

“Long, Long Ago”

christmas nativity play and youth service

by Melanie Koster

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY

JOSEPH

ANGEL

HOST OF ANGELS

BABY JESUS

SHEPHERDS (3)

WISE MEN (3)

CHRISTMAS STAR

NARRATORS (2)

STAGEHAND

DONKEY

READERS for prayers, bible reading (2 to 10)

CHOIR to SING (optional)

The play and order of service is designed to give the opportunity for as many children / youth to be involved as would like to be. The main parts are those of the narrators, which would be suitable for confident speakers. Most of the other parts range from having one or two lines, to several – and there is the option to involve smaller children in non-speaking roles, ie: the Christmas star, extra shepherds, angels, or to dress up as stable animals.

The play incorporates some well known Christmas carols. There is also a chorus throughout the script which could be sung by the children or a choir, or the congregation as a whole. The tune is from the well known Sleeping Beauty song, “There Was A Princess Long Ago”.

The play and order of service can be used as an entire church service as is, or parts of it or the prayers may be used separately as desired.

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CHILDREN'S PRAYER

LEADER A: Dear God, Thank you for the beautiful world we live in.

LEADER B: Thank you for the beautiful people in it.

LEADER A: We are sorry for the mistakes we make.

LEADER B: We ask for forgiveness.

LEADER A: Help us to help others.

LEADER B: We pray for peace.

LEADER A: Be with people who are hurting.

LEADER B: We pray for hope.

LEADER A: Be with people who are sad.

LEADER B: We pray for joy.

LEADER A: Help us spread the good news of Christmas.

LEADER B: We pray for love.

ALL: Amen.

CAROL: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

PLAY BEGINS: 'LONG, LONG AGO'

ABOUT MARY AND JOSEPH

NARRATOR 1 : Let me tell you a story.

NARRATOR 2: Great. I love stories.

NARRATOR 1 : Once upon a time –

NARRATOR 2: I've heard this one before.

NARRATOR 1 : Have you? Are you sure?

NARRATOR 2: Oh yeah, heard one you've heard them all. They all start the same.
'Once upon a time...'

NARRATOR 1 : A hem. Long, long ago...

NARRATOR 2: Long, long ago? How long, long ago?

NARRATOR 1 : Long, long ago - before television, cars...

NARRATOR 2: in the olden days?

NARRATOR 1 : Yes, in the real 'olden days'...

NARRATOR 2: Wow, I can't imagine that.

NARRATOR 1 : As I was saying... Long, long ago... in a place far, far, away...

NARRATOR 2: How far away?

NARRATOR 1 : Very far.

NARRATOR 2: As far away as (insert name of town near you)?

NARRATOR 1 : Further than that.

NARRATOR 2: Australia?

NARRATOR 1 : Even further than that. On the other side of the world, in a place called Nazareth, in Galilee...

NARRATOR 2: There lived a beautiful princess in a huge castle –

NARRATOR 1 : No, no, no. That's not how the story goes.

NARRATOR 2: It's not?

NARRATOR 1 : No. I'm talking about Mary. She was definitely not a princess or a queen, although she did become the mother of a king.

Sing: Mary lived in Galilee, Galilee, Galilee,
Mary lived in Galilee,
Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 1 : An angel called Gabriel came to Mary...

GABRIEL stands up and waves.

Sing: The angel's name was Gabriel, Gabriel, Gabriel
The angel's name was Gabriel,
Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 1 : Gabriel told Mary she was going to have a baby, the Son of God, and that God would make him a king.

NARRATOR 2: Wow. So then Mary got to go and live in a big castle with loads of servants and horses and stuff.

NARRATOR 1 : No, definitely not. In fact, Mary was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. Together Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem – Mary rode on a donkey.

Sing: A gentle donkey took them there, took them there, took them there,
 A gentle donkey took them there,
 Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 2: A donkey? Haven't we got a song about a donkey?

NARRATOR 1 : We sure do. Let's all remain seated and sing 'LITTLE DONKEY'

CAROL: LITTLE DONKEY

Mary, Joseph & the donkey ride up the aisle to the front of the church where the 'inn' is, and take their seats in the stable.

NARRATOR 2: Hang on a minute...

NARRATOR 1 : What?

NARRATOR 2: If Mary's going to have a baby – a baby king – then where's she staying?
 Is (insert name of maternity hospital near you) full? She can't have a baby here,
 among all those dirty animals... and where will the baby sleep? In the hay?

