

**The Nativity: A Refugee Story**  
**(Based on the readings from the Book of Matthew)**

Adaptation by

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2023 FINAL COPY OF PAGEANT  
SCRIPT FOR GRACE CHURCH

SCENE ONE - INTRODUCTION

NARRATOR #1

Our story begins in a time without hope. God's people had felt abandoned by God.

NARRATOR #2

Many lived in a time of war and poverty, as many do today.

(Refugee family enters through the side door by the front end of the sanctuary walking trying not to be seen by the congregation. The family sits on stools to the left of the altar in front of the plants by the window.)

NARRATOR #1

People often have to wait in darkness before they find hope.

NARRATOR #2

But this story brings hope through the light of Christ's birth and the promise of peace.

NARRATOR #1

Tonight, we await the Prince of Peace, whose coming is a mystery foretold through the story of the Nativity.

NARRATOR #2

Sit back, watch, pay attention. And turn off your phones, please. Something incredible is about to happen.

FATHER OF FAMILY

(use first name of each child), this is one of my favorite stories. My father shared this story when I was a little boy. We have no place to sleep tonight, but there is another child, the baby Jesus, who slept in a stable as a small child.

MOTHER OF FAMILY

Yes, even Mary and Joseph had to leave their home in Bethlehem out of fear for their safety. We are not alone tonight. God is with us.

SCENE 2 - THE ANNUNCIATION

NARRATOR #1

A long time ago, approximately 2,300 years ago, in a place called Galilee far, far away, approximately 6,700 miles from Seattle, in a town called Nazareth, a strange thing happened to a woman named Mary and her "yet to be husband" named Joseph. An angel, named Gabriel appeared to her and told her something very strange was going to happen to her.

(MARY is sweeping, cleaning when the ANGEL GABRIEL enters. JOSEPH is carving on a piece of wood with his carpenter tools.)

ANGEL GABRIEL

Rejoice, Mary. You have been chosen by God to bear a son whom you will name Jesus.

MARY

What? Who are you?? But I'm not married yet!

ANGEL GABRIEL

Don't worry. Giving birth to the baby Jesus will be a great gift to humankind, providing hope to many in times of despair.

MARY

How can this happen? (whispers) I am a virgin.

ANGEL GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and cover you. That's all God told me - I really can't explain the details.

JOSEPH

Whoa, you've got to be kidding us. There's no way-

ANGEL GABRIEL

Yeah, way...Joseph, you have been chosen to honor God by raising God's son in order to bring hope to the nations.

MARY

Joseph, what should we do?

JOSEPH

If this is a real angel, angels don't lie. (pauses) Do they?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Believe me, I'm the real thing. These wings are "REAL" - I work for the highest office in heaven. We always back our news with the most reliable sources. You can trust me

JOSEPH

You're not pulling our legs? It's been hard to trust the news lately since the Romans have taken control.

ANGEL GABRIEL

I only bring news of hope and good will!

**SONG: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE**

**(Sung by kids with Music Circle help if needed.)**

The angel Gabriel from heaven came  
His wings as drifted snow  
His eyes as flame  
"All hail" said he "thou lowly maiden Mary  
Most highly favored lady, " Gloria, Gloria

"For known a blessed mother thou shalt be  
All generations laud and honor thee  
Thy Son shall be Emanuel  
By seers foretold  
Most highly favored maid, " Gloria, Gloria"

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head  
"To me be as it pleaseth God, " she said,  
"My soul shall laud and magnify His holy name."  
Most highly favored lady, Gloria, Gloria

(During the singing of this song,  
Angel Gabriel approaches Mary and  
they both bow to each other.  
Joseph comes to Mary's side and  
kneels with her as the Angel  
Gabriel gestures to them a blessing  
and then exits.)

SCENE 3 - JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

NARRATOR #2

Now Caesar Augustus demanded that everyone be registered in their town of birth for the census. Caesar wanted to get a head count of how many people would be paying taxes to his Roman empire. So Joseph and Mary, who are awaiting the birth of Jesus, set out to travel the 90 miles or so from Nazareth to Joseph's birthplace, Bethlehem. Joseph was forced to obey Caesar's decree in order to avoid getting in trouble with the Roman Tax Collectors.

