

As the Narrator reads, the **Prophet Zechariah** returns to the step in front of the Royal Door / center back of stage. (An adult can play Zechariah. If played by a child, Zechariah can remove robes and rejoin cast in pews for another role.)

Mary enters solea from the left / stage left and **Angel Gabriel** enters solea from the right / stage right. They meet in the center of the solea / center stage.)

Narrator: Hundreds of years later, young Mary of the house of David was engaged to Joseph, also of the House of David. One day, the Angel Gabriel suddenly appeared to her.

Angel Gabriel: Hail Mary, full of grace. Blessed are you among women. Fear not, for you have found favor in God's sight. You will bring forth a son, and His name shall be Jesus. He shall be great and He shall be called the Son of the Highest, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Mary: How can this be? I am not married.

Angel Gabriel: With God nothing is impossible.

Mary: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Mary returns to pew from the left side of the solea / stage left. **Angel Gabriel** exits to the right side of the solea/ stage right. **Angel of the Lord** enters from the left / stage left. **Joseph** approaches solea from the right / stage right. He carries a blanket or covering, lays on the solea center front / stage center front and puts his head down as if sleeping. The **Angel of the Lord** approaches **Joseph** from the left / stage left.

Narrator: Joseph was disturbed when he discovered that Mary was expecting a child, but being a good man, he did nothing to disgrace her. Soon after, Mary's cousin Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist, and Joseph had a dream. He saw an angel from the Lord standing beside him.

Angel of the Lord: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the Baby begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

Joseph: **Joseph stands.** Now I understand that this Child who will be born, will be the King of Israel, whom the prophets have spoken of so many times

Mary walks down the left aisle & **Joseph** exits right / stage right with the blanket and walks down right aisle toward the back of the Nave / hall. They meet in the middle aisle. Meanwhile the **Angel of the Lord** exits to the left / stage left and takes a seat in the pew / row.

Narrator: The time came that a decree went out from the Emperor, Caesar Augustus, through all the lands of the Roman Empire. All the people were to go to the cities and towns from which their families had come, and there they would have their names written down upon a list. Since both Joseph and Mary had come from the family of King David, they went together from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It was a long journey.

As choir sings, **Mary** and **Joseph**, with his walking stick, walk up center aisle and climb the steps to the solea / stage.

Singers:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Verse 1

O Little Town of Bethlehem
how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.

Verse 2

Yet in the dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

Innkeeper enters the solea from the _____ side and faces **Mary** and **Joseph**.

Narrator: When Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, they found the city full of people who, like them, had come to have their names written upon the list.

Joseph: My good man, my wife and I have traveled a long way. Do you have a room for us for the night?

Innkeeper: I would like to help you, but you are not the only ones traveling this evening. Many others have also come, and my rooms are full.

Joseph: Please, sir, please help us. My wife is with child and we think the baby will be born tonight.

Innkeeper: I understand, but there are simply no rooms. You and your wife are welcome to sleep in the stable. There are no beds, but it is dry and warm.

Scene Needs: Straw in manger. Seat nearby for Mary. If in the Nave, have a drop cloth under the manger and spread a little straw. A baby doll to use for Baby Jesus. Several white pieces of cloth to represent the swaddling clothes.

As Narrator reads, **Joseph** helps **Mary** find a seat. Then, he stands in front of her, between her and congregation, as she reaches behind manger and picks up **Baby Jesus**. As the Narrator reads, "the Savior of the world was born," **Innkeeper** exits _____ and returns to pew/row. (If Innkeeper is to return as another character, he/she can remove apron at this time.)

Narrator: Joseph and Mary took advantage of the innkeeper's good will and went to the stable where the cattle were kept. In this stable of Bethlehem, Jesus, the Savior of the world, was born.

Singers:

Silent Night - Verse 1

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child, Holy Infant, so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

As the Narrator reads, **Mary** wraps **Baby** in several pieces of white cloth, and then lays him in the manger.

Narrator: Mary wrapped her child in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, which is where the cows and oxen would feed. Then she and Joseph adored the Divine Infant.

Singers:

Away in the Manger - Verse 1

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.

Enter **Angel to the Shepherds** enters the solea from the left / stage left, walks to the step in front of the Royal Door / on the elevated area, stands on it facing the **Shepherds**, who have entered from the right side of the solea / stage right and sit right of center. The Shepherds can carry stuffed sheep or shepherds crooks or other students can be dressed like sheep.

