

# The Christmas Story



## Characters:

- Caleb - Narrator
- Naomi - Narrator
- Mary - Jesus' mother
- Joseph - Mary's husband
- Wiseman #1
- Wiseman #2
- Wiseman #3
- Innkeeper #1
- Innkeeper #2
- The Angel Gabriel
- Heavenly Host: Lots of Angels
- King Herod - The King of Jerusalem
- Caesar Augustus - the Roman emperor



## Scene 1: Mary's House

A simple house scene with a small table and a few chairs. **Angel Gabriel** is disguised standing up with his back to the audience under a sheet, near the back on the scene. **Caleb** and **Naomi** enter and stand centre stage.

**Caleb:** This is a story that is nearly 2000 years old and tells us about the birth of Jesus. There was a prophecy that the son of God would be born to the world. He would bring peace and joy to all mankind.

**Naomi:** This is the Christmas Story.

**Caleb:** Our story starts 2000 years ago in Galilee, in a little town called Nazareth with a girl called Mary.

Enter **Mary** who begins cleaning her house. **Caleb** and **Mary** exit.

**Naomi:** Mary was a young girl and was betrothed to a carpenter named Joseph and would be married soon. She was just an ordinary Jewish girl.

**Caleb:** That's right she was 'just an ordinary Jewish girl' until...

In an instant **Angel Gabriel** reveals himself from behind the sheet and in a loud voice:

**Angel Gabriel:** Greetings, you who are highly favoured!

**Mary:** *\*Nearly falls over in surprise\**

What on EARTH do you think you're doing hiding in my bed sheets? I've only just finished ironing them!

**Angel Gabriel:** The Lord is with you.

**Mary:** *\*Confused\**

The Lord is with me? B-b-b-but what would he want with me? Have I done something wrong? Is this because I accidentally gave that man the wrong directions to the Sea of Galilee?

**Angel Gabriel:** *\*Laughs\**

No, don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favour with God.

**Mary:** What does that mean?

**Angel Gabriel:** It means that you have been chosen by God.

**Mary:** I've been chosen by God? So what does he want me to do?

**Angel Gabriel:** You have been chosen by God to be the mother of his son.

**Mary:** He wants me to WHAT?! But I'm the Virgin Mary! And I'm supposed to be marrying Joseph!

**Angel Gabriel:** You will have a son through the Holy Spirit. He will be great and will be called Jesus. He will grow into a great man who will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His Kingdom will never end.

**Mary:** *Looks very shocked by this. She fumbles for the closest chair and sits down on it in amazement.*

*\*pauses\**

But why me?

**Angel Gabriel:** You were chosen even before you were born! You have been chosen because of your love for God, your purity, your willingness to do whatever God asks. You are humble and love God above all else and you know that no matter what, God will take care of you. You will make a perfect mother for the Son of God.

**Mary:** *\*Stands up looking strong and courageous\**

If that is what I am called to do, then I must do it.

**Angel Gabriel and Mary freeze where they are.**

**Caleb & Naomi** enter and take centre stage.

**Caleb:** Oh. My. Goodness! Have you ANY idea what just happened here? In the space of 5 minutes the bed sheets went from being nicely ironed to becoming creased, an ANGEL appeared and Mary has been told that she will give birth to the Son of God!

**Naomi:** There's more to it than just that. If people don't believe that she will be pregnant with the Son of God before she's married then she could be disgraced. In Mary's time, giving birth before you were married was seen as a sin!

Who knows what might happen to her; she might lose her reputation and her husband but she knew she must do it.

**Caleb:** It's because of this determination, strength and willingness to obey God that she was chosen to be Jesus' mother.

**Naomi:** Those who can only be trusted a little bit will be given small responsibilities; those who can be trusted a lot will be given great responsibilities!

**Caleb:** God must have really trusted her! Imagine that much responsibility at such a young age –she's only just older than me!

**Naomi:** I know, mum doesn't even trust you to feed the donkey.

**Naomi** exits. **Caleb** follows miming 'Mum doesn't even trust you to feed the donkey'.

## Scene 2: Joseph's Dream

**Joseph** is asleep centre stage. Preferably in darkness with a dim light on Joseph. **Caleb** and **Naomi** enter and stand centre stage.

