



Let's Act Bible Stories!

Activity Pack No. 6

The First Christmas

The text of the play and of this Activity pack is based on the text of the Good News Bible.

The purpose of the Activity Pack is to help pupils identify with the characters in this well known story. The pack can be used on its own or in conjunction with any Nativity Play.

The Activity Sheets, designed for pupils' use, can be used in any order. They are as follows:-

1. ***Calm down, Ben, and tell me what has happened!*** A play for two voices, a shepherd and his wife
2. ***Stargazer's diary*** For pupils to complete
3. ***We're going home at last!*** Mini drama for two voices, two of the Stargazers' servants look forward to their return home
4. ***Front page news 1*** Page to finish from a reporter's notebook
5. ***Jerusalem News: Baby born in stable*** Page to complete
6. ***Front page news 2*** Page to finish from a reporter's notebook
7. ***Jerusalem News: Visitors search for baby born to be King of the Jews*** Front page for pupils to complete
8. ***Who said . . .*** Pupils use the Bible to work out who said what
9. ***Shocks for shepherds*** A story to complete
10. ***Surprise for stargazers*** A story to complete
11. ***The First Christmas. How well do you know the story? Part 1*** 20 questions on the story in Luke 2 (pupils could be divided into teams)
12. ***The First Christmas. How well do you know the story? Part 2*** 20 questions on the story in Matthew 2 (pupils could be divided into teams)
13. ***Letters home*** Pupils to complete travellers' letters
14. ***Two dreams, one story*** Two children dream themselves into The First Christmas
15. ***A special night remembered*** A play in which the innkeeper, his wife and a shepherd remember what happened the night Jesus was born



Calm down, Ben, and tell me what has happened!

(Sarah, Ben's wife, is at home)

Sarah Ben will be back soon. He will be tired after looking after his sheep all night. I expect he will want to be quiet and have a good rest.

(Ben enters in a rush looking very excited)

Ben Sarah! You'll never guess what has happened! We've seen the Saviour and . . .

Sarah Calm down, Ben, and tell me what has happened.

Ben Last night, an angel told us to go and see a baby . . .

Sarah A baby, Ben? How could a baby be a Saviour?

Ben The angel told us where we would find her, Sarah, and we did!

Sarah Come and sit down, Ben.

(They sit down together)

Sarah Now, Ben, tell me exactly what you saw.

Ben We were looking after our sheep in the fields as usual. Just like any night.

Sarah Were you awake, Ben?

Ben Yes, I was. Keeping the fire going and watching for wild animals.

Sarah What happened?

Ben Suddenly, the sky was filled with a terrific light! We could see an angel of the Lord!

Sarah You must have been frightened.

Ben We were terrified! But the angel said to us, "Don't be afraid!"

Sarah Did that make you feel better?

Ben Yes, a bit. Then he went on to tell us that our Saviour had been born.

Sarah Where, Ben?

Ben Right here, in Bethlehem, David's town. He was lying in a manger.

Sarah Did you go and find the baby?

Ben Yes, we did. Then we went and told everyone. Let's go and tell our neighbours now!

(both exit)



The Stargazer's diary

Saw wonderful star in the east. This is the star that we have been looking for. I said to my friends.....

.....

Arrived in Jerusalem. What a journey we have had! Stopped people to ask them.....

.....

No-one knows. They look very.....

Messenger came from King Herod. "Will you please come to a.....

King Herod asks us the exact time that.....

"Go to Bethlehem," he said, "and make a careful search for the child, and when you find him

.....

Set off for Bethlehem. "Look! there's.....

We feel very happy and full of.....

Went into the house. Saw the child and his mother Mary. We.....

.....

.....

Have had a dream. God says to us, "Don't go back to.....

.....

.....

Set off for home by.....

These are some sketches I made on my journey.



We're going home at last!

