

Christmas play 2011

The central idea is that the congregation are being taken around the Nativity by the angels. A parallel would be Scrooge being taken from the past to the future by three ghosts in the Dickens novel "A Christmas Carol".

Scene 1 In Heaven

Three angels come onto stage, stand proudly in the centre, and survey the audience with their eyes shielded from the light.

Angel 1 *(to the other angel, and pointing to the congregation)* Look at everyone here. Loads of people.

Angel 2 More than we expected I think. *(To the congregation)* Hello everyone and welcome!

Angel 3 And Hello! from me too.

Angel 1 *(Peering at the congregation)* You look as if you don't know where you are.

Angel 2 *(Exclaims to the congregation)* You're in heaven!

Angel 3 Don't look so worried! Nothing has happened to you. We just want to share this special night with you.

Angel 1 *(To the other angels)* I don't think they know why it is special!

Angel 3 *(To the congregation)* Well, you'll find out in a minute. But first, we should introduce ourselves. We are angels, messengers of God.

Angel 1 And you are going to come with us to learn about God's message of love to the whole world.

Angel 2 But you can't come with us dressed like that! *(To Angel 1)* They are wearing rather odd clothes *(Both angels pat down their white robes).*

Angel 3 We don't have any of our fine robes to give you, but we do have a few of these *(Picks out some tinsel haloes from a box on the stage and holds them up).*

Angel 1 Who wants one?

Angels run into the congregation to give out some tinsel haloes, encouraging members of the congregation to wear them. When they have given out the last one, they grab hold of each other and run back onto stage.

Angel 2 Quickly, it's time!

Angel 3 Just to let you know what is happening next ... Angels are gathering here from all over the world.

Angel 1 There are going to be gazillions of us. I can hear them coming. Just watch.

Angels aside. With accompaniment of some fast music, angels come from all directions, meet on stage and greet each other with hugs and handshakes. Each gets introduced and say their names.

Angel 1 So, you are probably wondering why we are all here.

- Angel 2 So let's start at the beginning. We are angels. Sometimes we bring messages to people from God, sometimes we act as guides for people, showing them where to go, and sometimes we help and protect people.
- Angel 3 In fact you may know of some of the things we did in the past, visiting your forefathers, kings, and prophets.
- Angel 1 But the most important message we gave to our prophets told of God's great plan to save people from their sins.
- Angel 2 And today is when it all starts. Which is why *you* are here. So hold on tight, and come with us.
- Carol* *Away in a Manger*

Scene 2 Telling Mary and Joseph

This scene takes place simultaneously in the houses in which Mary and Joseph live. At the start two angels are on the stage.

- Angel 4 Hello again everyone. Now that you have met our big team of angels, this is where the fun really starts!
- Angel 5 So remember, we are going to show you God's plan to send His Son to Earth as a person, to bring salvation to everyone.
- Angel 4 But we are going to start very quietly. You may not have noticed, but you and I are now in the home of a young girl called Mary (*Angel sweeps arm to the relevant part of the stage*). She doesn't know you are here, so you need to be VERY quiet.
- Angel 5 On the other hand, you and I are also in the home of a carpenter called Joseph (*Angel sweeps arm to the other half of the stage*). Joseph is very much in love with Mary, and they are planning to get married soon.
- Angel 4 So you are all in two places at once, here in Mary's house (*arm reaches to Mary's side of the stage*) ...
- Angel 5 ... and here where Joseph lives (*arm reaches to Joseph's side of the stage*). Not bet you have never been in two places at once before! We told you this would be exciting.
- Angel 4 And Mary and Joseph will soon be here. They won't see you at all, but we will need to speak to them.
- Angel 5 I think they are coming now. Be quiet everyone
- Mary and Joseph come to their halves of the stage. Mary brings in a plate with some bread and a drink, puts them on a table, sits down, and starts to eat and drink. Joseph puts a small stool on a table to prepare to do some work. Angels step back to each side.*
- Mary Good, time for lunch, to eat and enjoy a moment's quiet.
- Joseph Now to finish off this fine stool. Almost done, and then I can be paid.
- Mary I wonder what Joseph is doing. I am looking forward to seeing him this evening.

