

Bethlehem!

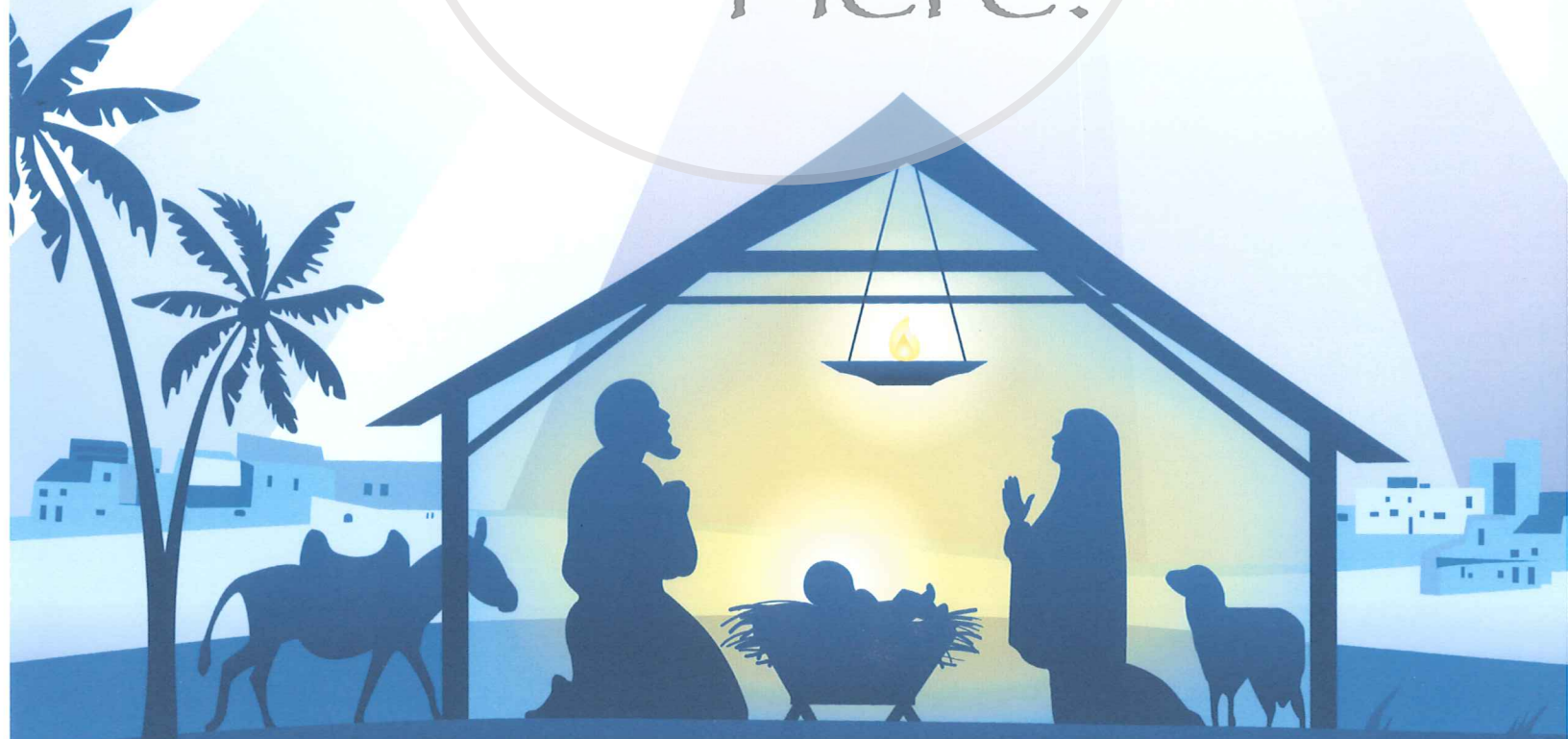
...Nothing

Ever

Happens

Here!

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...Nothing Ever Happens Here!

Bethlehem!

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...Nothing

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Happens

Here!

1





Nothing Ever Happens Here

I live in a place that is boring and old.
Time slides by slowly, always has I am told.
It's merely another star filled night.
Bethlehem heat makes me cranky, oh quite!

Today is just another dust filled day,
I'm wasting my time, I have nothing to do.
I'm hanging around, I'm waiting for you.
Nothing happens. I'm sad and I'm blue.

I'm leading my camel to Bethlehem's well
Each day I walk slower, there's nothing to tell.

