

Scene 1:

Christmas tree decorated in back with some gifts under it. Manger scene on the communion table not set up; pieces are in a box. Card table with table cloth set up front and off center.

O Come, O Come Immanuel: piano

Man: (enters from stage left. Holding a cup of coffee or cocoa and munching on a cookie. Pauses to look at the tree in admiration while he finishes his cookie and listens to the music as if it is coming from a radio or CD. When music stops, sets mug down on the communion table and notices the manger scene.) What's this? I thought everything was up and decorated. What happened to the manger scene? Well, I'd better help with that. (moves the manger over to the card table. Brings the box with the pieces and looks inside) Let me see. I guess, Joseph and Mary go first. (takes them out and looks at them.) Were they all that different from me?

Reading 1: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

(After reading Mary and Joseph enter down side aisle from back of auditorium, stopping part way down aisle at a "door". Innkeeper answers, shakes head and shuts door. Mary and Joseph head to next door (stage right). Again a no answer. Then comes to third door (stage left).)

Innkeeper: (answers the door) What? We don't have any room.

Joseph: But sir, my wife, she is pregnant and about to give birth. Please, anything will be better than out in the cold.

Innkeeper's wife: (enters from door) We do have the stable. Come with me.  
(Innkeeper leaves back into the "inn"; while wife and Mary and Joseph go to the "stable" set up off stage.)

Man: Wow! They were like me. Joseph had a wife who needed help. He had to have

been stressed out about finding a place for her. I wouldn't want to be in his shoes! Imagine (name of wife) nine months pregnant and no place to stay—let alone a hospital! I would be scared stiff! Then there is Mary. She wasn't much older than 13. She had to have been someone's little princess. She had a daddy somewhere who had hopes and dreams for her. I doubt going off at nine months pregnant with her husband was part of those plans, or to be pregnant before she was married! It must have crushed him to hear the town gossip. It makes sense now. I can see them there sitting waiting for the baby to come. (walks off, leaving his mug, still contemplative.)

Mom and the boys: (enter from stage left.)

Boy 1: (sees the manger scene) Hey, Mommy, look—a manger scene.

Mom and boys: (go to look at it) It's not all the way set up. (talk about what's there and what comes next. Pull out baby Jesus)

Boy 1 (or Mom if he can't): Was Jesus a baby like (name of second younger boy) was?

Mom: Yes. Jesus was born as a baby just like (name of second younger boy) was. The big difference was that instead of being born in a hospital, Jesus was born in a cave for animals. They wrapped him up just like we wrapped (name of baby brother) up in blankets, but instead of being put in a nice crib, they had to lay him in the feeding trough for the animals. (Can explain by showing that the manger is where the animals eat, set up the child then leave.)

Reading 2: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

(During reading, Mary and Joseph "give birth" and wrap the baby in cloths and lay him in the manger.)

(Young children's choir enters from front row stage right and stands on the stairs leading up to stage.)

Young Children's Choir: Away in a Manger, exit to parents in audience

Shepherds: (enter from the side entrance and stand on floor stage right not on stage. Warm their hands near a "fire")

Shepherd 1: Caleb, you'd better watch the old ewe. She's going to have problems tonight. I think she will deliver her lamb.

Caleb: On a night like tonight? It's too nice of a night for her to have her lamb.

Shepherd 1: You just wait and see. I've seen too many. . . (trails off as a bright light appears)

Reading 2b: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

(Luk 2:9-12)

Angels chorus: (enters from front row stage left saying) Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth.

(Sing a carol about angels then depart)

Caleb: (with awe) What was that? Have you ever seen anything like that before?

Shepherd 1: No, Caleb, I haven't. Let's go see what the angels were talking about.

Shepherds: (walk over to Mary and Joseph and see the baby)

Person 2: (sets up shepherds) I never thought that just ordinary people got to see the baby right away. (pause, Shepherds exit) God was allowing anyone who would listen to come see His Son! (shakes head and walks away)

Song: Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night (during song, Mary and Joseph leave)

Reading 3: Now when the birth of Jesus took place in Beth-lehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is the King of the Jews whose birth has now taken place? We have seen his star in the east

and have come to give him worship. (Mat 2:1-2) And when they saw the star they were full of joy. And they came into the house, and saw the young child with Mary, his mother; and falling down on their faces they gave him worship; and from their store they gave him offerings of gold, perfume, and spices. (Mat 2:10-11)

Wise men: (enter from back stage right and look for King. One points out the star, and they walk up to the stage where Mary, Joseph, and 2 year old Jesus have taken a seat at stage right. Knock on the "door", and enter. Give gifts and worship Him.)

Song: We Three Kings (during song, Wise men exit at last verse back down the aisle. Mary, Joseph and Jesus wait until chorus and exit stage right)

Person 3: (enters and exclaims) Oh, look! A manger scene. (walks over and examines the scene) The wise men are missing. (looks in the box) Here they are. Let's set them up. The wise men were not quite like us. They had lots of money and probably worked for a king, but they were like us, in that they read the Scriptures and looked to obey God. They were willing to make a huge long trip, just to go see Jesus. What are we willing to do for Jesus? (exits mulling over that thought)

Teen and elementary duet: (enter from stage left, bringing a cookie on a plate and a glass of milk. Set it down by the tree. Then sing "Was He a Boy Like Me?" and exit)

Reading 4: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:5-11)

Final Person: Everyone who came to Jesus birth were ordinary people. They all had a choice to make: when would they bow before Jesus—at His birth, or in the end? You too have a choice to make. God decided to become a human so that He could reach out to humans and tell them of a relationship that He wants to have with them. Jesus died so that relationship could be renewed. What will you do with Jesus this year?