A mini play for two voices

Ali and Gurdip are servants to two of the wise men

- Ali** I heard our masters talking Gurdip, we're going home at last!
- Gurdip** Oh! I'm so glad, Ali, we've been travelling and away from home for so long!
- Ali** Yes, but what wonderful things we have seen!
- Gurdip** All because of that star our masters saw!
- Ali** How amazing that the star led us all the way to Bethlehem.
- Gurdip** I shan't ever forget seeing baby Jesus!
- Ali** Or the gifts our masters gave him. Gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- Gurdip** We had better start to get ready. Will we call and visit King Herod in Jerusalem on the way back d'you think?
- Ali** No, Gurdip, I heard them say we won't go back to Jerusalem.
- Gurdip** Not go back to see King Herod? He told our masters to go back to him!
- Ali** Yes, I remember. He said he wanted to go and worship the baby, too.
- Gurdip** So why aren't we going back to see him, Ali?
- Ali** Because he was lying, Gurdip!
- Gurdip** What! King Herod lying to us, not telling us the truth? Why?
- Ali** God told our masters in a dream not to obey the King.
- Gurdip** Why, Ali?
- Ali** Because Herod was really going to kill the baby, not worship him!
- Gurdip** That's terrible, Ali. But why would he want to kill the baby?
- Ali** He is afraid he'll lose his throne with another king around.



Gurdip So what are we going to do, Ali?

Ali We are going to go home another way.

Gurdip You mean not see Herod ever again, Ali?

Ali This baby we have seen is far too precious. God has told our masters what Herod plans to do if he finds out where the baby is. We can't allow that to happen. Listen! Our masters are coming! We must go home with them a different way.

(both exit)



Front page news 1

I am a reporter. I work for the Jerusalem Post. I am good at my job. I always get a good story for our front page. One day, my Editor said to me, "Go at once to Bethlehem. Something very strange has happened there. Take some other reporters with you and the newspaper's artists." So off we went. Here are some pages from my notebook.

Arrived in Bethlehem. Busy place, full of people for the Census. I'll ask this person what's been happening? "Excuse me, can you tell me what's been going on in Bethlehem?" He said, "I met some shepherds. They were very excited and told me.....
.....

Found some shepherds. Asked them what they knew about what had happened. One of them said.....
.....

Went to interview the Innkeeper. He told me.....
.....

His wife told me.....
.....

We wanted to get the full story. So we split up and talked to as many people as we could about what they had seen and heard. Someone said.....
.....

Another person said.....
.....
.....

We found another person who told us.....
.....
.....

Now I



Jerusalem News Baby born in stable

Exclusive stories by.....
Pictures by.....

AMAZING STORY TOLD BY SHEPHERDS

A resident of Bethlehem told me.....
.....
.....

One of the shepherds told me.....
.....
.....

Innkeeper's story

"Two people came looking for a room but.....
.....
.....

HOW WE HELPED by Innkeeper's Wife

"I had a good idea.....
.....
.....

Soon after they had settled in.....
.....
.....

Local people also spoke to us. One man told us he saw.....
.....
.....

Another said he remembered.....
.....
.....



Front page news 2

About two years later there was a big upset in Jerusalem. Travellers from the east had come and were asking a question that caused a huge stir. Our editor told us to investigate.

This is what I wrote in my notebook over the next few days.

Met citizens of Jerusalem. "Have you met these visitors from the east?" I asked them. One said.....

Another told me.....

A third person said.....

Managed to interview one of the visitor's servants. He told me.....
.....
.....

Heard that the visitors had gone to a secret meeting with King Herod. Crept into palace. Spoke to one of the King's servants. Must not give his name. The servant told me.....
.....

Followed the visitors to and wrote down all they did. Kept safe distance so they wouldn't see us. Wrote down that they got to and went into.....
.....

Kept a watch on them. They left the house and went to stay somewhere else. Found someone who claimed to have seen what happened in the house. He told us.....
.....
.....

A few days later the visitors started on their return journey. We followed them. They did not go back to.....
.....
.....

Must go back to our Editor with full story and pictures.



Jerusalem News

Visitors search for baby born to be King of the Jews

Exclusive stories by.....
Pictures by.....

Citizens tell us visitors are asking "Where.....
.....

The visitors say that they have come to.....
.....

One citizen told us, "They have been following.....
.....

