

Christmas Play 2000

The basic idea is to have the inn as the central focus. The play will start in a pub in modern time on Christmas Eve, and shift by sleight of hand into the inn 2000 years ago. After the nativity the scene will finally shift back to modern time.

Narrator 1 We would like to take you back to Christmas Eve
Narrator 2 People have finished their work for the year, and they are thinking about the Christmas holiday
Narrator 1 We now meet the landlord of the Eagle public house and his wife, getting ready for the Christmas Eve rush
Narrator 2 This is not an ordinary Christmas Eve. Come with us to find out what happens.

Scene 1: Modern pub on Christmas Eve

Landlord *Scene begins in the pub with landlord and landlady getting ready for opening (Turns from arranging bar to talk to audience)* Good evening everyone, and welcome to my pub. *(Points to sign)* You see it's called the Eagle. It is Christmas Eve, and shortly we will open. Tonight is my busiest night of the year, well, apart from New Year's Eve. Lots of people will come in, some on their way home from work, some to get away from their homes, some to just let off steam. For whatever reason they come, I can tell you that it means I make a lot of money out of tonight. And tomorrow will be busy as well. Just as soon as they get in, those tills will be ringing.

Landlady *(Turns from her work and speaks to Landlord)* And I'm the Landlady, and unless you stop talking and open up we aren't going to get any punters, and you are not going to take any money!

Landlord Okay, okay *(Goes to open doors, calls to people)* We're open now. *Few people come in, some go to tables, and some order drinks. Main focus switches to small group sitting round table.*

Person 1 Well, that's it for another year.
Person 2 What have you been doing this week?
Person 3 Tax forms. They have to sent in next month, and everyone leaves them to the last minute.
Person 4 I've had more than usual this year. Glad to see the back of them now.
Person 1 They ought to just ship everyone off to a hotel next to the tax office for a few days each year, then they can fill the wretched forms in together, and we can be have rid of them for a year.
Person 2 It's probably been tried in the past!
Landlady *(Brings drinks over)* Here you are. You look as if you need these!
All People Thanks
Landlady Any plans for Christmas?
Person 3 Just a quiet time at home with the family.
Person 4 I have to drive to my parents tonight.
Person 2 I'm planning on sitting down watching the TV. My husband can do the cooking this Christmas.
Person 3 So what do you think of Christmas then?
Person 1 It always seems to be such a rush. Never any time to think about it.
Person 4 My daughter was in a play this year, all about Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus. *Joseph and Mary arrive and join the people at the table*
Person 3 Hello, come and bring up a chair
Person 4 Landlord, can we have a couple of drinks over here please? *(Landlord brings drinks over during following dialogue)*
Joseph Thanks. How are you all?
Person 1 Glad that we have finished work for the year. But how are you?

Mary We're fine. I'm getting a bit tired these days.
Person 2 Your baby must be due soon
Mary Yes, we're expecting it any day now.
Joseph It could be a Christmas baby!
Person 3 That would be fun.
Person 4 If you have your baby here, it would be just like the first Christmas!
Landlady Hello, carol singers! Come on in. A song everyone!
*Enter carol singers, and sing the first verse of a carol. Congregation sing rest of carol.
Then carol singers sit down at table and are served a drink. More people shuffle in.*

Scene 2: Same pub some time later

Bar staff rush around serving people, organised by landlord. Two staff come to front
Staff 1 We are really rushed tonight. Is it always like this on Christmas Eve?
Staff 2 Always.
Landlady *(to the two waiters)* Can you take these to those two gentlemen over there
Both Staff *(Both)* Okay
Take glasses to the vicar and curate.
Landlady I have never seen it this busy at Christmas. New Year, yes, but never before on Christmas Eve. Are you all coping okay. *(Staff people come back to centre)*
Staff 1 We are busy,
Staff 2 But we're coping
Landlady We'll all be glad of the rest tomorrow!
Staff 1 You bet!
Staff 2 Right on!
Landlady People seem to be enjoying themselves. I wonder how they will all spend Christmas day
Staff 1 Asleep perhaps!
Landlady It's funny to think that the first Christmas started in an inn like ours.
Staff 2 Do you think it was just as busy?
Landlady I don't know. Probably.
Landlord *(Appears from back)* A song, a song, time for a Christmas song. Have we got a pianist?
Good, Everyone ready ...
*Everyone stands together to sing "God rest you merry gentlemen". Congregation joins in.
At the end most people move off.*