They arrive in Bethlehem after a five day journey with Mary ready to give birth. They are hoping to find an inn where Mary could deliver her baby.

(INNKEEPERS #1 & #2 are each holding up a large cardboard sign that says "Inn" with a square window cut out that folds open and closes easily.)

(MARY rides a toy horse, or a real donkey if available, while JOSEPH approaches each door and knocks on each of the cardboard signs.)

INNKEEPER #1

What do you want?

JOSEPH

Please, sir, my wife is great with child and needs a place to deliver our baby-

INNKEEPER #1

NO ROOM HERE! Try the Holiday X-press next door.

(JOSEPH & MARY walk towards Innkeeper #2's sign and knocks.)

INNKEEPER #2

WE'RE FULL UP!

JOSEPH

Please sir - my wife is about to give birth - we need a room desperately!

INNKEEPER #2

Try the stables at the end of the road.

JOSEPH

The stables? But WE need a room, not our donkey.

INNKEEPER #2

The stables are the best deal in town. Because of the census convention, all the inns are full. You should have planned ahead - ever heard of using a carrier pigeon?

JOSEPH

I..I don't have any pigeons. I'm a carpenter.

INNKEEPER #2

The Torah tells us NOT to procrastinate!

(INNKEEPER #2 slams his window on JOSEPH.)

NARRATOR #2

So Joseph sets off for the stables and finds a manger filled with hay to feed the cows. That night, Mary gives birth to the baby Jesus. They lay the baby in the manger.

**SONG: AWAY IN A MANGER**  
**(Sung by Kids and Congregation)**

Away in a manger  
No crib for a bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head  
The stars in the bright sky  
Looked down where He lay  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing  
The Baby awakes  
But little Lord Jesus  
No crying He makes  
I love You, Lord Jesus  
Look down from the sky  
And stay by my side  
Until morning is nigh

SCENE FOUR - ANGELS APPEAR TO THE SHEPHERDS

NARRATOR #1

An angel of the Lord appears to two shepherds in a field, not far from the stable where Mary and Joseph sleep. The two Shepherds took turns watching their sheep at night.

(SHEPHERD #1 is watching the sheep,  
gathering them together while  
SHEPHERD #2 is sleeping, snoring  
loudly.)

SHEPHERD #1

Come on, you little doggies! Stay together now. Keep each other warm!

SHEEP #1

We're not doggies - do we look like motherless calves?

SHEEP #2

We're sheep and these are our little lambs.

SHEPHERD #1

Ok, ok, sorry for confusing you with a cow. Herding cows is my other job when I'm not taking you all out to graze.

(ALL SHEEP start to baah and make  
loud cries waking up SHEPHERD #2.)

SHEPHERD #2

HEY, what's going on? Can't you handle your night watch?

(Star of Bethlehem lights up above  
the altar.)

NARRATOR #2

Suddenly, both SHEPHERDS are blinded by a bright light from above; the Angels of the Lord appears to them. The SHEPHERDS are terribly afraid and hide among the sheep who are calm and continue to graze, eating their grass in the field.

ANGEL #1

Do not be afraid. Listen. I bring you news of great joy, joy to share with all people. Today in Bethlehem, a savior has been born.

ANGEL #2

You will find a baby lying in a manger.

ANGEL #1 & ANGEL #2

(IN UNISON)

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people forever!!

SHEPHERD #1

Whoa, I must be really sleep deprived.

SHEPHERD #2

Am I dreaming or is this really happening? Should we believe them? Are angels real?

ANGELS #1 & #2

ARE WE REAL? (shouting)

ANGEL #1

Check out the star above your heads.

(Shepherds #1 & #2 stare at the star overhead in wonder.)

ANGEL #2

We happened to provide the star for your navigation so you can easily find the baby Jesus in the manger.

ANGEL #1 & #2

We're better than google maps!

(As the congregation sings the two verses, the Shepherds walk with their sheep towards Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. Shepherds and sheep start to dance around the baby's manger joining in the refrain.)

**SONG: ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH**  
(Sung by kids and congregation)

Angels we have heard on high  
singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their brave delight.

**Refrain**

Gloria in excelsis deo  
Gloria in excelsis deo

Shepherd why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear?