Exclusive Interviews

One of the visitor's servants told us.....
.....

The visitors went to King Herod's Palace for.....
.....

A Palace Servant told me.....
.....

LATE NEWS FLASH

Visitors on their way to Bethlehem.....
.....
.....

We can exclusively report.....
.....
.....



Who said . . .

Use the following Bible passages to work out who said what.

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 2:8-20

Matthew 2:1-15

"You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus."

a..... G.....

"I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me as you have said."

M.....

"You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

a..... of the L.....

"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

S.....

"Where is the baby born to be King of the Jews?"

Men who s..... the s.....

"Where will the Messiah be born?"

K..... H.....

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea"

ch..... pr.....

"Go and make a careful search for the child, and when you find him let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."

K..... H.....

"Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."

an a..... of the L.....



Shocks for shepherds

We were sitting around our camp fire. The sheep were quiet. I thought, 'This will be a peaceful night. Nothing much will happen.' I could see the lights of the houses in Bethlehem through the darkness. Darkness wrapped us like a blanket. The fire kept us warm, especially when I put on another log. It was my turn to keep watch. You never knew when a wild animal, a lion or a bear might turn up. I always had my rod with me (that's a thick piece of wood). I've beaten off many a wild animal with that. Courage, that's what us shepherds need more than anything. That night I felt ready to face anything.

Suddenly, the darkness disappeared. Just as if a curtain had been drawn back. Light was everywhere. I couldn't understand what was happening. This was the middle of the night. I looked up in the sky. An angel was looking down at us. I was sure it was an angel. My friends were wide awake now. We were all terrified. Then we heard the angel speaking to us, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born – Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

We looked at each other. This was amazing. God had sent one of his angels to us, just ordinary shepherds. We had all seen and heard him. What a message he had given us! Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the first angel, singing praises to God, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" Then they all vanished. The darkness returned. But we knew something that hardly anyone else knew. Our Messiah, our King and Saviour had come at last! We knew what we had to do. "Let's go to Bethlehem," we said to one another, "and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

(Finish this story. Draw some pictures to show where the shepherds went.)



Surprise for stargazers

I am a stargazer, an astronomer, if you like. All I have to look at the stars with are my eyes, but my eyesight is very good. I often think it would be wonderful if someone could invent something to make it as if I was nearer the stars. I have studied the stars for years so I know lots of star patterns and I can tell when a new star appears. Discovering a new star is something we stargazers dream about. My friends and I were looking for a special star, waiting for it to appear. This star would be so important and we watched for it every night, scanning the starry skies. Night after night we looked, watching and waiting. Suddenly, one night, we saw it, the star we had been waiting for. It was brighter than any star we had ever seen before. We just knew that this was the star we must follow.

We set out at once. We followed the star at night, resting during the day. Every night we gazed at the star, and wondered where it would lead us. But we were certain it would lead us to a baby born to be King of the Jews. We were so certain, that we didn't mind how difficult and dangerous our journey was. We didn't mind the cold, the heat, the wet or the sandstorms we met on the way. Rivers, mountains and wild animals didn't frighten us. We just knew we must follow that star.

We arrived in Jerusalem. Surely we would find the special baby here. We asked everyone we met, "Where is the baby born to be the kings of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." They looked frightened, bewildered or puzzled and hurried away. No one could help us. Suddenly a man came up to us. He looked around to make sure no one was listening. He whispered to us, "Will you please come with me and meet King Herod?" We agreed. Silently we followed him through the streets until we came to Herod's Palace. King Herod welcomed us. He looked uneasy. He questioned us about exactly when the star appeared. Then he asked us to go to Bethlehem where we would find the baby we were looking for. He wanted us to come back and tell him where the baby was so he could go and worship him too. We were thrilled as we left his Palace. At last our journey was nearly over.

(Finish this story and draw some pictures to show what happened.)