- Joseph And if I finish this stool quickly, I can go to find Mary. She will be pleased to see me early.
- Angel 4 Mary! Mary!
- Mary *(Stands up, looking around)* Who's there? Where are you?
- Angel 4 Mary! Mary!
- Mary Who is that? Come out whoever you are, and stop frightening me.
- Angel 4 *(Steps forward into Mary's view)* Do not be afraid. I bring you greetings. You are highly favoured of the Lord, and He is with you.
- Mary What do you mean. Of course I serve the Lord the best I can, but *who are you?*
- Angel 4 I bring you a message from God. You are to have a child, and call Him Jesus. He will be great, and called the Son of the Most High. He will be given the throne of David, and His kingdom will never end.
- Mary How can this be true? Joseph and I are not yet married.
- Angel 4 The Holy Spirit will come upon you and will conceive the child. Jesus will be the Son of God. Remember, even though this sounds impossible, nothing is impossible with God.
- Mary I am the Lord's servant, may it be as you have said.
Angel 4 and Mary step back
- Angel 5 Joseph! Joseph!
- Joseph *(Thinking it is a customer)* Hang on just a minute. I will be right with you!
Joseph puts down his stool and tool, comes to the front, and looks around.
- Joseph Hello, is anyone there?
- Angel 5 Joseph! Joseph!
- Joseph Where are you?
Angel 5 steps forward into Joseph's view; Joseph reacts with surprise that the person talking with him is not a customer.
- Angel 5 Joseph, do not be afraid. You are an honourable man, chosen by God. I have come to tell you that Mary is with child. You are to call Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.
- Joseph How can this be? We are not yet married. What has Mary done to me?
- Angel 5 Do not worry, and do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. This will fulfil what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, "The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means God with us".
Joseph and Angel 5 step back
- Song *You're the word of God the Father*

Scene 3 **Who can we tell?**

Several angels on the stage

- Angel 6 Our plan is on schedule. Mary and Joseph now know about it, and soon Jesus will be born.
- Angel 7 I have one big worry. This is all too exciting, and I am afraid that one of us won't be able to keep it to ourselves any longer, and will go down to Earth and tell someone.
- Angel 8 And it might be the wrong person.
- Angel 9 Telling people about what God is doing is what we do. And it's all bursting out. All I want to do right now is go down and tell someone.
- Angel 10 Of course we need to be very careful. Perhaps if we are careful we could tell someone special. What do you think?
- Angel 11 Why don't we all go and tell the king in Jerusalem. There is no-one as special as him.
- Angels *(Together)* What? Not King Herod? You can't be serious!
- Angel 6 Don't you know about King Herod. He's a psychopath. If he finds out, he will probably try to kill Mary and Joseph.
- Angel 7 What about telling some ordinary people?
- Angel 8 How do we do that without everyone seeing us? I am worried about being spotted by soldiers and guards. News could spread back to King Herod very quickly.
- Angel 9 If we chose some shepherds, we could talk to them when they are in their fields. You would certainly not be seen by other people that way.
- Angel 10 That's a good idea! But we can't tell them until the baby is born, or else they will probably tell everyone.
- Angel 11 I wonder whether we could tell someone by way of a code perhaps, so we don't actually have to be there.
- Angel 6 What sort of code are you thinking of?
- Angel 7 I don't know. Perhaps put a star in the sky? There are people around the world who study the stars, and if we did it in the right way, they might understand.
- Angel 8 These people have books, and think they understand how stars have an effect on our lives.
- Angel 9 Which is all nonsense of course, but if we put the star in the right place, they will nevertheless interpret it as indicating a new king in Jerusalem.
- Angel 10 And if we get it right, they might be very impressed, and some of them might want to travel to Bethlehem to worship the baby Jesus. It will take them a while to get there.
- Angel 6 This sounds very clever. I really like this idea.
- Angel 7 So how do we put a star in the sky?

