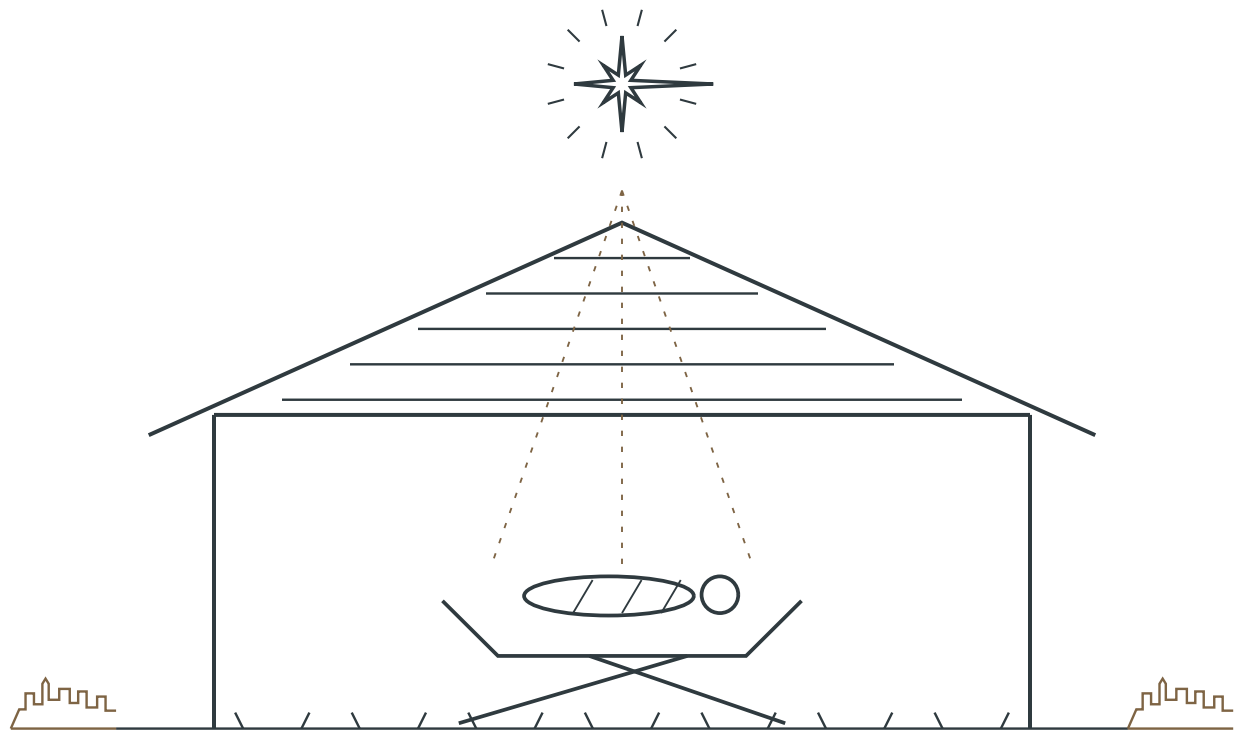




FREE PRINTABLE SCRIPT • KING JAMES VERSION

The Nativity Christmas Play Script

FOR CHURCH, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND FAMILY



6 SCENES • ABOUT 20 MINUTES • 8 TO 40+ PLAYERS • AGES 4 AND UP

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

LUKE 2:15 (KJV)

Director's notes, cast list, costumes, the full script with carol cues, a rehearsal checklist and programs to hand out • US Letter + A4



BEFORE YOU START

Director's Notes

This play tells the first Christmas in the words of the King James Bible. Narrators read the story; Mary, the angels, the shepherds and the wise men speak only the words the Bible gives them. There is nothing to write and very little to memorize, so it works for a small church, a Sunday school class, a homeschool group or cousins in a living room.