The First Christmas

How well do you know the story? Part 1

All the answers can be found in Luke 2:1-20

1. Who ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire?
2. Where was Joseph (and Mary) living?
3. Where did they go to register?
4. What did Mary wrap her new born son in?
5. Why didn't they stay in the inn?
6. Where did Mary put her baby?
7. Who were out in the fields that night?
8. What were they doing?
9. Who appeared to them?
10. How did they respond?
11. What did the angel say?
12. Why had the angel come?
13. Who had been born?
14. Where would they find the baby?
15. What did the great army of heaven's angels sing?
16. What did the shepherds say to one another?
17. Who did they find in the stable?
18. What did the shepherds say to Mary and Joseph?
19. What did Mary do with the things she had heard?
20. Why did the shepherds sing praises to God?



The First Christmas

How well do you know the story? Part 2

All the answers can be found in Matthew 2:1-15

1. Where was Jesus born?
2. Who was King at this time?
3. Where did the Stargazers come from?
4. Which city did the stargazers stop at on their way?
5. What did they ask the people in the city?
6. What did the stargazers say they had come to do?
7. How did King Herod respond to this?
8. Who did Herod call together?
9. Where did the chief priests and teachers of the Law say they thought Jesus would be born?
10. Why did Herod call the Stargazers to a secret meeting?
11. What did Herod tell the Stargazers to do?
12. Why did Herod say he wanted the Stargazers to let him know where Jesus was?
13. Where did the star stop?
14. When the Stargazers saw the child, what did they do?
15. What were the gifts that they had brought for Jesus?
16. Why did the Stargazers return to their country by a different route?
17. How did God warn Joseph about what Herod was really planning?
18. Where did God tell Joseph, Mary and Jesus to go to?



Letters home

Perhaps some of the travellers from the east wrote letters home. Imagine you were travelling with them. What would you say in a letter?

Dear Francesca,

We have been away from home for so long. I wanted to tell you about what we have been doing. We have been travelling by night. All the time we keep watching that star as it moves in the sky. I have seen some strange and wonderful sights. At last we got to Jerusalem. We caused quite a stir. King Herod sent a messenger to us.

Dear Sadeep,

Nothing has prepared us for what has just happened! We came near to an ordinary house in Bethlehem. We looked up. The star had stopped over that very house!

Dear Ahaz,

Like us, you study the stars. You know we have been following that special star for a long time. We were certain it would take us to the child born to be King of the Jews! I have exciting news! We have found the King!

Dear Ahmed,

We presented our gifts to the young King. Now we are coming home. But not by the way we came. I will explain.



Two dreams, one story

(An ordinary home. Time: the present)

Dad Why aren't Tim and Sarah here for breakfast, yet?

Mum Saturday morning means . . .

(enter Tim)

Tim Hi! Mum, Dad! I had an amazing dream last night!

Dad We've been waiting for you . . . do you want any breakfast, Tim?

(enter Sarah)

Sarah Hello, everyone! Smells like a good breakfast! I'm hungry!

Mum Tim was saying he has had an amazing dream.

Sarah So did I. I must tell you about it!

(The family gather around the breakfast table and start to have breakfast)

Dad Tell us about your dream, Tim.

Tim I had turned into a shepherd and . . .

Sarah You, a shepherd! Who would trust you with their sheep?

Mum Shush, Sarah, let Tim tell us about his dream.

Tim The night was dark and cold. I wrapped my cloak around me.

Sarah And got as near the fire as possible Tim?

Tim We were so tired . . . I remember feeling like going to sleep when suddenly . . .

Dad Suddenly what, Tim?

Tim I looked up. The whole sky was ablaze with a brilliant light!

Sarah Were you scared, Tim?

Tim Petrified. Then we saw a figure in the sky.

Mum What sort of figure, Tim?

Tim An angel, we just knew it was an angel. Then we heard his voice.