NARRATOR 1 : Yes, actually. The inn was full, and – well, just listen:

Bible reading:

LUKE 2: vs 4-7 *(During the reading, baby Jesus is placed in Mary's arms.)*

SING: God's son was born in Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Bethlehem,
 God's son was born in Bethlehem,
 Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 2: I can feel another song coming on.

NARRATOR 1 : I think the children have a song for us. Let's listen.

CHILDREN SING: AWAY IN A MANGER

SHEPHERDS

Shepherds : Move to aisle and sit around 'watching their flock.'

Sing: *Hum tune to 1st verse of 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night'*

SHEPHERD 1: Knock knock.
SHEPHERD 2: Who's there?
SHEPHERD 1: 'Cows go'.
SHEPHERD 2: 'Cows go' - who?
SHEPHERD 1: Cows don't go 'who', they go 'moo!'
Shepherd 2 & 3: Ha, ha, ha.
(Angel appears)
ANGEL: Knock knock.
SHEPHERD 1: *(afraid)* Who's there?!!
ANGEL: Don't be scared. I'm an angel.
SHEPHERD 1: I thought so.
SHEPHERD 2: The halo and wings kind of gives you away.
SHEPHERD 3: What do you want with us?
ANGEL: I've got great news!
SHEPHERD 1: You could have just sent us an e-mail.
SHEPHERD 2: Or put something on Facebook.
SHEPHERD 2: Or sent us a text -
SHEPHERD 3: *(gets out cell phone and holds it up)* No... no coverage here.
ANGEL: The news...?
SHEPHERD 1: Oh, the news! Yes, do tell us!
ANGEL: Today your Saviour was born – God's son!

Sing: God's son was born in Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Bethlehem,
God's son was born in Bethlehem,
Long, long ago!

SHEPHERD 2: Wow.
SHEPHERD 3: I think we'd better go and see.
SHEPHERD 1: I wonder what the visiting hours are?
ANGEL: *(beckons to other angels)* Come on you lot!
All Angels: *(surround the shepherds)* Glory to God! Peace on Earth!

Sing: Angels came and sang good news, sang good news, sang good news,
Angels came and sang good news,
Long, long ago!

SHEPHERD 2: Now that's impressive.
SHEPHERD 3: Better than a text message any day.
SHEPHERD 1: Let's go and see this new baby king.

Sing: Some shepherds came to visit him, visit him, visit him,
Some shepherds came to visit him,
Long, long ago.

Shepherds and angels go to front, and sit around Mary, Joseph & baby Jesus.

CAROL: THE FIRST NOWELL

NARRATOR 2: I liked that song... but who's the guy called Noel the angels kept mentioning?
NARRATOR 1 : Not Noel, *No-well*.
NARRATOR 2: That's what I said. Who is he? Is it Jesus' middle name or nickname or something?
NARRATOR 1 : *(Sounding frustrated, impatient)* No... well...
NARRATOR 2: Now you're saying it. What does it mean?
NARRATOR 1 : Um...
NARRATOR 2: You don't know, do you!
NARRATOR 1 : Not really, no.
NARRATOR 2: There's only one thing to do then.
NARRATOR 1 & NARRATOR 2: *(look at each other and nod)* GOOGLE it!

NARRATOR 2 gets out laptop and pretends to type.

NARRATOR 2: Here it is. "Nowell: definition number 1: a shout of joy at Christmas for the birth of the Saviour;
or number 2: a kind of hymn of mediaeval origin sung in honour of the Nativity of our Lord;
...or number 3: the core, or inner part of a mould for casting a large hollow object."
NARRATOR 1 : I think you can forget that last one.
NARRATOR 2: Yep. I suppose you could say the angel's first nowell was kind of like the

first time anyone sang Happy Birthday to Jesus.

NARRATOR 1 : OK, let's sing another song – now before you say anything, it is NOT about an angel called Hark.

NARRATOR 2 types on laptop again...

NARRATOR 2: 'Hark' = to listen attentively. Got it!

CAROL: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

ABOUT KING HEROD:

NARRATOR 2: Wow, everyone must have been so excited about the new king.

NARRATOR 1 : Well, not everyone... King Herod was a bit upset when he found out.

NARRATOR 2: King Herod...? Who's he? Does he have a web page?
(pretends to type on laptop) Let's see... dub dub dub dot Herod -

(TRUMPET FANFARE, as King Herod stands up)

KING HEROD: I'm King Herod, and I'm a bit upset.

Sing: King Herod was a bit upset, bit upset, bit upset
King Herod was a bit upset
Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 2: What happened?

