

Opening song: Tell out, tell out the news

Welcome and opening prayer

Scene 1: Introduction to Joseph

The Narrator is in the pulpit. Joseph comes onto the stage, with a new chisel in his hand, and looks up at the Narrator.

Joseph Hello up there!

Narrator 1 Hello down there! How are you doing?

Joseph Great thanks.

Narrator 2 What's that you've got there?

Joseph Ah, it's my new tool. It's a new chisel. It's been made with all the latest technology, the very best from the Roman Empire. Pure Damascus steel. It's a "Blinco Eighty-one hundred". Slices through wood like a knife going through soft butter.

Narrator 1 You seem very pleased with it. But do you want to tell everyone here who you are?

Joseph They know who I am. I am Joseph, Nazareth's original 'Tool Man'.

Narrator 2 Yes, this is Joseph. Anyone who wants something made from wood comes to Joseph. A new table; a new chair; a new door frame; a new cart. Joseph can make them all.

In comes Joseph's father

Father Ah you say that, but you should see his mistakes. Just the other day, a chair with 4 odd legs! The things I have to *turn* around for him.

Joseph (*Sarcastically*) Ha ha ha. This is my father everyone. He lives on another *plane*! Just don't listen to him. He has retired, and nowadays he works as my assistant.

Father Your repair man more like.

Joseph (*Sarcastically*) Ha ha, Very funny, no need to *hammer* on about it.

Father Be that as it may, I see, or should I say *saw*, you have a nice new tool there.

Mary walks in

Mary Yes, a 'Blinco Eighty-one hundred' chisel. The tool man hasn't talked about anything else recently.

Narrator 1 Let me introduce you both to everyone here. This is Joseph's father (*who bows*), and just come in is Mary, Joseph's girlfriend (*Mary curtsies*). Are you well Mary?

Mary Yes, I am fine thanks. But I just called in to check that you (*talking to Joseph*) are all right for tonight.

Joseph You bet!

Mary Good. Well, I will see you later. (*Turns to Father*) Are you coming with me now?

Father Ok, see you later, Tool Man.

Mary and Father leave

Narrator 2 I saw that glint in your eye.

Joseph Yes, Mary is great, isn't she? And tonight I am going to ask her if she will marry me.

Narrator 1 Whooh! Fantastic news. I think that deserves a clap everyone. (*Audience claps*)

Joseph Anyway, I had better go now.

Narrator 2 Okay then, it's getting cold, so don't forget your coat.

Joseph All-right

Joseph puts on a multi-coloured coat and stands proud. A quick burst of technicolour dreamcoat music from the show.

Joseph Wrong coat! (*Takes off coat and puts on a normal coat*)

Narrators (*together*) Wrong show!

Carol

Scene 2: The dream

Joseph is sitting on a bench looking down.

Narrator 1 The good news is that Joseph did ask Mary if she would marry him, and she agreed. They started the usual sort of planning: measuring curtains, buying table cloths, and the like.

Narrator 2 However, Joseph has just heard some bad news, and he is looking very sad.

An angel slips to Joseph's side from the pulpit.

Angel 1 What's up big fellow?

Joseph It's Mary. We hadn't been engaged for too long, and then she tells me that she is expecting a baby!

Angel 1 And your point is what exactly?

Joseph For one, it isn't my baby. For another, she told me a ridiculous story about meeting an angel and being told her baby was a gift from God. She says her baby will become the saviour of the world.

Angel 1 Again, what exactly is your point?

Joseph It just doesn't make sense. She says she loves me, but this is just crazy. I can't believe this has happened to us.

Angel 1 It all sounds quite reasonable to me.

Joseph And who are you anyway?

Angel 1 I'm an angel.

Joseph Oh (*not really taking it in*). But why do you think it is reasonable?

Angel 1 Well, you know that Mary loves you, don't you?

Joseph Yes

Angel 1 And she wouldn't lie to you, would she?

Joseph I didn't think so.

Angel 1 Well?

Joseph Hang on, who did you say you are?

Angel 1 An angel.

Joseph A what?

Angel 1 An angel! That's *three* times I've told you that.

Joseph Wow, you really are an angel? Let me touch you!

Joseph touches the angel.

Joseph (*touches the angel's halo*) So what's this bit?

Angel It's my halo. Be careful.

Joseph picks up the halo but then drops it

Joseph Oops, sorry.

Joseph picks up a broken halo

Joseph I'm sorry. I can fix it for you.

Angel 1 Never mind. I might ask your father later.