**Caleb:** Mary's pregnancy bothered him a little bit. He was a faithful man and didn't want to disgrace Mary in public, so he was thinking of calling the wedding off.

**Naomi:** One night, while Joseph was sleeping, the Angel Gabriel appeared in Joseph's dream.

**Angel Gabriel** enters and stands close behind Joseph.

**Angel Gabriel:** Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, she is pregnant with the Son of God. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

**Angel Gabriel** exits and Joseph wakes up.

**Joseph:** I can't leave Mary, I must do what the Angel said and take Mary as my wife!

Lights dim if possible and **Joseph** exits the scene.

### Scene 3: Caesar Augustus

Caleb and Naomi enter and stand stage left.

**Naomi:** During this time, the land was ruled by the Romans who were very powerful rulers and had their own gods.

**Caleb:** The ruler of this empire was a man called Caesar Augustus.

Caesar Augustus walks on in a very pompous manner with a guard on either side of him, each holding a spear.

**Caleb:** He planned to tax everyone as a way of raising money for himself and the Roman Empire. He issued a decree.

**Caesar Augustus:** *\*Loud booming voice\**  
Every man is to return to his home town where he will be counted. Then, we shall know how many men are in my empire and finally we will tax them.  
*\*Places his hands on his hips and rocks back and forth, looking very pleased with himself\**

Everyone exits.

## Scene 4: The Journey to Bethlehem

There is a sign at the back of the stage saying 'Bethlehem 30 miles'. Joseph and Mary enter the stage, Mary riding a donkey and looking quite pregnant.

Joseph and Mary exit the stage and go around the back if possible. Lights dim and the sign is flipped around to read 'Bethlehem 1 mile'.

As the 2 are traveling, coconut shells can be heard to simulate hooves.

**Joseph:**           *\*Holding up a large map\**

At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit and stay on Route 8566.  
Nearly there my dear! Less than a mile to go!

Joseph and Mary enter the scene looking tired.  
There is a large 'Bethlehem' sign.

**Mary:**            I'm tired, can we find somewhere to rest?

**Joseph:**        Of course we can. Look, there's an inn over there, let's see if they have any rooms for the night.

Joseph and Mary walk over to stage left and knock on the door.

*\*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK\**

**Innkeeper #1:** Yes? Can I help?

**Joseph:**        We've been traveling all day and we are tired. Do you have a spare room we could have for the night?

**Innkeeper #1:** I'm afraid I've just this minute filled my last spare room! There's another inn down the road, try that one.

Joseph and Mary walk across to the other side of the stage to another inn.

*\*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK\**

**Innkeeper #2:** Ah, hello there!

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**Joseph:** Do you have a spare room that my wife and I could use for the night?

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**Innkeeper #2:** Sorry, we're full. It's Christmas.

**Caleb and Naomi enter the scene and stand centre stage.**

**Naomi:** The inns weren't full because it was Christmas, of course. Christmas didn't even exist yet. This was to be the time of the very first Christmas.

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**Caleb:** The reason that everywhere in Bethlehem was full was because of the decree that Caesar Augustus had issued, and many people had returned to Bethlehem.

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**Naomi:** There was also a prophecy that said 'Out of Bethlehem the ruler of Israel would come', so it was important that Jesus was born in Bethlehem for that prophecy to come true.

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**Caleb:** Luckily for them, Joseph and Mary did manage to find somewhere to stay, though it was only somewhere small round the back of a house with a straw floor, where the animals slept. They were lucky to find a space in Bethlehem.

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## Scene 5: Shepherds

Three shepherds sit huddled together. There is a pause between each set of exchanges to give a sense of quiet to emphasise that there isn't much happening in the scene (this contrasts with Angel Gabriel's appearance and the energy of the heavenly host).

**Shepherd #1:** *\*Points to the sky.\**

6! How many have you seen? Oi! *\*Nudges Shepherd #2\**

How many shooting stars have you seen tonight?

**Shepherd #3:** There's no use asking him – he'll have fallen asleep counting his sheep again. I've only seen 4.

**Shepherd #2:** *\*snores loudly.\**

**Shepherd #1:** Does the sky seem a bit...different tonight?

**Shepherd #2:** *\*stirs.\**

**Shepherd #3:** What?

**Shepherd #1:** It *\*pauses\** seems a bit, well *\*pauses\**, just different.

**Shepherd #3:** *\*Looks at Shepherd #1 with a puzzled expression.\**

It's the same sky we had last night. It just seems like the stars are..... brighter.