Narrator: On that night some shepherds were tending their sheep in a field near Bethlehem. Suddenly a great light shone upon them, and they saw an **Angel of the Lord** standing before them. They were filled with fear as they saw how glorious the angel was.

Angel to the Shepherds: Do not be afraid, for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all mankind. Today in the city of David is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

The seated **Angels**, walk to back of Nave / hall in their respective side aisles, pausing when they reach the center aisle.

Singers:

The First Noel - Verse 1

The first Noel the angels 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.
Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.

As the carol is sung, the **Angels** are to slowly walk two-by-two down the center aisle toward the solea / stage. Once on the solea / stage, some can stand behind the Shepherds, others to the sides. They are not to block the audience's view of the Shepherds. Angels can hold battery lit candles.

Consider attaching poster size angels to poles to represent the angels in the air. If preschoolers are angels, consider having them enter from the sides of the solea / stage rather than come down the center. They can join the older angels once the others are in position, perhaps in front of the older angels and a few in front of the shepherds.)

Narrator: When the **Angels** are getting in position, the Narrator begins. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly host. The shepherds saw that the air around them and the sky above them was filled with angels, praising God and singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

Singers:

Hark the Herald Angels Sing - Verse 1

Hark the herald angels sing	Join the triumph of the skies,
Glory to the newborn King;	With angelic host proclaim
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,	Christ is born in Bethlehem!
God and sinners reconciled!	Hark the herald angels sing
Joyful all ye nations rise,	Glory to the newborn King!

Angels arrange themselves on solea. **Angel of Glory** faces the congregation and holds arms out.

Angel of Glory: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.

All Angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.

Shepherds 1 and 2 stand and face congregation.

Angels exit both left and right sides of solea / stage left & stage right, as quickly and quietly as they can

Narrator: While the shepherds looked with wonder and listened, the angels went out of sight as suddenly as they had come.

Shepherd 1: I have never seen anything so glorious in all of my life.

Shepherd 2: Neither have I. Let us now go to Bethlehem and see what has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

During carol, **Shepherds** exit on both left and right sides of the solea/stage, then walk down the side aisles towards back of Nave / hall, and then, on the second verse, walk two-by-two down the center aisle.

Singers:

Angels We Have Heard on High

Verse 1

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

Verse 3

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, our newborn King
Gloria in excelsis Deo
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

As **Narrator** reads, **Shepherds** arrange themselves on the solea / stage

Narrator: As quickly as they could, the shepherds went to Bethlehem, and there they found Mary and Joseph and the little Babe lying in the manger. They told Mary and Joseph, and others also, how they had seen the angels, and what they had heard about this Infant. All who heard their story wondered at it, and the shepherds praised God for the good news that He had sent them.

As choir sings, **Mary** picks up Baby and holds Him; at the end of the song, she puts Him in the manger again.

Singers:

What Child is This - Verse 1

What child is this, who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King
Who shepherds watch and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him praise,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Angel holding Star of Bethlehem stands at back of the Nave / hall. **Wise men** stand at foot of solea and face back of Nave / hall.)

Narrator: In a country east of Judea, many miles away, there lived learned men who studied the stars. They were called Magi. One night they saw a strange star shining in the sky, and they wondered.

Wise Man 1: Do you see that star in the sky? I have never seen one shine so brightly before.

Wise Man 2: I wonder if it could be shining over Bethlehem. The prophet says that out of Bethlehem shall come a ruler who will shepherd the people of Israel.

Wise Man 3: I feel that the star is speaking to us, telling us to follow. Come let us go!

Angel holding the Star of Bethlehem takes a position before the **Wise Men**.
Wise Men walk majestically walk down a side aisle in a row toward back of Nave / hall; **Star** proceeds before them.

Narrator: They made the long journey with servants, camels, and horses.

Singers:

We Three Kings

Verse 1

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star.

Refrain

Oh, star of wonder, star of might
Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to the perfect light.

If a microphone is available at the back of the Nave / hall, the **Wise Men** can deliver their lines there. If not, they should **continue following Star**, walking down the center aisle towards the front of the Nave / stage.

Narrator: When they got to Jerusalem, they asked about the whereabouts of Jesus.

Wise Man 1: Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?

Wise Man 2: We have seen his star in the East.

Wise Man 3: We have come to worship him.

Wise Men walk towards solea.

Singers:

We Three Kings - Verse 2

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold we bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.

Narrator: King Herod heard about this, and he was troubled. He gathered his advisors, who informed him of the prophecies about Jesus' birth. This did not make him happy. He devised a plan and met the Wise Men himself.