- Dad** What did the angel say?
- Tim** "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born – Christ the Lord!"
- Mum** Did he tell you how you would know if you had found the right baby, Tim?
- Tim** The baby would be wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger, that's what the angel told us.
- Sarah** What did you feel like doing, running away?
- Tim** No, we wanted to see this baby, so off we went.
- Dad** How did you find him?
- Tim** It was easy, really. A manger meant an inn. We soon found the inn and there was the manger.
- Sarah** Did you see the baby?
- Tim** Yes, he was there in the stable. Joseph and Mary were there too.
- Dad** What do you remember most?
- Tim** The peace of it all . . . and the smell!
- Sarah** The smell?
- Tim** Yes, the smell of the animals. The manger was their feeding trough.
- Mum** Anything else?
- Tim** Peace. Everything was so peaceful.
- Sarah** Tell us about the baby.
- Tim** Just like any other baby, yet, somehow different from any other baby I've seen.
- Dad** Did you explain why you had come, and who had told you where to find the baby?
- Tim** We told them everything.
- Mum** How did they react?



- Tim** I noticed that Mary listened very carefully. She looked very thoughtful.
- Sarah** Was that the end of the dream?
- Tim** No. We found ourselves walking through the streets singing praises to God for all we had seen, and telling everyone about him. They were all amazed. Then I woke up!
- Dad** Now tell us about your dream, Sarah.
- Sarah** I was one of the servants of a wise man.
- Tim** You . . . a servant! What would they want you for?
- Sarah** For cooking their meals and mending their clothes. Things I'm good at!
- Dad** How did it all start, Sarah?
- Sarah** "Wake up! Wake up!" I thought I was going to be late for school!
- Tim** Who was calling you?
- Sarah** One of the other servants. He told me we were to leave at once on a journey.
- Mum** Why the rush, Sarah?
- Sarah** He said our masters had seen a special star that they had been watching for. We must follow it wherever it went.
- Dad** So you all set off in the middle of the night?
- Sarah** Yes, I got together things I would need on the journey and off we went!
- Tim** Were you scared, going off to some unknown place?
- Sarah** I was a bit, but our masters were certain this was the journey of a lifetime!
- Mum** And you didn't know where you were going?
- Sarah** We had no idea. Just that we would find the baby born to be King of the Jews.
- Dad** You had to keep your eyes on that star all the time?



- Sarah** Yes, so we always travelled at night and rested during the day.
- Mum** What sort of things did you see on your journey?
- Sarah** All sorts of things, wild animals, mountains and lakes and different sorts of people.
- Tim** Did you feel nervous?
- Sarah** Sometimes. But we always kept together so we were quite safe. Then we came to Jerusalem. That's where we stopped.
- Dad** Why Jerusalem?
- Sarah** Our masters thought we would find the baby there, so they started asking everyone where they could find the baby born to be King of the Jews.
- Mum** What did people say?
- Sarah** They had no idea what we were talking about. They were very upset as well.
- Dad** You must have been bewildered!
- Sarah** We were, but then a man came up to us. He was from King Herod. Would we come at once to a secret meeting with the King?
- Mum** A secret meeting! Why the secrecy?
- Sarah** I guess Herod didn't want anyone to know we were meeting him.
- Dad** What did you think of King Herod?
- Sarah** He seemed very pleasant, yet somehow I didn't feel I could trust him.
- Mum** What did he want?
- Sarah** He asked my masters exactly when the star appeared. Then he told them to go to Bethlehem, make a careful search for the child and when we found him to let Herod know.
- Tim** Why?
- Sarah** So he could go and worship him, he told them.
- Dad** Did you believe him?
- Sarah** I was not really sure. I think my masters did. Until . . .
- Mum** Until when, Sarah?



- Sarah** Well, we went and found where the child was. The star led us to the house in Bethlehem where he was. His name was Jesus. My masters knelt down and worshipped him and got out their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- Dad** That was a scene to remember, Sarah!
- Sarah** Yes, it was. But somehow I felt that they were not just giving Jesus some presents . . .
- Tim** What do you mean, Sarah?
- Sarah** I felt they were giving themselves to him, as well.
- Mum** So now it was time to leave and what happened?
- Sarah** We left and I was expecting us to go back to Jerusalem. But instead my masters said that God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Jerusalem.
- Dad** What did you think about that, Sarah?
- Sarah** I was surprised and relieved. I didn't really like King Herod. So we started back for home by another way and by-passed Jerusalem.
- Mum** They disobeyed King Herod! I'm so glad. What a wonderful dream! Now it's time to clear the breakfast things, and for you two to wash up!

