

## Narration Script for Children's Pageant

Imagine the stars in the sky, the countless constellations, the sprawling Solar System. And among it a little planet called Earth. God made all of those things, and all of the people and inhabitants of our planet. Just over two thousand years ago, God came to be with us, to show us how life should be lived.

God could have chosen anywhere to be God's home. God could have built a palace that would have made the grandeur of the most amazing palaces seem like nothing. But no. God chose a baby born among forgotten people; people who were overlooked by governments and among the poorest people. This is the story of how God came to be with us.

The story begins with a young woman in her home - Mary. Unless you look a bit deeper, there is nothing particularly remarkable about Mary. She was from a town called Nazareth, and she was engaged to be married to Joseph. But, to God, she was very important. So important that God sent an angel with a message for her.

The angel told Mary that she was very special and God was with her. But Mary found it hard to understand why the angel had come to see her. She was just an ordinary woman. She worried what the angel meant by the greeting. Seeing she was scared, the angel told her not to be afraid - God was very pleased with her.

And she would give birth to a son. She was to call him Jesus, and he would be called the Son of God. Mary didn't understand how this could be. The angel explained that God's love would give her a baby, and people would call him the Messiah - someone who would teach us to share God's love with the world.

The angel departed - leaving Mary excited about the news of the baby. She went and told Joseph - the man she was to marry - all about it. Joseph didn't understand everything, but later he had a dream and an angel told Joseph that he didn't need to worry. Everything Mary said was God's hope and that he was chosen to take care of Mary and the baby.

But shortly after the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, who ruled over the land, was always worried about getting money from the people. He decided to count every person in the country so he would know who should pay him. He sent an order everyone - including Mary and Joseph - had to go back to their home town to be counted. Joseph came from a faraway town called Bethlehem.

Even though Mary was close to the time she would have her baby, she and Joseph had to travel 90 miles to Bethlehem. Although tired and weary, Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph knocked on every door in the town, looking for a place to stay - but everywhere was full of people. Each time they were given the same answer. Lots of people had come down to be counted, so the whole town was full - there were so many families who had to find rooms. Mary and Joseph nearly gave up, but then they the house of another family member.

Joseph desperately asked for help. But the only space he could offer was his stable where they kept all the animals. They thanked him for his generosity. At last they had somewhere for the baby to be born. So Mary and Joseph went to stay in the stable.

It was a very difficult place to bring a new life into the world. Dirty and smelly, but Mary and Joseph made the best of it.

When the baby was born, they wrapped little Jesus in the clothes they had. They didn't have a bed for him, so they placed him in a manger - a trough that is used to feed animals. I'm not sure this was what Mary was expecting. The angel said Jesus would be called Son of the Most High. But as she looked at the sleeping baby in the manger, she knew that he was a precious gift.

That same night, in some fields nearby, a group of shepherds were watching over their flocks of sheep. It was night-time, and they were surprised when an angel appeared. and they were terrified! You see, these shepherds were just ordinary people doing their work. They weren't considered very important. Nobody took much notice of them. So they were surprised when the angel spoke to them.

The angel told them not to be afraid, they had good news. Their good news was for people across the world. 'Today in Bethlehem the Messiah has been born,' explained the angel. 'You will find a baby lying in a manger.' Well, as if this wasn't enough for the humble shepherds to take in, the angel was soon joined by a huge group of angels, called the heavenly host. The angels said: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth.'

The shepherds decided that the best thing was to go to Bethlehem, as the angel said. They wanted to see what had happened – what the Lord had told them.

So they hurried off to seek Mary and Joseph. And the baby – which they knew they would find lying in a manger. They found the stable where the young couple were – and the shepherds went in to see the baby in the manger.

When they had seen him, the shepherds told everyone they met about the child. People were amazed to hear their story. Are you amazed too? The Son of God, born in a stable?

Mary, who had seen it all happen, kept these things close to her heart. The shepherds went back to their flocks.

Sometime later more people came to visit. But they didn't come straight to the stable. These three important people – sometimes called Kings, sometimes Wise Men – were Magi. They were very clever people, who knew a lot about the stars.

They had studied stories about Kings that would be born and they saw a star that they believed was a sign that the king was born, But they'd made a mistake. They followed the star to worship the new king. And where would a king be born? Yes, they went straight to the palace! But they didn't find him there. Then they saw the bright star ahead of them again and followed it until it stopped.

The Wise Men saw the child and they worshipped him. Each of them brought a special gift to give to the baby Jesus.

Each of them gave Jesus a precious gift, and that's why we give gifts at Christmas – particularly to people who don't have lots of gifts. The magi went home even wiser, realizing that precious things are worth far more than money – and are not always found in the richest places.