- Angel 8 Just like that (*lifts arm and opens fingers*). Woop! One new star. There you have it. All done!
- Angel 9 Boy, I like being an angel. You want a new star, *woop woop* (*hand gesture*), there is a new star.
- Angel 10 And soon the wise men will know that something new has started.
- Angel 11 This is so exciting now. The Son of God is about to be born, and I just can't wait!
- Song* *Tonight!*

Scene 4 In Bethlehem

Mary and Joseph are sitting together in the stable, with baby Jesus being cuddled by Mary

- Angel 12 We have brought you forward in time, to a small town called Bethlehem, which lies just to the South of the city of Jerusalem.
- Angel 13 Bethlehem was the historic home of King David and his family, and Joseph was descended from David's family.
- Angel 12 The prophets had foretold that the Son of God would be born in Bethlehem. It has turned out that Mary and Joseph have had to come to Bethlehem to register for taxation under the Romans.
- Angel 13 They arrived just before Jesus was due to be born. But the town was packed, and there was little room.
- Angel 12 The only thing was to go into the stable below the main living area, and for Jesus to be born amongst the cattle and sheep, with a carpet of straw and the animal's manger as His first bed.
- Joseph takes the baby Jesus from Mary, gives a hug, and places Him in the manger*
- Angel 13 And so God's great plan for mankind, foretold over hundreds of years through the prophets, has now begun.

Scene 5 In the fields

Shepherds are sitting on the stage, with the angels at the front

- Angel 14 (*Talking with the congregation*) I think you get the idea here. We are now in the fields. These (*pointing*) are shepherds looking after their sheep, and they can't see you and can't see us.
- Angel 15 At least not yet. You remember when we came up with a plan to tell someone about the birth of Jesus. Well, hold on to your seats, because these shepherds are not going to know what has hit them.
- Angel 14 Just to catch up on what happened earlier ... you remember when we put a new star into the sky? Well, wise men from the East saw it, and are on their way coming to worship the new-born King with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Angels step back and off the stage

- Shepherd 1 Did I just hear something? Sounded like someone talking?
- Shepherd 2 No, there's no-one else here. Perhaps it was a bit of breeze in the grass, or one of the sheep?
- Shepherd 3 It's a clear night; I think we would see if anyone else was here.
- Shepherd 1 I guess so, but it didn't sound like the grass.
- Shepherd 4 It is a beautiful night for sure. Bethlehem looks so lovely down below.
- Shepherd 5 And the sky; the stars are looking so bright tonight.
- Shepherd 1 I don't know if you have noticed, but that bright star just above Bethlehem, well, it hasn't always been there.
- Shepherd 2 What do you mean?
- Shepherd 1 It has been moving over the past few weeks. It has been coming from the East, getting closer and closer to us each night.
- Shepherd 3 (*pointing*) Do you mean that one there?
- Shepherd 1 Yes, that's the one.
- Shepherd 4 I noticed it too. I thought I must be dreaming. Stars don't move do they?
- Shepherd 5 It's almost as if it has been leading someone on a journey.
- Shepherd 1 And now it looks as if it has stopped over Bethlehem.
- Shepherd 2 This is nonsense talk chaps. Stars don't move and they don't stop, and they certainly don't lead people!
- Shepherd 3 I think we are not getting enough sleep. Either that or there's something wrong with the wine we drink up here.
- Shepherd 1 You might think this, but I can hear something. And it's getting louder.
- Shepherd 4 He's right, I can hear something.
- Shepherd 5 And I can see something – a light over there (*pointing*), and it's getting brighter.
- Shepherd 2 (*with fear in his voice*) What it is? I'm really scared!
- Shepherd 3 Get down everyone!

All the shepherds fall to the floor in fear.

Angels run onto the stage from the back.

- Angel 16 Good evening shepherds!
- Angel 17 Don't be afraid, up you get. We have come with good news (*angels help the shepherds to their feet*).
- Shepherd 1 Who are you?
- Shepherd 4 And why are you wearing such funny clothes?

