

THE NATIVITY

*One Act Christmas Pageant Play
For All Ages*

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Version 1.7

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

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The Nativity Christmas story text is found within the first two chapters of the Holy Bible New Testament books Matthew and Luke.

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SUMMARY

A 15 minute short play. The Christmas story told through Matthew and Luke as they expound upon the Nativity in their actual Biblical words while their narration unfolds with the other actor performances.

Storyteller as Matthew's assistant and Narrator as Luke's assistant, were created to help read nearly half of Matthew and Luke's words; this helps share those large parts, adds interest, and offers larger female parts if desired. Micah and Isaiah can be combined as Prophets if desired. Gabriel and Angel can be combined to make it one of the largest parts if done.

CAST SPEAKING PARTS COMPARED

18.3%	MATTHEW
16.8%	LUKE
14.6%	STORYTELLER
13.7%	GABRIEL
11.5%	NARRATOR
6.6%	MARY
5.2%	ZECHARIAH
4.2%	ANGEL
2.8%	ELIZABETH
1.4%	HEROD
1.4%	MICAH
1.1%	ISAIAH
0.8%	SHEPHERDS
0.7%	HEAVENLY HOSTS
0.5%	ADVISORS
0.3%	INDIAN MAGI
0.3%	BABYLONIAN MAGI
0.2%	PERSIAN MAGI
0.0%	JOSEPH
0.0%	BABY JESUS

THE NATIVITY

POSSIBLE STAGE LAYOUT*

Stage Left: Zechariah's home,
Wilderness hills for shepherds
and magi

Center Stage: The manger/stable,
and the Temple

Stage Right: Mary's home, Herod's
home, and Wilderness hills if
optionally desired; the Temple
can go here if center stage does
not work

*The stage layout can easily be
reversed as well

THE TEMPLE

FADE IN lights onto the elderly
Disciple LUKE and Apostle
MATTHEW, who are kneeling up
front in prayer.

NARRATOR

(Pointing to MATTHEW)

They are done praying, you help the Apostle Matthew and I'll
help Luke.

STORYTELLER helps MATTHEW rise up
while NARRATOR assists LUKE to
stand from their kneeling
prayerful positions.

LUKE walks forward to speak to
the audience.

LUKE

Ah, hello. I am Luke, a devoted Disciple of our LORD and
Savior Jesus and was personally instructed by the Apostle
Paul. With me...

MATTHEW

(Quickly interrupts)

Hello, I'm Matthew, one of the Apostles and we are so excited
to share with you the greatest story every told! The true
story of... uh... but, we'll let Luke continue.

Smiles and nods to LUKE

LUKE

(Smiles kindly)

Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

LUKE gestures his hand toward STORYTELLER to present part of LUKE's account.

FADE IN lights onto ZECHARIAH as STORYTELLER speaks

STORYTELLER

(Nods in respect to LUKE)

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

LUKE

One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

LUKE gestures his hand toward NARRATOR to present part of LUKE's account

NARRATOR

(Nods in respect to LUKE)

While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said,

GABRIEL

Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks.

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.

ZECHARIAH

(With disbelief in his voice)

How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.

GABRIEL

I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.

STORYTELLER

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long. When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary. When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home.

ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH'S HOME

NARRATOR

Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months.

ELIZABETH

How kind the Lord is! He has taken away my disgrace of having no children.

MARY'S HOME

STORYTELLER

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said,

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

(Faithfully believes him and
now curious how it will
occur)

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

And then the angel left her.

Mary lays down and sleeps.

FADE OUT lights to dim on Mary

FADE IN lights on Matthew

MATTHEW

(Excitedly interrupting Luke)

So you see this is precisely how Jesus the Messiah was to be born! Here we have His mother, Mary, who was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

FADE IN lights to MARY

Mary rises and begins packing and
leaves home

FADE OUT light to dim or dark
while Mary travels

ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH'S HOME

NARRATOR

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary,

ELIZABETH

God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.

MARY

Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.

NARRATOR

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

MARY hugs ELIZABETH

FADE OUT lights to dim as MARY
journey's home

FADE IN lights on STORYTELLER

STORYTELLER

When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. Zechariah motioned for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

FADE IN lights on ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH

Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant, the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.

FADE OUT lights dark

MARY'S HOME

FADE IN lights on MARY and
NARRATOR

NARRATOR

Now when Mary returned home to Joseph she was well over three months pregnant and Mary told Joseph all that had happened. Joseph needing time alone to think.

MATTHEW

(Joseph begins to fall
asleep)

Joseph, her fiancé, was a good 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.

ANGEL

Joseph, son of David, 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.

MATTHEW

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.'

MATTHEW

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born.

FADE OUT lights dark

FADE IN lights on LUKE

FADE IN dim lights on JOSEPH and MARY as they travel

LUKE

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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.

JOSEPH finds a stable and helps Mary lay down

FADE OUT lights to dark

FADE IN the star of Bethlehem

STORYTELLER

He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee, and he took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

MATTHEW

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod.

NARRATOR

She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them.

ANGEL

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.

STORYTELLER

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

HEAVENLY HOSTS

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

STORYTELLER

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.

STORYTELLER

So they hurried toward the village.

MATTHEW

(Excitedly interjects)

About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking,

INDIAN MAGI

Where is the newborn king of the Jews?

PERSIAN MAGI

We saw his star as it rose...

BABYLONIAN MAGI

...and we have come to worship him.

MATTHEW

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,

KING HEROD

Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?

ADVISORS

In Bethlehem in Judea or this is what the prophet wrote:

MICAH

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.

MATTHEW

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,

KING HEROD

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!

MATTHEW

After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the East guides them toward Bethlehem.

LUKE

Hold on, Matthew let us not get ourselves ahead of the story, our shepherds have now hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby Jesus, lying in the manger. They were overjoyed and filled with excitement.

MATTHEW

Yes, thank you brother; we can't have a nativity without the shepherds. So the star, remember, guides our three wise men to Bethlehem, it went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were also 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.

FADE OUT lights to dark

CURTAIN CALL

FADE IN lights full bright

All cast take a bow on stage
during curtain call applause from
the audience

Fade out lights to dark

CLOSING

FADE IN lights onto LUKE and
MATTHEW

LUKE

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. 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.

MATTHEW

And when it was time to leave, the three wise men returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

LUKE

Eight days from his birth the baby was circumcised,

MATTHEW

(Excitedly butting in)

and Joseph named Him Jesus!

LUKE

(Continues with a smile)

He was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived. When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

MATTHEW

(Interjecting)

And that is how it all began, let us give thanks and praise to our Father in heaven for this precious gift. For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

FADE OUT lights to dark