Herod enters from the left / stage left and meets the **Wise Men**, who enter solea /stage from the center aisle at the foot of the solea /stage.

King Herod: I have talked to my chief priests, who know the writings of the prophets. They have advised me that the Baby was to be born in Bethlehem. Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, so I may come and worship Him too.

Magi walk down a side aisle of Nave / hall to the back of the Nave / hall again and pause. Meanwhile, **King Herod** exits and prepares to return as the **Angel to the Wise Men** - if you do not have enough people or want to make sure every character remains part of the Nativity Tableau.

Narrator: When the Wise Men heard the king, they departed.

Singers:

We Three Kings

Verse 3

Frankincense to offer have I.
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising, voices raising,
Worshipping God on high.

Verse 4

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume,
Breathes a life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Magi walk down center aisle towards solea following Angel holding the Star of Bethlehem.

Narrator: The Star they had seen in the east went before them, until it came and stood over where the young Child was.

Singers:

We Three Kings – Refrain

Oh, star of wonder, star of might,
Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to the perfect light.

Angel holding the Star of Bethlehem stands behind Mary, Joseph and the Baby.

Narrator: When the Magi saw where the star had stopped, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. They entered and saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him.

Wise Men face the congregation; one by one fall to their knees and lay their gifts before the Baby.

Wise Man 1: I am Melchior, and I bring a gift of gold to lay before the King.

Wise Man 2: I am Caspar, and I bring a gift of frankincense to lay before the king.

Wise Man 3: I am Balthasar, and I bring a gift of myrrh to lay before the King.

Troparion for the Nativity – Greek Phonetics

I Ghennesis Sou Christe o Theos Imon
anetile to kosmo to fos to tis gnoseos
en afti gar i tis astris latrevondes
ipo asteros edhidhaskondo.
Se proskinin
ton ilion tis dhikeosinis
ke Se ghinoskin ex ipsous anatolin.
Kyrie, dhoxa Si.

Troparion for the Nativity -English

Your birth, O Christ our God
Did shine upon the world the light of your
knowledge
And those who were worshipping the stars
By a star they were educated
To worship you, the sun of righteousness
And to know you, a dawn coming from heaven.
Lord, our glory to you.

Troparion for the Nativity – English Translation by Fr. Seraphim Dedes

Your nativity, O Christ our God,
Has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world.
For therein the worshipers of the stars were
By a star instructed to worship You,
The very Sun of Righteousness,
And to know You as Orient from on high.
Glory to You, O Lord

Narrator: After their long journey, the Wise Men slept. An Angel warned in a dream not to return to Herod.

Wise Men stand and rest their heads on their hands as if asleep upright. Angel to the Wise Men enters from _____ side and awakens them.

Angel of the Wise Men: (*Angel touches them and they wake.*) Do not return to that evil man. King Herod does not want to worship the young Child. He wants to bring him harm. When you return East, you must choose a different route.

Narrator: In this way, the life of Jesus was saved, and He lived to become our Teacher and our Saviour.

Narrator: Approximately three hundred years after His birth, a bishop of our Church in Myra lived his life in a Christ-like way. He sought donations from wealthy people in order to share them with those less fortunate. He developed a great reputation for his good heart and his practice of distributing gifts to all in need. After he died, he was elevated to sainthood. We know him as St. Nicholas.

[To the tune of Jolly Old St. Nicholas]

1

Once upon a long ago, very far away
In the town of Bethlehem, lying in some hay,
Jesus came for you and me, bringing Heaven's love,
As a gift for us to have, from the Lord above.

2

In the town of Myra once, also long ago,
Lived good Bishop Nicholas, hair as white as snow.
Nicholas loved Jesus, who loved and helped us all.
"I will do the same," he said, "helping great and small."

3

Thankful Bishop Nicholas, friendly, good, and wise;
When he could, he helped the poor, always by surprise.
Wealthy came to Nicholas, bringing wealth to share,
So it could be sent to those living in despair.

4

We should be like Nicholas, thankful, good, and kind.
Loving those who need our help, all the ones we find.
Jesus and Saint Nicholas taught us how to give,
Share but never seek rewards that is how to live!

Narrator: Our tradition of exchanging Christmas gifts is in memory of the gifts the Magi gave to the baby Jesus and the gifts St. Nicholas gave to those in need. When the Dutch came to New York, their pronunciation of **St. Nicholas Sinterklaas** shifted to Santa Claus—a natural phonetic alteration. The jolly elf image came in 1823, from the poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," now better known as "The Night Before Christmas." It was not long before children knew St. Nicholas the bishop as Santa Claus the jolly man in the red suit and reindeer.

