

# The Birth of Jesus Foretold reader's theater

CHARACTERS: 8; with doubling from scene to scene

PROPS: none specified

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 11 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2.

FKRL: 5.8

## Gabriel Visits Mary

CAST: Gabriel, Mary, Narrator, Elizabeth

GABRIEL: This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about.

MARY: God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee to me, Mary, a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

GABRIEL: Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.

MARY: I was greatly troubled at his words. I wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.

MARY: How will this be, since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL: The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.

MARY: I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.

NARRATOR: Mary hurried to Zechariah's home in a town in the hill country of Judea

MARY: Greetings, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: When I heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in my womb

NARRATOR: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

ELIZABETH: *(in a loud voice)* Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached

my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!

## Mary's Song

CAST: Mary, Elizabeth, All

MARY: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

ELIZABETH: for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

MARY: From now on all generations will call me blessed for the Mighty One has done great things for me

ALL: Holy is his name.

ELIZABETH: His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

MARY: He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

ELIZABETH: he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

ALL: He has brought down rulers from their thrones

ELIZABETH: but has lifted up the humble.

MARY: He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

ELIZABETH: He has helped his servant Israel,

MARY: remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever,

ALL: just as he promised our ancestors.

## Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son Readers Theater

CAST: Mary, Joseph

MARY: I stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

JOSEPH: Mary was pledged to be married to me, Joseph

MARY: but before we came together, I was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

JOSEPH: I, Joseph her husband, was faithful to the law

MARY: and yet did not want to expose me to public disgrace.

JOSEPH: I had in mind to divorce her quietly.: But after I had considered this: an angel of the Lord appeared to me in a dream

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ANGEL: Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

JOSEPH: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet

MARY: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son: and they will call him Immanuel

BOTH: which means God with us

JOSEPH: When I woke up, I did what the angel of the Lord had commanded me.

MARY: He took me, Mary, home as his wife but we did not consummate our marriage until I gave birth to a son.

## The Birth of Jesus Reader Theater

CAST: Caesar, Quirinius, Mary, Joseph, Shepherd 1 & 2, Angel

CAESAR: I, Caesar Augustus issue a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

QUIRINIUS: This was the first census that took place while I, Quirinius, was governor of Syria.

CAESAR: Everyone go to your own town to register.

JOSEPH: I, Joseph, also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David because I belonged to the house and line of David.

MARY: Joseph went there to register with me, Mary, the woman pledged to be married to him. I was expecting a child.

JOSEPH: While we were there, the time came for the baby to be born

MARY: I gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

JOSEPH: She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger

MARY: because there was no guest room available for us.

JOSEPH: I gave him the name Jesus as the angel had said

SHEPHERD 1: We shepherds were living out in the fields nearby keeping watch over our flocks at night.

SHEPHERD 2: An angel of the Lord appeared to us

SHEPHERD 1: the glory of the Lord shone around us

BOTH SHEPHERDS: We were terrified.

ANGEL: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

SHEPHERD 2: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying

ALL : Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

SHEPHERD 1: When the angels had gone into heaven we decided to go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

SHEPHERD 2: So we hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger.

SHEPHERD 1: When we had seen him, we spread the word concerning what had been told to us about this child

SHEPHERD 2: All who heard it were amazed at what we said to them.

MARY: But I treasured up all these things and pondered them in my heart.

JOSEPH: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

MARY: On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus

JOSEPH: the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

## Jesus Presented in the Temple

CAST: Joseph, Simeon, Mary, Anna

JOSEPH: It is time for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses

MARY: Joseph and I took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord as it is written in the Law of the Lord

JOSEPH: Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord

MARY: We offered a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord

JOSEPH: a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

ANNA: Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout.

SIMEON: I was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on me.

ANNA: It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

SIMEON: Moved by the Spirit, I went into the temple courts.

JOSEPH: When Mary and I brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required

ANNA: Simeon took him in his arms and praised God

SIMEON: Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

MARY: Joseph and I marveled at what was said about him.

SIMEON: This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.

JOSEPH: There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher.

ANNA: I was very old; I had lived with my husband seven years after our marriage then was a widow until she was eighty-four.

SIMEON: She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

MARY: Coming up to us at that very moment, she gave thanks to God

JOSEPH: and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

## The Magi Visit the Messiah

CAST: Narrators 1, 2 & 3, Magi 1 & 2, Priest 1 & 2, Herod,

MAGI 1: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea during the time of King Herod

MAGI 2: We Magi from the east came to Jerusalem asking about the Christ.

MAGI 1: Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

MAGI 2: We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.

HEROD: When I, King Herod, heard this I was disturbed

PRIEST 1: and all Jerusalem with him.

HEROD: (to priest) Call together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law. Find out where this Messiah is to be born?

PRIEST 1: In Bethlehem in Judea

PRIEST 2: This is what the prophet has written:

PRIEST 1: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

PRIEST 2: for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

HEROD: Bring back the Magi, but do so secretly so I can find out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then I will send them to Bethlehem.

PRIEST 2: We shall

HEROD: Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.

MAGI: After we had heard the king, we went on our way

MAGI 2: The star we had seen when it rose went ahead of us until it stopped over the place where the child was.

BOTH MAGI: When we saw the star, we were overjoyed.

MAGI 1: When we arrived at the house, we saw the child with his mother Mary

MAGI 2: We bowed down and worshiped him.

MAGI 1: We opened our treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

MAGI 2: Having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, we returned to our country by another route.