**Shepherd #2:** *\*Points to the sky\**

7!

*\*Pause.\**

**Shepherd #3:** Barnabas the calendar maker might be out of a job soon. He's been making 'BC' calendars, counting down the years and now he's finally reached 0. He's been getting very anxious about the whole matter.

*\*Pause.\**

**Shepherd #1:** *\*Points up to the sky, stage left\**

8! Wait a minute...

All of a sudden **Angel Gabriel** appears from stage right, behind the Shepherds.

**Angel Gabriel:** GREETINGS!

All the Shepherds, react in an over-exaggerated manner:  
AAAAARRRRRRGH!!

**Angel Gabriel:** Don't be afraid. I bring good news for you that will bring joy to all the people! Today in Bethlehem a Saviour has been born, he is the Messiah, the Lord! Go there and you will find him wrapped in a blanket in a manger.

Heavenly host run onto the stage from all directions, bounding with energy and meet centre stage.

**Heavenly Host:** Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth! Peace to all mankind! The Messiah is born!

**Shepherd #3:** *\*Points in a determined manner\**

We must travel west to give our praise to the Messiah!

**Shepherd #1:** Look! There is a bright star in the sky; it will show us where the Messiah will be. Let us follow it!

Clopping hooves can be heard as the Shepherds mime riding off stage. All exit stage.

## Scene 6: King Herod

The scene begins with King Herod sitting on his throne with a guard at each side of him.

Caleb and Naomi enter and take centre stage.

**Naomi:** The Shepherds weren't the only ones to have heard of the Messiah's birth.

**Caleb:** There was a Roman who ruled over all of Judea and his name was King Herod. The Romans had even dubbed him as 'King of the Jews'. Herod was a ruthless man who would do whatever he could to keep his power as King.

Caleb and Naomi move to stage left.

**Royal subject:** Your highness

*\*pauses\**

I'm not sure how to tell you this...

**Herod:** *\*Loud booming voice\**

Go on!

**Royal subject:** Well...it...sort of.....seems... that people are talking about a new Messiah has been born. He is going to be the 'King of the Jews'.

**Herod:** Even louder and looking rather cross. WHAAAAAAT?!  
But I AM KING OF THE JEWS!

**Royal subject:** If I may say, your highness, I have heard that there is a group of wise men traveling to give praise to this newly born Messiah. They are in Jerusalem now, perhaps we could use them to our advantage?

**Herod:** Send for them at once!

**Royal subject:** *\*Moves to the edge of the stage\**

You there!

*\*shouts off stage\**

King Herod would like to talk to you.

The Wise Men make their way onto the stage.

**Wise Man #1:** See, I told you Herod would summon us soon.

Herod instantly changes from looking angry to looking friendly.

**Herod:** I have heard that you are on your way to give your praise to the newly born Messiah.

**Wise Man #2:** Indeed we are, indeed we are.

**Herod:** And h- *(is broken off)*

**Wise Man #3:** We knew Jesus had been born because we saw it in the stars. There is one star that marks where he is. We will follow this star.

**Herod:** Ah, well y-

**Wise Man #2:** We are indeed wise, we know a great deal and you're right Herod, there IS a prophecy written long ago that says a ruler will be born in Bethlehem!

**Herod:** Well then, go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to-

**Wise Man #3:** you so that you may come and worship him too, we will your highness.

**Wise Man #1:** In that case, to Bethlehem!

The Wise Men bow and walk backwards off stage (still bowing).

**Herod:** I can't understand how those wise men knew what I was about to say!

**Royal subject:** Don't forget your highness, they were very wise and knew all. I hear none of them ever missed a single day of school.

All exit.

### Scene 7: The Journey to Bethlehem

**Naomi and Caleb** enter and stand at the front side of the stage.

High up stage right is a star over a picture showing a scene of Bethlehem a long way off.

**The Shepherds** enter stage left and make their way towards the star still miming riding on camels with the sound of clopping hooves in the background.

**Shepherd #1:** There's the star, we shall be there soon!

Shepherds exit.