(all exit)



Let's Act Bible Stories!

A special night remembered

The text of this play is based on the text of the Good News Bible.

Author's note

This play can be performed in a straightforward way or with the addition of mimed action or appropriate pictures being shown and readings and carols.

Characters

Grandpa	a retired Innkeeper
Rachel	his granddaughter
Ben	his grandson
Grandma	wife of the retired Innkeeper
Reuben	a retired shepherd

Those taking the speaking parts could be seated at the front or side of the stage. As they discuss the events of the First Christmas the other characters mime the story. The sequence could be as follows:

1. Innkeeper and Mrs Innkeeper welcome guests.
2. Joseph and Mary arrive. A place is found for them.
3. Reuben and others are looking after their sheep.
4. Reuben looks up into the night sky.
5. An angel appears followed by a host of angels.
6. Shepherds go to the Inn and find baby Jesus.
7. Shepherds tell townspeople what they have seen.
8. Wise Men meet Herod.
9. Wise Men wake up and decide to go home another way.
10. Joseph, Mary and Jesus leave for Egypt.
11. Soldiers arrive and kill young boys in Bethlehem.
12. Joseph, Mary and Jesus start back for Bethlehem but then change their plan and return for Nazareth.



- Grandpa** All my working life I was an innkeeper. Inns are places for travellers to stop and rest and get a meal and some sleep. My last job was running the inn at Bethlehem. That was a busy place. One year was especially busy. I shall never forget it. Our grand-children, Rachel and Ben, are always asking about it. We must have told them it twenty times. But they always want to hear the story again. Ah, I hear them coming. I know what they will want!
- Rachel**
Ben Tell us the story again, please, Grandpa.
- Grandpa** Which story?
- Rachel** You know, that special night when you were young. When Joseph and Mary came here.
- Grandpa** Ah, yes. I'll not forget that night. Your Grandma and I had just taken over the inn when it happened.
- Ben** Was the inn full, Grandpa?
- Grandpa** Full! I'd never seen so many people. Packed in everywhere they were.
- Grandma** I was run off my feet looking after them all.
- Rachel** Why had they come? Why was the inn so full?
- Grandpa** It was the Emperor's fault, Caesar Augustus. He had ordered a Census.
- Ben** What's a Census, Grandpa?
- Grandpa** It meant everyone had to go back to their home town to be counted. So he knew the names of the loyal subjects. Can't say I felt very loyal, though!
- Ben** So lots of people came here, to Bethlehem.
- Grandpa** Yes, from all over Israel. Often tired and hungry.
- Grandma** Sometimes mealtimes lasted all day!
- Rachel** Did you find somewhere for them all to sleep?
- Grandpa** Only just. And then a very tired couple came.
- Ben** When did you see them?
- Grandpa** I was just getting some logs for the fire. I saw a man helping a woman towards our door.
- Rachel** Did they want to stay at your inn, Grandpa?



- Grandpa** Yes, they were exhausted, couldn't go any further.
- Ben** But wasn't the inn full?
- Grandma** Yes, your Grandfather was just going to turn them away when I saw them. I took one look at the young woman. I said, "You'll go no further tonight, come with me."
- Rachel** Where did you take them?
- Grandma** We had a cave at the back for the animals. I said to them, "Will this be alright for you?"
- Ben** What did they say?
- Grandma** The young woman said, "This will be a very warm and safe place for us. Thank you."
- Rachel** What happened then?
- Grandma** You tell them, Reuben, you were working as a shepherd then.
- Reuben** That night we were out in the fields around Bethlehem, keeping warm by the fire and guarding our sheep. It was my turn to be on watch. Suddenly my attention was caught by something in the night sky.
- Rachel** The night sky?
- Reuben** Yes, the brightest light I have ever seen.
- Ben** What was it?
- Reuben** I saw an angel.
- Rachel** Were you frightened?
- Reuben** Terrified. So were the other shepherds.
- Ben** What happened then?
- Reuben** We heard the angel's voice, "Don't be afraid," he said, "I am here with good news for you which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born – Christ the Lord!"
- Rachel** David's town! That's this town, Bethlehem!
- Reuben** Yes. Then the angel said, "And this will prove it to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth lying in a manger."