RUN TIME

About 20 minutes

CAST

8 to 40+ players

AGES

4 and up

REHEARSALS

3 short ones

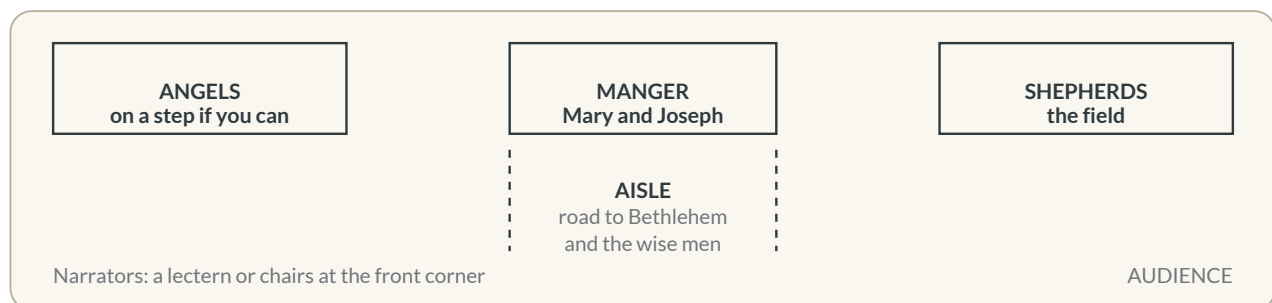
HOW THE SCRIPT WORKS

- **Narrators read whole verses** from the KJV. Give them the script to read from; they do not need to memorize.
- **Characters speak only KJV words.** Where a verse holds someone's words, the verse is split: the narrator reads up to "said," and the character speaks the rest. Every split joins back into the exact verse.
- **Little ones can act without lines.** Joseph, the star bearer and the townspeople mime. Group lines (angels, shepherds, wise men) are said together, so a shy child is never alone.
- **Some verses are left out** to keep it short (Luke 1:29, 34-37 and 2:2; Matthew 1:22-23, 25 and 2:3-8, King Herod). Read the whole of Luke 2 and Matthew 2 together at home.
- **Carols** come between scenes. Use a piano, a recording or sing unaccompanied. The list is on page 3.

THREE SHORT REHEARSALS

- 1 Read-through: sit in a circle, hand out parts, read the script and sing the carols once.
- 2 Walk-through: practice entrances, where to stand and the group lines. Add props.
- 3 Dress rehearsal: costumes on, the whole play from start to finish, then a bow.

A SIMPLE STAGE MAP



"O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth."

PSALM 96:1 (KJV)

WHO IS IN THE PLAY

Cast and Costumes

ROLE	WHAT THEY DO	LINES
NARRATOR 1, 2, 3	Reads the story from the KJV. One person can read all three parts.	Scenes 1-2 / 3-4 / 5-6
MARY	One line (Luke 1:38). On stage from Scene 1 to the end.	1 line
JOSEPH	No lines: listens, wakes, walks, stands guard.	non-speaking
GABRIEL	Speaks to Mary (Luke 1:28-33).	5 lines
ANGEL OF THE LORD	Speaks to Joseph and to the shepherds. Can be the same child as Gabriel.	5 lines
ALL ANGELS	Any number. Say Luke 2:14 together.	1 line, together
SHEPHERDS	Two or more. Say Luke 2:15 together.	1 line, together
WISE MEN	Any number (the Bible does not say how many). Say Matthew 2:2 together.	1 line, together
STAR BEARER	Carries a star on a stick ahead of the wise men.	non-speaking
TOWNSPEOPLE	Optional, any number: travelers on the road to Bethlehem.	non-speaking

COSTUMES FROM HOME

- Mary: a long dress and a blue scarf or shawl
- Joseph and shepherds: bathrobes, a towel on the head tied with a belt or tie
- Angels: white T-shirt or pillowcase tunic, tinsel halo on a headband
- Wise men: bright robes or capes, paper crowns
- Narrators: their Sunday best, or all in one color