Scene 3: Same pub, but now it becomes ambiguous what period of time it is

Narrator 1 Christmas Eve is often the time for people to go to their families
Narrator 2 Some people are keener than others – these people are not in any hurry
Narrator 1 Other people have to travel on Christmas Eve
Narrator 2 We are now going to meet some people on a journey

Few people still drinking at the table, served by landlord and landlady. Kings enter wearing coats, and disrobe to reveal kingly clothes. They sit down and are served drinks
Innkeeper You are strange to these parts?
Traveller 1 We've come a long way
Traveller 2 And we hope we don't have much further to go
Traveller 3 But it's nice to sit down and have a drink.
Traveller 4 Any chance of a room for us for the night.
Wife *(Blows a sigh)* No chance I'm afraid. I doubt if you'll find anywhere tonight.
Innkeeper The town is full tonight, and has been for a few days. The Romans have forced them all to come here to sort out their taxes.
Wife If you want, there is a stable round the back you can stay in. Your camels will be able to

rest, and it ought to be comfortable.

Traveller 1 That sounds fine – better than some of the places we have stayed in.

Wife Where are you heading anyway?

Traveller 2 We don't know. We are just following a star in the sky

Wife Any particular star?

Traveller 3 Yes, there is one that came from the East and is travelling in this direction

Traveller 4 Once we saw it we know it was something special. When we looked at our scrolls we discovered that it meant that a new king is to be born.

Traveller 1 So we have come to worship him

Traveller 2 And the star seems to have come to rest over this town. Once we have had a drink, we will go to look for this new king.

Innkeeper *(to his wife, gesturing that he thinks they are crazy)* Do you think they're okay?

Wife They seem okay. Goodness knows what they are going on about. *(To travellers)* There's no king here in Bethlehem. In fact nothing here at all. Have another drink and then I'll show you the stable.

Group on other table overhear, one turns to talk to the travellers

Person 1 We couldn't help but overhear.

Person 2 Sounds exciting, following a star

Person 3 How long have you been travelling

Traveller 3 Two or three months now. It's easy to lose count!

Traveller 4 You don't know where a new king might have been born?

Person 1 Not here for sure.

Person 2 Have you tried Jerusalem?

Traveller 1 Where's Jerusalem?

Person 3 Just a few miles down the road.

Person 1 King Herod lives there. I didn't know that he is having a son.

Traveller 2 But the star says that it is this town.

Person 2 I doubt it. But people in Jerusalem would know.

Traveller 3 How come?

Person 3 There are a lot of smart people in Jerusalem. They ought to know.

Person 1 They will tell you where the new king is to be born.

Traveller 4 Perhaps we should try Jerusalem.

Traveller 1 Come on, let's go

Traveller 2 Thanks for your help

All people Good luck

Kings put on their coats and set off

Carol ***We three kings***

Scene 4: Now clearly an inn, some time later

Narrator 1 Our travellers have set off to look for the King

Narrator 2 But other people still have to work. They are having a last drink before the innkeeper locks up for the night

Narrator 1 It is not going to be quite as quiet as the innkeeper and his wife are hoping

Narrator 2 Someone else is about to arrive

Few people still drinking, being served by landlady

Wife Are you working tonight?

Shepherd 1 Yes, we will to go off to the fields shortly.