Angel 2 appears the other side of Joseph and sits down

Angel 2 So what do you think, Joseph?

Joseph And who are you?

Angel 1 Don't let him touch your halo. Look what he did to mine. (*Picks up his broken halo*)

Angel 2 Ha! Anyway, Joseph, think about it – you know that Mary wouldn't cheat on you.

Joseph No, I didn't think she would.

Angel 2 And Nazareth is such a small village you would know if something had been going on.

Joseph I guess ...

Angel 2 And surely no-one would make up a story that you wouldn't believe?

Joseph No, I guess not.

Angel 1 So either Mary is mad to cheat on you ...

Angel 2 .. and then just as mad to make up a crazy story about angels and stuff ...

Angel 1 Or else she is telling the truth.

Angel 2 And if she is telling the truth ...

Angel 1 ... then you are about to become the father of the Son of God.

Carol:

Scene 3: In the field

Narrator 1 So Joseph took Mary to be his wife. They set up home, and did all the things with curtains and table cloths and the like.

Narrator 2 It turned out that soon after, the Roman rulers decided that it was time for one of their census counts, and Joseph had to take Mary to Bethlehem to be registered.

Narrator 1 Joseph made all the plans in advance: he sorted out the route, bought all the maps he would need, hired a donkey, and arranged a hotel booking.

Narrator 2 And he also sorted out all the baby things they might need, because it looked likely that their baby would actually be born in Bethlehem. But you all know Joseph by now – he is a good chap, but with his luck things may not go quite to plan.

Shepherds move onto the stage

Shepherd 4 It's a cold night.

Shepherd 5 That's because it is a clear sky.

Shepherd 6 The stars look fantastic.

Shepherd 1 (*pointing up at the sky, with Shepherd 2*) That one over there, the one that appears to be hanging just over Bethlehem, that's a new one I think.

Shepherd 2 So it is. It is really bright. I wonder whether it means something.

Shepherd 3 The sheep seem okay. Time to sit around the fire, heat up our food, and get the drinks out.

Shepherd 4 Fire, food and drink, and good company – the best thing about being out here.

Shepherd 5 Who is that over there?

Shepherd 6 Looks like a chap with a lady on a donkey.

Shepherd 1 They *must* be lost!

Shepherd 2 She looks to be “with child”, as they would say.

Joseph and Mary come near to the shepherds

Shepherd 3 Are you lost?

Mary Not according to HIM (*points at Joseph*), but basically, YES.

Joseph According to the map we should be close to Bethlehem.

Mary We would be even closer if you held the map the right way up.

Mary grabs the map and turns it up the right way

Shepherd 4 So you are heading for Bethlehem then?

Joseph That's right. According to the map there should be a road near here.

Shepherd 1 Let me have a look at this map. (*Takes the map from Joseph*). I am afraid this map is out of date. The roads have changed a bit since the Romans took over here.

Mary (*to Joseph*) I told you to not buy your maps from that “mule cart sale”. They may have been cheap, but I did say they might be too old to be of much use any more.

Shepherd 2 Never mind, you are quite close. (*Points with Joseph, who nods to say he can see the way*) Look over there, do you see, the road goes down there, and then it is straight – as you would expect with a Roman road. You can still get there tonight.

Shepherd 3 But sit down for a while by the fire, warm yourself up, and have some food.

Mary and Joseph sit down with the shepherds

Shepherd 5 Look, some more people are coming, actually quite a few of them.

The kings arrive on stage

Shepherd 6 Are you lost as well?

King 1 We have come from far-away countries.

King 2 And we have travelled for many weeks.

King 3 (*Look up to see the star*) We are following a star.

King 4 And we were doing okay

King 2 But then we ended up in Jerusalem.

King 3 We met someone called Herod – he was a strange chap.

King 1 He reckons *he's* the king, but we believe we have come to visit a *newly born* king.

King 4 So it can't be Herod ...
King 1 ... because he is too old!
Shepherd 1 You want to watch that Herod. He is not a very nice man.
King 1 But his people were quite helpful. They told us we should head to Bethlehem.
King 2 Then we thought we were on the right road, but we have ended up here.
Shepherd 2 The roads have changed.
King 3 Ah, that would explain it.
Shepherd 3 But you are close, and there is a bright star over the town.
King 4 That must be the star we have been following.
Shepherd 4 Those nice people are also going to Bethlehem.
Shepherd 5 They are sitting down having a rest.
Shepherd 6 Why don't you say hello to them, and then have a rest yourself by the fire.