PROPS

- A manger: a cardboard box with straw, hay or crinkled paper
- A baby doll wrapped in a blanket ("swaddling clothes")
- A star on a dowel or yardstick
- Three gift boxes for the wise men
- Shepherd crooks: broom handles or cardboard
- A step stool for the angel

CAROLS IN THE SCRIPT (PUBLIC DOMAIN WORDS, FREE TO SING)

PRELUDE

O Come, All Ye Faithful: words at byscripture.com/o-come-all-ye-faithful/

BEFORE SCENE 3

O Little Town of Bethlehem: words at byscripture.com/o-little-town-of-bethlehem/

BEFORE SCENE 4

Angels We Have Heard on High: words at byscripture.com/angels-we-have-heard-on-high/

BEFORE SCENE 5

Away in a Manger: words at byscripture.com/away-in-a-manger/

BEFORE SCENE 6

We Three Kings: words at byscripture.com/we-three-kings/

FINALE

Joy to the World: words at byscripture.com/joy-to-the-world/

Swap in if you like:

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing: byscripture.com/hark-the-herald-angels-sing/

Silent Night: byscripture.com/silent-night/

The Script

SING O Come, All Ye Faithful

as everyone takes their places (prelude)

SCENE 1 The Angel Visits Mary

LUKE 1:26-28, 30-33, 38 (KJV)

[Mary sits center stage, sweeping or reading. Gabriel waits at one side and steps in on "And the angel came in unto her."]

NARRATOR 1 26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

NARRATOR 1 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

NARRATOR 1 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said,

GABRIEL Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

NARRATOR 1 30 And the angel said unto her,

GABRIEL Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

GABRIEL 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

GABRIEL 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

GABRIEL 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

NARRATOR 1 38 And Mary said,

MARY Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

NARRATOR 1 And the angel departed from her.

[Gabriel exits. Mary stays, kneeling or with head bowed, then moves to Joseph's side of the stage.]

SCENE 2 Joseph's Dream

MATTHEW 1:20-21, 24 (KJV)

[Joseph lies down as if asleep. The Angel of the Lord stands behind him with arms open.]

NARRATOR 1 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying,

THE SCRIPT • CONTINUED

- ANGEL** Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.
- ANGEL** 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.
- NARRATOR 1** 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

[Joseph wakes, stands and takes Mary's hand.]

SING O Little Town of Bethlehem while Mary and Joseph walk slowly around the room

SCENE 3 The Road to Bethlehem

LUKE 2:1, 3-7 (KJV)

[Mary and Joseph walk the aisle toward the manger. Townspeople cross the stage carrying bundles.]

- NARRATOR 2** 1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
- NARRATOR 2** 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
- NARRATOR 2** 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
- NARRATOR 2** 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
- NARRATOR 2** 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
- NARRATOR 2** 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

[Mary sits by the manger with the baby (a doll in a blanket). Joseph stands beside her. They stay in place for the rest of the play.]

SING Angels We Have Heard on High

as the angel choir gathers

SCENE 4 Shepherds in the Field

LUKE 2:8-14 (KJV)

[Shepherds sit on the floor at one side, as if around a fire. The Angel of the Lord steps up high (a step or a chair).]

- NARRATOR 2** 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

THE SCRIPT · CONTINUED

- NARRATOR 2** 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
- NARRATOR 2** 10 And the angel said unto them,
- ANGEL** Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
- ANGEL** 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
- ANGEL** 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
- NARRATOR 2** 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
- ALL ANGELS** 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[The angels step back or kneel. The shepherds jump up and look at each other.]

SING **Away in a Manger**

softly, while the shepherds kneel

SCENE 5 **At the Manger**

LUKE 2:15-20 (KJV)

[The shepherds hurry to the manger.]