Innkeeper Are we almost ready to call it a night

Wife I think so. Everyone is in their room now. Let's have a last drink

Innkeeper pours drinks for him and his wife. Then hear knock on door, and in come Mary

and Joseph

- Innkeeper Boy, you look worn out
Wife Come to sort out your taxes
Joseph That's right
Innkeeper My word, you're pregnant
Wife Sshhh – you don't say that to a lady
Mary Don't worry. Yes, I am expecting a baby. I think it is almost due
Joseph So we really need somewhere to stay tonight
Innkeeper Oh no, I'm really sorry, we are full of everyone else who has come to pay their taxes
Wife If only you had arrived earlier today
Joseph We tried, but Mary couldn't travel too fast
Mary It's okay Joseph. We'll find somewhere.
Wife I know. We have a stable round the back. We almost offered it to some travellers, but they had to run off to Jerusalem
Innkeeper You won't find anywhere else.
Joseph Is it okay?
Mary I am sure it will be okay. I just need somewhere to sleep now.
Wife Let me take you round, then you can settle down for the night
Innkeeper's wife takes Mary and Joseph off to the stable
Shepherd 1 Your stable is okay, isn't it
Innkeeper Yes, it will be okay for them. Pity we don't have a proper room though.
Shepherd 3 Better than we will have.
Shepherd 4 Yes, tonight we sleep under the stars looking after the sheep.
Shepherd 1 At least we can look for the star those strangers thought they were following.
Shepherd 2 Come on, we ought to get off now. Those sheep will be missing us.
Innkeeper Hope the weather stays okay for you.
All people Thanks. Have a good night.
Shepherds leave for the fields. Innkeeper's wife returns
Innkeeper How did you get on?
Wife I think they will be comfortable. There's plenty of clean straw. It's not like home, but it's warm enough. My worry is that she may give birth very soon.
Innkeeper What a strange night. Here we are, really busy with the taxing business, then come those strange people following a star, and then Mary and Joseph.
Wife I think that we are going to have to keep an eye on them. They are so young and on their own. You lock up. I'll go and check that they are okay.

Narrator 1 The birth of Jesus at Christmas was foretold by many of God's prophets
Narrator 2 The message of Christmas is good news. God has come to His people

Song *God has spoken to His people*

Scene 5: Later

Landlord is tidying up. Suddenly in rushes Landlady

- Wife Quick! Quick! The baby is coming. Quick, I need some water. Is there any hot water on the fire? And cloths to wrap the baby in.
Innkeeper You go back. I'll get the things. Wait. Shouldn't we try to move them into one of the other rooms. We can kick someone out. They will understand.
Wife There's no time for that. Besides, they are probably better off staying in one place now. It may not be perfect, but they seem comfortable enough.
Innkeeper Okay, you get back and I'll bring the things round.

Scene 6: Shepherds in fields (follows without a break, based in the aisle)

Shepherds blow whistles from around the church, and then start calling. Move to middle of aisle

Shepherd 1 All's well so far

Shepherd 2 The sheep seem safe enough

Shepherd 1 Have you seen the star that those people were talking about

Shepherd 3 I think that it is that one over there

Shepherd 4 Whereabouts?

Shepherd 1 Look, over there! (*all strain to look*) What's that light over there?

Angels run in and onto the stage, shepherds fall to floor

Angel 1 Don't be afraid. Come closer

Angel 2 We have good news for you of great joy, for you and all people

Shepherds move closer

Angel 3 Tonight in Bethlehem a child has been born

Angel 1 He is the Saviour, He is Christ, the Lord

Angel 2 Go to Bethlehem and worship Him,

Angel 3 And this is how you will know Him. He will be wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger

Angel 4 Glory to God in the Highest

Angel 5 And peace to people on Earth who are loved by God

Angel 1 Go quickly and you will find Him

Angels move off. Shepherds stand up and rub their eyes

Shepherd 1 Did we really see that?

Shepherd 2 Yes, and we should do what they say

Shepherd 3 To Bethlehem

All shepherds To Bethlehem!

