_index_of_hymns_and_carols.htm

SONG #1 - God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

God rest ye merry gentlemen; let nothing you dismay.
Remember, Christ, our Savior, was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

CHORUS:

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!

SONG #2 - Ave Maria (verse 1, sung by Angel #1 ONLY)

Ave Maria Gratia plena
Maria Gratia plena
Maria Gratia plena
Ave, ave dominus
Dominus tecum

Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus
Et benedictus fructus ventris
Ventris tui Jesus

Ave Maria!

SONG #3 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1 ONLY)

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Israel
To thee shall come Emmanuel

SONG #4 - O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

SONG #5 - The Coventry Carol [Sung by Mary ONLY]

Lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.
Lullay, Thou little tiny Child.
By, by, lully, lullay.

SONG #6 - Away in A Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes,
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by the cradle till morning is nigh.

SONG #7 - Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

CHORUS:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

CHORUS:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

SONG #8 - The First Noel (verse 1 ONLY)

The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

CHORUS:
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

SONG #9 - The First Noel (Verses 2 & 3 ONLY)

They looked up, and saw a star,
Shining in the East, beyond them far;
And to the Earth, it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

CHORUS:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light, of that same star,
Three Wise Men came, from a country afar;
To seek a King, was their intent,
And to follow the Star wherever it went.

CHORUS:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

SONG #10 - O Come All Ye Faithful

O come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels.

CHORUS:

O come, let us adore Him (3x)
Christ, the Lord.

Sing, choir of angels,
Sing in exultations,
Sing all ye citizens of Heaven above:
Glory to God in the Highest.

CHORUS:

O come, let us adore Him (3x)
Christ, the Lord.