Narrator: The joyous news of Christ's birth is told to us in God's Word, the Holy Bible. Today, two thousand years after God gave us the gift of His Son; we continue to gather in His Church to celebrate His birth. We do this to remember His love for us, that He taught us to share, His teachings and by His sacrifice for our salvation, the new life that He gave us.

We will pause now so that those of you with cameras can come forward to take a picture of our Nativity scene. (If any Actors are not already in position on the solea /stage, ask them to take their place at this time.) All actors come to the solea / stage and take your place. **(Wait for pictures.)**

Narrator: At this point we would like to invite all the rest of the children in the congregation to join us on the solea / stage so we can worship the infant Jesus together. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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.
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

O Come All Ye Faithful –Greek Phonetics

Elate, pistoi, me hara megali
Elate, elate stin Bithleem
Elate na deite
O Christos gennatai
Elate proskinite,
Elate proskinite,
Elate proskinite ton Theon.

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

God rest ye merry, gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power
When we are gone astray
O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Children return to pews during or after the final song.

Joy to the World –Verse 1

Joy to the world, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven,
And nature sing.

Joy to the World –Verse 3

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness
and wonders of His love
and wonders of His love
and wonders, wonders
of His love.

Special thanks go to author Evangeline Varonis. She envisioned a play to incorporate the children of the Church School, and then researched the Scriptures and Church tradition for the text. The selection of Christmas Carols reinforced the message of the Birth of the Christ Child, the Messiah, plus gave everyone, children and adults an opportunity to participate. May our Lord continue to bless her and her family. May she continue to “bear good fruit.”

Cast in Order of Appearance	Costume Items
1. Isaiah	Robes, beard
2. Zechariah	Robes, beard
3. Archangel Gabriel	Angel or choir robe; wings
4. Mary	Blue robe, red head covering/shawl. Vessel for water.
5. Angel of the Lord	Angel or choir robe; wings
6. Joseph	Tunic with vest
7. Innkeeper	Tunic with apron
8. Angel to the Shepherds	Angel or choir robe, wings
9. Host to the Angels (as many angels as wanted)	Angel robe; wings; battery-lit candle
10. Angel of Glory	Angel robe; wings, battery-lit candle
11. Shepherds	Tunic; shepherd's crook or walking stick; stuffed animals representing sheep/lambs
12. Shepherd 1	Normal shepherd attire
13. Shepherd 2	Normal shepherd attire
14. Children dressed as sheep [opt]	Sheep costumes; white footed pj's, ears attached to circular head piece made of cotton balls, and a blacken nose
15. Angel holding Star of Bethlehem	Angel or choir robe; Large Star of Bethlehem on pole
16. Wise Man 1	Altar boy robe; beard; crown; gift of gold or gift-wrapped/decorated box
17. Wise Man 2	Altar boy robe; beard; crown; gift of frankincense or gift-wrapped/decorated box
18. Wise Man 3	Altar boy robe; beard; crown; gift of myrrh or vessel that could hold myrrh
19. King Herod	Altar boy robe; beard (different from wise men; try curling it); crown
20. Angel to the Wise Men	Angel or choir robe
21. Narrator/s	Street clothes or choir robes

PROPS

1. If in a hall, an elevated area for Isaiah and/or Zechariah to stand on
2. Seat for Mary
3. Walking Stick for Joseph [opt]
4. Manger
5. Straw for Manager
6. Drop Cloth [opt]
7. Squares of White Cloth for Swaddling
8. Doll Baby
9. Coverlets for Joseph to sleep on [opt]

10. Stuffed Sheep [opt]
11. Angels [poster board] size on poles [opt]
12. Wings for angels [opt]
13. Battery-operated candles for angels [opt]
14. Shepherds' crook(s)
15. Star of Bethlehem on a pole
16. Colorful cloths for Magi to sleep on [opt]
17. Frankincense
18. Gold
19. Myrrh
- 20.

Comments: Depending on the size of your Church School, students can portray more than one character and the Angels can be one person. Feel free to enhance costumes. It seems you will also need adults to oversee Props and Costumes, as well as direct students and help them with their lines. I would be interested in who uses the play. Let me know. In addition, if you add directions or anything else, let me know and I will update the online file. Phyllis Meshel Onest, pmonest@neo.rr.com