NARRATOR 1 : Some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked where to find the baby born to be king of the Jews. They said they had seen his star and wanted to worship him.

SING: The wise men saw a shining star, shining star, shining star,
The wise men saw a shining star,
Long, long ago.

NARRATOR 2: And King Herod didn't like that.

NARRATOR 1 : No.

KING HEROD: No. I'm the only king around here!

NARRATOR 1 : He told the wise men to go off and find Jesus and let him know where he was so he too could go and worship him. But he actually wanted to get rid of him.

NARRATOR 2: What a horrid man!

Sing: King Herod was a horrid man, horrid man, horrid man
King Herod was a horrid man
Long, long ago.

(King Herod sits down)

NARRATOR 1 : But, God warned the wise men not to tell Herod, so Jesus was safe.

NARRATOR 2: Oh, is this the wise men coming now?

(Sound: play a little of 'Going on a journey' from Julie Wylie's 'Sing Merry Christmas' cd – 'We're going on a journey, we're going on a journey, a camel journey, a camel journey'-)

ABOUT THE THREE WISE MEN

(STAGE HAND - runs up the aisle, apologising to everyone along the way & goes up to the Narrators at the front)

STAGE HAND: Sorry, sorry... Excuse me... *(gestures to soundman to cut the music)*
Cut! Cut! *(music stops abruptly)*

STAGE HAND: Sorry, but we've got a slight hitch.

NARRATOR 1 : Oh... sorry everyone...

(in a loud whisper to stage hand) What's going on? Where are the wise men?

STAGE HAND: Well, they're coming – but the problem is with the camels.

NARRATOR 1 : The camels?

NARRATOR 2: You know what they say – never work with children and animals.

STAGE HAND: I'm sorry but Orana Park decided we couldn't borrow the camels after all.

NARRATOR 1 : Oh.

NARRATOR 2: Whoever's on church cleaning this week will be relieved!

NARRATOR 1 : This is very last minute. What are we going to do?

STAGE HAND: Don't worry. I've made other arrangements.

NARRATOR 1 : Oh?

STAGE HAND: Yeah - we've modernised. You know the alternative version of the wise men's song?

Sing: *(to the tune of We Three Kings)*

We three kings of Orient are
bearing gifts we've travelled afar
one on a scooter, tooting his hooter
and two in a motorcar.

Sound effects: car noises, horn

*Three wise men / women enter, one on scooter & other two in cardboard car... carrying gifts.
Star leads the way and stands behind the manger scene.*

Wise men/women bow down before baby Jesus & one at a time present their gifts.

WISE MAN 1: This is my gift, of gold.

WISE MAN 2: This is my gift, of frankincense.

WISE MAN 3: This is my gift, of myrrh.

JOSEPH: Thank you!

NARRATOR 2: Ah, now I understand... they're giving gifts! Is that why we give presents
to each other at Christmas time?

NARRATOR 1 : Well, Jesus was actually the first Christmas present ever – He is God's
gift to us. He is Peace, Hope, Joy and Love.

NARRATOR 2: Well, I've gotta say – I think this is the best story I've ever heard. Thank
you for sharing it with us.

NARRATOR 1 : You're welcome. Now it's up to you - and to everyone else here to go out
and spread the true story and meaning of Christmas.

NARRATOR 1 & NARRATOR 2: Merry Christmas everyone!

CAROL: SILENT NIGHT

PRAYER

'Packing up Christmas' Prayer

When the angels remove their halos and wings,
and the Christmas choir no longer sings,
When the wise men's crowns
and shepherds gowns
have all been packed away...

Let the Peace of Christmas stay.

When tinsel and trimmings and Christmas tree
have been taken down so carefully,
and the coloured lights
that shone so bright
are boxed and sealed and put away...

Let the Hope of Christmas stay.

When trumpet and flute play the last Christmas note
and the donkey's departed for home on its float,
When we've mopped up the mess
and more or less
cleaned up all the hay...

Let the Joy of Christmas stay.

When manger and all the nativity gear
are put into storage for another year,
When we've done the dishes,
said 'Christmas Wishes' -
with all my heart I pray...

Let the Love of Christmas stay.

Let's not pack Jesus Christ away,
May Christmas continue beyond Christmas day.
Amen.

CAROL: JOY TO THE WORLD

BLESSING PRAYER

LEADER 1: Walk into this week in hope.

LEADER 2: Be gentle with each other.

LEADER 3: Work together in love and peace.

LEADER 4: and may God bless all of us. Amen.