**Repeat Refrain above**



SCENE FIVE-THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

(The Three Wise Kings enter from the double doors bearing their gifts and make a slow procession towards the altar where the manger is.)

NARRATOR #1

A few weeks after the baby Jesus was born, Three wise kings followed the bright star the shepherds used to navigate to the Christ child. Melchior was from Persia, Jaspar was from India and Balthazar was from Arabia.

NARRATOR #2

They came bearing gifts, expensive gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. What's myrrh?

NARRATOR #1

I think it's an essential oil. You know the kind that helps you sleep. It's also burned as incense.

NARRATOR #2

Oh, that stinky smoke they spread through the church on special holidays.

NARRATOR #1

Yes, like Christmas.

NARRATOR #2

The sight of the star filled them with delight and going into the stable, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and kneeled before the baby Jesus.

**1st Part of SONG: We Three Kings of Orient Are  
(Sung by kids and congregation)**

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

Refrain

O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

(MELCHIOR presents his gift to the  
Baby Jesus.)

MELCHIOR

We bring gold signifying Jesus' status as King of the Jews.

(JASPAR presents his gift to the  
Baby Jesus.)

JASPAR

We bring frankincense representing the infant's divinity.

(BALTHAZAR presents his gift to the  
Baby Jesus.)

BALTHAZAR

We bring myrrh to represent Jesus' mortality.

**2nd Half of Song: We Three Kings**

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign.

Refrain

O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

Frankincense to offer have I;  
incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising,  
worshiping God on high.

Refrain

O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Refrain

O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

NARRATOR #1

Joseph and Mary were so amazed at the Three Wise Men's presence and were overcome by all the attention their small child was receiving from these wise men from so far away.

NARRATOR #2

Joseph was concerned that when the news traveled that a baby has been named, 'King of the Jews', that King Herod would try to kill the baby Jesus out of jealousy.

NARRATOR #1

In fact, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream instructing him to leave Bethlehem, and travel to Egypt to avoid King Herod's wrath.

NARRATOR #2

So the Holy Family had to flee, like refugees, to a foreign place for safety.

(JOSEPH & MARY get up and walk out the front doors of the sanctuary, as the ANGELS guide them through the doors while the SHEPHERD & the SHEEP exit stage left and the THREE KINGS exit stage right.

NARRATOR #1

Hey, (name of Narrator #2) that reminds me. Did you happen to see the family sitting outside watching our pageant?

NARRATOR #2

You know (name of Narrator #1), I did see them earlier. Should we maybe check on them as it's probably getting really cold outside. I'm sure their kids are cold.

NARRATOR #1

It is Christmas, a time to bring hope to others 'cause that's what Jesus has brought to all of us. Hope.

(Both Narrator #1 & Narrator #2 walk from the podium to the altar area where the refugee family is seated behind the plants.)

NARRATOR #2

Please, come inside for some warm drink and cookies. You are welcome in our church.

(All the characters in the pageant  
re-enter bringing cookies and cups.  
The kids all sing the final song  
together surrounding the refugee  
family.)

**SONG: Do They Know It's Christmas? by Bob Geldof & Midge Ure  
with additional lyrics by Julianna Moeller and  
Ann Strickland (Please use these lyrics and not the one's  
on Youtube)**

It's Christmas time, there's no need to be afraid.  
At Christmas time, we let in light and we banish shade.  
And in our world of plenty we can spread a smile of joy.  
Throw your arms around each other at Christmas time.

But say a prayer. Pray for the other ones.  
At Christmas time, it's hard, but when you're having fun,  
There's a world outside your window.  
We need a world of love and care,  
Where a kiss of love can heal you  
And there's enough for all to share.  
And the Christmas bells that ring here  
Are the clanging chimes of hope.  
Well today we're reaching out and asking you...

To bring peace and joy this Christmas time to all the world  
A song of hope when there's no hope in sight.  
Why is comfort to be feared?  
Why is love no longer real?  
How can they know it's Christmas time at all?

Here's to you, raise a glass for everyone.  
Here's to them, and all their years to come.  
Let them know it's Christmas after all.

Feed the world, let them know it's Christmas time again.  
Feel the world, let them know it's Christmas time again.  
Heal the world, let them know it's Christmas time again.

THE END