Song Tonight

Narrator 1 The shepherds now rush towards Bethlehem

Narrator 2 The baby Jesus is now resting, and the innkeeper and his wife are getting ready for bed

Scene 7: Back to the inn

Innkeeper tidying up. His wife appears

Wife What an amazing night

Innkeeper How are they doing

Wife They're fine. They are resting now.

Shepherds knock at door

Innkeeper Who do you think this is now?

Wife Go and see

Innkeeper opens door and in come shepherds

Wife Shouldn't you be out in the fields

Innkeeper Listen, they have an amazing story

Shepherd 1 We were out in the fields

Shepherd 2 It was quiet

Shepherd 1 We were looking for the star

Shepherd 3 And suddenly

Shepherd 4 With a great light

All shepherds Angels

Shepherd 1 Lots of angels

Shepherd 2 We fell to our knees

Shepherd 1 And the angel said that we should come back to Bethlehem, and we would find a special baby

Shepherd 3 Somone who would be the Saviour
Shepherd 4 And we will find him in a manger, wrapped in cloths
Wife There is a baby in our stable, and he is lying in the manger. Let me take a couple of you to see
Innkeeper's wife takes a few of the shepherds to see Jesus
Innkeeper That was amazing. Weren't you afraid?
Shepherd 1 You bet!
Travellers knock at door
Innkeeper Who can this be now?
Innkeeper lets in the travellers, his wife comes back in
Shepherd 1 You were the people following the star
Traveller 1 That's right. We went to Jerusalem like you said
Traveller 2 We went straight to the palace and explained that we had come to worship the new king
Traveller 3 The palace people were amazed. They said they knew nothing about it
Traveller 4 We had them worried though. We got to see King Herod.
Traveller 1 His men went to look in their books
Traveller 2 And they discovered that the new king should be born in Bethlehem
Traveller 3 Just as the star had led us
Traveller 4 We have come to worship and bring gifts
Wife They are in the stable. We can all go to see
Innkeeper's wife leads everyone off the stage

Song *This child*

Scene 8: The stable

Everyone gathers around Mary and Joseph
Traveller 1 We are seeking a new born king
Mary See, baby Jesus. He is the one you are seeking
Joseph This is not an ordinary baby. He is indeed born to be king, He is God's annointed one.
Mary Some months ago an angel came to me. He said that I would have a child who was to be called Jesus. He will be God's own Son. He will be the promised Messiah.
Joseph The same angel came to me in a dream, and told me that our baby Jesus will save God's people from their sins.
Mary He is the Saviour promised by all the prophets
Joseph He is God's gift to all people
Traveller 2 We have brought our gifts for the baby
Travellers bring them gifts and lay them before Mary and the baby
Joseph Where are you all from
Traveller 3 We have all come from a long way away. We have followed a star that we believed would bring us to the new king
Traveller 4 We have been following it for a few months. This is the end of a long journey.
Mary Come closer, come and see the baby king you have been seeking.
Travellers move closer, Angels appear on stage

Song *King of kings and Lord of lords*

Scene 9: Initially the inn in Bethlehem, and then moving back to modern time

Travellers and shepherds sit around tables, being served by staff
Traveller 1 That was amazing
Innkeeper Never seen anything like it
Shepherd 1 Angels, stars, the Messiah, all in one night
Traveller 2 What a fantastic end to our journey

Shepherd 1 What a fantastic night
Wife What a fantastic honour to have God's Son born in our stable
Traveller 3 What a fantastic thing for God to send His Son as a gift for all people
Landlord rings the bell, now we suddenly shift to modern time
Innkeeper Time everyone, drink up.
Traveller 2 Right, time to go to home (*group stand up*)
Traveller 4 My children will be really early in the morning. They always get up early Christmas
 morning
Traveller 1 I used to get up early on Christmas morning when I was their age – always desperate to
 open presents!
People stand up and put on their modern coats
Wife Have a good Christmas everyone
Everyone (*Stand and turn to audience with drinks*) Happy Christmas everyone