- NARRATOR 3** 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,
- SHEPHERDS** Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
- NARRATOR 3** 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
- NARRATOR 3** 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
- NARRATOR 3** 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
- NARRATOR 3** 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
- NARRATOR 3** 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

[The shepherds stand to one side of the manger, glad and quiet.]

THE SCRIPT • CONTINUED

SING **We Three Kings**

while the wise men walk the aisle behind the star

SCENE 6 **The Wise Men Worship**

MATTHEW 2:1-2, 9-11 (KJV)

[The Star Bearer leads the wise men down the aisle. They carry three gift boxes.]

NARRATOR 3 **1** Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

NARRATOR 3 **2** Saying,

WISE MEN Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

NARRATOR 3 **9** When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

NARRATOR 3 **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

NARRATOR 3 **11** And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

[The wise men kneel and set their gifts down. The Star Bearer stands behind the manger.]

SING **Joy to the World**

the whole cast and audience sing together

FINALE **Finale**

JOHN 1:14; LUKE 2:14 (KJV)

[Everyone comes forward and stands around the manger.]

ALL NARRATORS **14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

WHOLE CAST **14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[Bow, then wave to your families!]

The End

FOR THE DIRECTOR

Cast and Rehearsal Checklist

Play date _____ Time _____ Place _____

ROLE	PLAYER'S NAME	COSTUME	LINES	R1	R2	R3
Narrator 1	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Narrator 2	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Narrator 3	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mary	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Joseph	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gabriel	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Angel of the Lord	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Angels	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shepherds	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wise men	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Star bearer	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Townspeople	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

R1, R2, R3 = rehearsals 1 to 3 (see page 2). Tick when the player was there. Blank rows are for extra angels, shepherds or wise men.

NOTES: MUSIC, HELPERS, SNACKS, PHOTOS



The Nativity



A CHRISTMAS PLAY FROM THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Presented by _____

Date _____

ORDER OF THE PLAY

Carol: O Come, All Ye Faithful

Scene 1: The Angel Visits Mary (Luke 1:26-28, 30-33, 38)

Scene 2: Joseph's Dream (Matthew 1:20-21, 24)

Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Scene 3: The Road to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1, 3-7)

Carol: Angels We Have Heard on High

Scene 4: Shepherds in the Field (Luke 2:8-14)

Carol: Away in a Manger

Scene 5: At the Manger (Luke 2:15-20)

Carol: We Three Kings

Scene 6: The Wise Men Worship (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11)

Carol: Joy to the World

Finale: Glory to God (John 1:14; Luke 2:14)

OUR CAST

Script: Free Nativity Play Script (KJV), byscripture.com/free-nativity-play-script/



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Finale: Glory to God (John 1:14; Luke 2:14)

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Thank You for Telling the Story

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

ISAIAH 9:6 (KJV)

Whether your stage is a sanctuary or a living room, your players have just spoken the Christmas story aloud from Scripture. Help them keep those words: choose one verse from the play to learn together this season.

KEEP GOD’S WORD CLOSE AFTER CHRISTMAS

Scripture Memory Cards

Learn one verse at a time with cards for the fridge, the car or the classroom. Start with Luke 2:14.

byscripture.com/shop/scripture-memory-cards/

SOAP Bible Study Journal

Read, notice, live and pray one passage at a time. A gentle way to begin the new year in the Bible.

byscripture.com/shop/soap-bible-study-journal/

Journals and cards together: the ByScripture Starter Bundle at byscripture.com/shop/starter-bundle/

ALSO FREE FOR CHRISTMAS

Christian Christmas coloring pages for the cast: byscripture.com/free-christian-christmas-coloring-pages/

Christmas Bible trivia for the cast party: byscripture.com/free-christmas-bible-trivia/

Christmas Bible verse cards: byscripture.com/free-christmas-bible-verse-printables/

Advent Scripture reading plan: byscripture.com/free-advent-reading-plan/

The Christmas story in the Bible, Luke 2 and Matthew 1-2: byscripture.com/christmas-story-in-the-bible/

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