- Ben** What happened then?
- Reuben** The whole sky was filled with singing angels.
- Rachel** What were they singing?
- Reuben** "Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased."
- Ben** Did you come here, to the inn?
- Reuben** Couldn't wait. Made sure the sheep were safe and came as fast as we could.
- Rachel** What did you see when you arrived?
- Reuben** A baby lying in the animals' feeding box, just as the angel said we would.
- Rachel** What did the baby look like?
- Reuben** Beautiful. Tiny. Helpless. A baby yet also a King.
- Ben** What did his mother say?
- Reuben** She and her husband just smiled.
- Rachel** Did you stay long?
- Reuben** No, we just wanted to tell everyone the news! Our King had come at last! And us shepherds were the first to know!
- Rachel** The King! The Messiah the prophets had told about long ago?
- Reuben** Yes! I was amazed! We shepherds just wanted to share the good news! We told everyone we met!
- Ben** What did they say?
- Reuben** They were amazed!
- Grandpa** So was I. And then it was all over . . . or so it seemed.
- Rachel** What do you mean Grandpa?
- Grandpa** Well, Mary and Joseph and the baby were soon ready to move on. Joseph found a house to rent and work as a carpenter. That was his trade.
- Grandma** Bethlehem settled down to life as usual and then some more people came.
- Grandpa** Yes, and very grand people they were.



- Ben** Why had they come?
- Grandpa** They said they had come a very long way following a star.
- Rachel** A star?
- Grandma** Yes, they said they were sure the star was leading them to where they would find a baby born to be king of the Jews.
- Grandpa** Unfortunately they had gone to Herod's palace first.
- Ben** Why was that unfortunate?
- Grandma** Because Herod was afraid he would lose his throne. Herod asked the Jewish leaders where this king would be born.
- Rachel** What did they tell King Herod?
- Grandpa** That the prophet Micah had said that the baby would be born in Bethlehem.
- Grandma** So that wicked King Herod secretly asked the visitors to go to Bethlehem, find the baby and then go back and tell Herod so he could go and worship him.
- Ben** Did he really want to worship the baby?
- Grandpa** No. Herod wanted to kill the baby. But God knew what he planned to do.
- Rachel** How did God stop Herod killing the baby?
- Grandpa** The visitors left Herod. They were overjoyed to see the star again. They followed it until it stopped over the place where the child was.
- Ben** What did they do then?
- Grandma** They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshipped him.
- Rachel** What about their gifts?
- Grandpa** They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and presented them to him.
- Ben** Did the men go back and tell Herod where Jesus was?
- Grandma** They would have done, but God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.
- Rachel** So what happened next?



Grandpa An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph with an important message from God.

Ben What was the message?

Grandma "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt and stay there until I tell you to leave," the angel said.

Rachel Did Joseph do as the angel said?

Grandpa He certainly did! He woke them up in the night and took them off to Egypt.

Ben What happened when Herod found out that the men had gone home another way?

Grandma He was furious! He ordered his soldiers to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood who were two years old and younger.

Rachel How long were Joseph, Mary and Jesus in Egypt?

Grandpa Until an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream again. This time he told Joseph to go back to Israel as King Herod was dead.

Ben Yet another journey!

Grandma Yes, when they got back to Israel, Joseph found that it was not safe for them to go to Bethlehem, so he took his family north to Galilee and they settled in Nazareth.

Rachel Did you ever see Joseph, Mary and Jesus again?

Grandpa Years later I saw Jesus. Joseph was dead but Mary was still alive. I heard that Jesus was going on a journey again with some close friends.

Ben Where was he going?

Grandpa He was going to Jerusalem.

Grandma Well, it's time you children went back home.

Grandpa We'll go and see you on your way.

(all exit)

Whole cast re-enters and sings a well-known carol, such as Once in Royal David's City.