**Naomi:** The Shepherds followed the star until it hung over Bethlehem.

### Scene 8: The Shepherds praise Jesus

The scene will be set up like a manger with straw on the floor and a few animals present.

**Caleb and Naomi** enter.

**Naomi:** At last, the shepherds found the manger. They were the first to see and worship the baby Jesus.

Mary and Joseph are sitting around a crib and clopping hooves can be heard, growing louder.

Enter **Shepherds** who dismount and pause in awe.

**Shepherd #1:** There he is, we've made it!

**Joseph:** I'm sorry, I don't mean to be rude but *\*pauses\** who are you?

**Shepherd #3:** We are shepherds and an angel came to us telling of a newly born Messiah, and we followed a star which lead us here.

**Mary:** See! It IS true, our son IS the Messiah.

**Joseph:** This is wonderful news!

**Shepherd #2:** We are poor shepherds and have no gifts fit for a king, but we can offer him our faith and our praise.

The Shepherds immediately kneel by the side of the crib and begin to pray.

“JOY TO THE WORLD”

Joy to the world, the Lord has 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.

Meanwhile, at the other side of the stage, the three Wise Men spot the star above the manger from afar.

**Wise Man #2:** Look! There's the star, we're almost there!

“WE THREE KINGS”

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

[CHORUS]

O-o, Star of wonder, Star of night,  
Star of royal beauty bright;

Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect light.

**Wise Man #1:** *To Mary, \*pointing to the baby Jesus\**

Is he the Messiah?

**Mary:** Why yes, he is!

**Wise Man #2:** We bring gifts!

The wise men lay their gifts down by the manger as they each say what they have brought.

**Wise Man #1:** Gold!

**Wise Man #2:** Frankincense!

**Wise Man #3:** *\*pauses\**

Myrrh?

**Joseph:** These are all kingly gifts indeed!

“SILENT NIGHT”

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.

## ENDING 1

Caleb and Naomi enter.

**Naomi:** Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just like the prophecy said. The wise men and the shepherds found out about the birth and came to give their praise along with gifts.

**Caleb:** And that is our story of the first Christmas.

All cast enter the stage and form one long line.

**Naomi:** From all of us...

**Everyone:** We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

“WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS”

We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;

Good tidings for Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding;

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding;

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding and a cup of good cheer

We won't go until we get some;

We won't go until we get some;

We won't go until we get some, so bring some out here

We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

THE END

## ENDING 2

**Wise Man #2:** *(to everyone gathered)*

I don't want to spoil the occasion, but I have had a dream about why King Herod sent us to find the Messiah and to send news back to him. My dream told me that Herod is an evil man and wishes to do away with this newly born Messiah – Jesus is not safe! We must return but take a different path back.

Everyone exits the stage.

### Scene 9: An Angel Visits Joseph

Joseph and Mary are asleep in the manger with the crib next to them. Naomi and Caleb are stood by the side of the stage.

Angel Gabriel enters and Joseph wakes up.

**Angel Gabriel:** Joseph get up and take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

Angel Gabriel exits.

**Caleb:** So Joseph left for Egypt and took Mary and Jesus with Him until the death of King Herod.

**Naomi:** This fulfilled an old prophecy that said “Out of Egypt I called my son”.

**Caleb:** When King Herod realised that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem under the age of two years old in the hopes of getting rid of the young Messiah.

**Naomi:** When King Herod died, an angel appeared to Joseph again in a dream saying that Herod was dead and to take Mary and Jesus to Israel.

**Caleb:** Joseph found out that King Herod's son was now king so he was afraid to go to Israel. He travelled from Galilee and went to live in a town called Nazareth with Mary and Jesus. This fulfilled what prophets had said about Jesus being a Nazarene.

**Naomi:** This is the end of our Christmas story, telling of the birth of Christ and how prophecies were fulfilled along the way.

**Caleb:** Our story has been put together from different accounts. The bible tells us two angles of the Christmas story; two angles of the same story. Some smaller details really don't matter. The important thing is that a prophecy came true and that God's son was born in some of the most humble surroundings imaginable, yet went on to do great things.

All cast enter the stage and form one long line.

**Naomi:** From all of us...

**Everyone:** We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

"WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS"

We wish you a Merry Christmas;

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We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;

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THE END