Kings go to sit by the fire, followed by the shepherds

Narrator 1 I thought you were going to have a party, not just sit there.
Narrator 2 Come on, show your guests how you guys have a good time?
Shepherds Let's do it! (*or other shouts*)
Narrators (*together*) We're coming to join you.
Narrator 1 And here come some angels too ...

Music starts. Everyone, including angels, assemble on stage, young members with shakers.

Song: Down there in Bethlehem

As music fades out of instrumental, the shepherds, kings, angels disperse (giving out sweets to congregation).

Mary Joseph, they've all gone.
Joseph At least we know where we are going now. Come on ...
Mary and Joseph leave the stage

Song: Tonight

Scene 4: No room at the inn

Inn scene is set up, with the manager and receptionist on duty.

Narrator 1 Eventually Joseph and Mary arrive at their hotel in Bethlehem
Narrator 2 Will Joseph's run of bad luck continue? Remember that he thinks he had made his booking before they left Nazareth.

Mary and Joseph arrive and move over to the desk, with Joseph carrying a large suitcase.

Mary This is really nice; well done!
Joseph I don't think there was much choice, but it is not bad, I agree. Let's get someone to sort us out.

Joseph rings the desk bell

Receptionist Welcome, and how are you today?

Joseph Fine thanks.

Receptionist And how may I help you?

Joseph We have a reservation, in the name of Joseph of Nazareth. A double room with space for a baby.

Receptionist That would be our family room. Let me look
Receptionist looks through piles of papers, and is clearly taking a long time.

Mary *(to Joseph)* You don't think something is wrong do you?

Receptionist I am sorry, I don't seem to be able to find a reservation in your name.

Mary *(with a sound of panic)* Joseph?

Joseph There must be a booking. I went to your branch in Nazareth and made the booking three weeks ago.

Receptionist I am afraid I can't find anything. Let me call the manager
Receptionist goes over to the manager, who then comes over to the desk to talk with Joseph

Manager I am afraid there seems to be a problem. My assistant tells me that you booked a room through our office in Nazareth. The only problem is that we don't actually have an office in Nazareth. I think you must have booked a room with some other hotel chain but in some other town.

Mary Joseph!!!! I don't believe this!

Joseph Don't you have any spare rooms?

Manager Sorry, no, we are completely full.

Mary *(sounding very exasperated)* Joseph, I am having a baby!!!!

Joseph Are there other hotels in Bethlehem?

Manager Sorry no. We are the only inn. You see the sign, we are *(emphasise)* "The" Inn. Not one of several inns, but "The" inn; *singular*. That is, we are the *only* inn. And, I am afraid, there is no room in *The Inn*, as it says in the good book.

Joseph *(now sounding desperate)* You have to help us. My wife is expecting a baby soon.

Manager So I can see.

Receptionist *(to manager)* It isn't much, but the stable isn't so bad. Can we tidy it up a bit and let them stay there?

Manager That is a good idea, *(now to Joseph and Mary)* if that is okay with you? It's not what you would call 5-star accommodation though.

Joseph One star will do us. I don't think we have any choice. Thank you very much.

Manager Come with me.

Joseph picks up his bags, and Mary and Joseph follow the Manager off the stage.

Carol:

Scene 5: The Nativity Scene

Start with Mary and Joseph sitting on the stage, holding the baby Jesus

Narrator 1 That night Jesus was born, right there in the stable. God's gift to all people, His only Son, given to be the saviour of all of us.

Narrator 2 Not many people in Bethlehem knew what was happening that night. The shepherds we met earlier were led by the angels to come to worship the one who had been born as Christ the Lord.

Shepherds come to worship

Narrator 1 Wise men had come from the East, following a star that they believed would lead to a new king.

Narrator 2 They came with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but most of all, they came with their hearts to worship the Messiah and King.

Kings come to worship and bring their gifts

Narrator 1 Angels have also come to worship. They have been anticipating this birth with great excitement.

Narrator 2 From the time when they first spoke to Mary and Joseph, they have been the unseen helping hands behind the Christmas story.

Angels come onto the stage approaching from the back of the church

Narrator 1 And finally, all of us here come to worship the baby before us, He who has come to be our saviour.

Song: Here I am to worship

Summary talk, highlighting that we believe this is true, recognising that God chose ordinary, vulnerable, and fallible people to bring about the Christmas story, and picking up the theme of worship.

Closing carol: Hark the Herald Angels Sing