- Angel 18 We are angels, messengers from God. We have been here all the time, and want to tell you some good news.
- Angel 16 Have we got any haloes for these good men?
- Angel 17 I think so.
Angels quickly put haloes on the shepherds heads.
- Angel 18 That looks better. And we have your attention.
- Angel 16 We have news of great joy, for you and for all people. Today, in Bethlehem, a Saviour has been born. He is Christ the Lord.
- Angel 17 And you can go to see him. You will find Him in a stable, lying in a manger, wrapped in cloths.
- Angel 18 Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on Earth.
- Shepherd 5 So what do we do?
- Angel 16 Go down to Bethlehem quickly. You will be the first people to see your Saviour, the first to see Christ the Lord.
- Angel 17 But before you go, will you join us in a song or two? Today is the most important day ever in God's creation.
- Angel 18 So let's celebrate together.
Worship song – "Lord we lift your name on high" after which everyone, apart from Angel 16, leaves the stage, and the kings appear to a triumphant piece of music, and talk towards the audience
- Angel 16 *(to the audience)* You remember the star we put into the sky? Well, it worked, and wise men from the East are now close.
Angel 16 steps back, and kings come to the fore.
- King 1 That must be Bethlehem down there. Not far to go now.
- King 2 I wonder what we will find. Herod's palace was really impressive.
- King 1 Yes, but he didn't seem to know anything about the new king. And Bethlehem doesn't look very impressive.
- King 2 So do you think we have made a mistake following the star?
- King 1 No, I think the message from the star was clear, and people in the palace were quite sure that the Hebrew scriptures point to a king to be born in Bethlehem.
- King 2 So let's continue on our journey, and we will see what we find.
Kings leave the stage

Scene 6 The Nativity

The scene begins with Mary and Joseph seated

- Angel 19 *(speaking to the congregation)* You have come with us on a long journey, from our first meeting in Heaven, to the homes of Mary and Joseph in Nazareth, and then back to Heaven again.

- Angel 20 After this we travelled to Bethlehem to see Mary and Joseph with their newborn baby Jesus, and then onward into the fields to tell the shepherds.
- Angel 19 Now we are going back into Bethlehem to join with the worship of the baby Jesus.
- Angel 20 The shepherds are hurrying into Bethlehem. There are wise men coming from the far East with their gifts. We invite you now to come with us to worship Jesus, the Son of God, Saviour of the world.
- Angel 19 When our journey is over, you will return to your own lives. And we will go back to our normal work of helping God's people.
- Angel 20 But this moment of worship, where we see for ourselves the Son of God born as a baby, and the start of God's plan of salvation for all people, this is something we will all carry with us for evermore.

Accompanied by music, the angels first come onto stage from the back of the church, and stand behind Mary and Joseph or sit around the outside.

The shepherds come from the back and onto the stage, and one-by-one kneel at the crib before sitting on the stage.

Finally wise men come from the back, and one-by-one they present their gifts kneeling, then step to the side.

All sing "Here I am to worship"

Final narration

- Angel 21 Our journey together has now ended. The baby Jesus will grow through childhood to become a man, without many people knowing who he is. He will follow in His father's footsteps and become a carpenter.
- Angel 22 In about thirty years' time Jesus will begin a ministry of teaching and healing. The blind will see, the lame and disabled will walk and run, the sick will be restored to full health.
- Angel 21 Those who have been searching for forgiveness will be forgiven, and those searching for meaning will find a purpose in serving God. All will be called to become children of God.
- Angel 22 As was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, Jesus will eventually carry the punishment for our sins. He will be taken by the authorities, beaten, and hung on a cross to die.
- Angel 21 But he will conquer death. And through this, we will have the right to be called the children of God, for we will be born of God.
- Angel 22 Jesus is God's Word become flesh, who has made his living place amongst us here. We have today seen His glory, the Glory of the one and only God, He who has come from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- Angel 21 And this is why today we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Talk and prayers

Carol Hark the herald angels sings