I'm lonely and restless in this sad little place.
If God only knew the look on my face,
I'm certain He would make my day bright.
I wonder if God even cares for my plight.

Bethlehem-Nothing Ever Happens Here.
I'm sick of this tiring, age-old place.
All I see is an ancient olive tree sway,
Wishing I could find a spot
Where excitement is the game we play .

I'm sitting here wondering why
My sad little life is not filled with cheer.
Missing joy every day.
What can I do?
Nothing Ever Happens Here.



BETHLEHEM ...NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE

Two bored citizens of ancient Bethlehem wander into your church. They wonder why nothing ever happens in Bethlehem. It's the same old hometown complaint we hear today. Everyone else's town seems more exciting than their own.

Little do these Bethlehem citizens realize that God is about to do something amazing in their hometown. They complain about everything, even as they meet some pretty exciting people. Of course, our Bethlehem visitors are unaware of the miracle taking place in a village inn down the street...until...well, we won't spoil the ending. Enjoy the journey to "Bethlehem-Nothing Ever Happens Here".



Gather your church family
to discover God's exciting plan
for little Bethlehem of Judea!

*"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me
to be ruler in Israel.
His goings forth are from long ago,
from the days of eternity."
Micah 5:2*



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BETHLEHEM

...Nothing Ever Happens Here



BETHLEHEM... is an All church Christmas program. Feature folks of all ages from Nursery through Adults. Love to laugh? Need a reminder of what makes Christmas special? This is the Christmas program for you! Easy to prepare and...**NO MEMORIZATION!**

BETHLEHEM...is rehearsed in small groups with their Sunday School teacher/leader. Gather the whole group for a final rehearsal and the program is ready to take to the stage.

BETHLEHEM...is sprinkled with humor and inspiration. Tell the story of Jesus' birth featuring two bored citizens of ancient Bethlehem. They are certain that their village has been forgotten by God. Nothing ever happens in Bethlehem and nothing ever will. These two people are about to experience the surprise of their lives as they meet a series of Christmas people who have a different view of good old Bethlehem!

BETHLEHEM...audience participate as they sing Christmas Carols. Special music performed by local talent is sprinkled throughout the event (as the music team desires) so everyone becomes part of the fun as Jesus' story unfolds on your stage.

BETHLEHEM... concludes with a "Celebrate Bethlehem" Party. Decorate, serve delicious desserts or party sandwiches and play Christmas music. It becomes a lasting memory for everyone!

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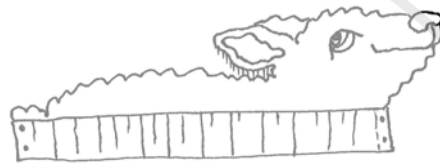
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THE CHRISTMAS DIRECTOR

Organize a humorous, inspirational Christmas celebration. No age limits! Train teams who take charge of their segment.

Make program copies and assign segments to Sunday School classes, church committees, small groups of friends and willing individuals who agree to become part of *"Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here"*.



Follow Directions. Ask team leaders to organize their group complete with props and costumes. Be prepared to help but for the most part the leaders should handle their material. The result is a tremendous reminder of why Jesus entered our pitiful, little world. The story of Bethlehem is powerful and changes lives every time it is told.

Prepare Your Heart. For some church members, holiday programs presented by your church comprise most, if not all, of their Christmas celebration. Do it for the Lord! Do it for those folks!

One Step At A Time. It is possible that you are thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside and dive into this appealing presentation of Christmas as experienced by two bored citizens of Bethlehem. They are in for the surprise of their lives!



Delegate. Sunday School teachers and group leaders become involved by preparing their people for the program. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks.

Practice A Positive Approach. It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal preparations, parties and travel to make Christmas sparkle.

Statements like, "We can't do it", "We never did it this way", or "No one wants to do it", are inappropriate. If the Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!

Pray! Take details before the Lord and then-RELAX! God is in control. Carry out the tasks at hand.

Plan! Make a program copy and mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt the material. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide parts and combine parts when necessary. Give teachers and participants copies of their segment in a colorful folder.

Prepare! Hopefully you have ordered *Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here* with more than a month lead time. Assign responsibility for small group practice to each teacher/leader.

No Memorization! Some churches enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. Memorization means lead time is longer and intensive rehearsal is essential.

This is an ALL CHURCH Production!

Involve adults and readers,
musicians and leaders.

Adapt the program to use
available number of participants.





AT A GLANCE

This is a program sample. Insert Christmas Carols and special Music wherever it is appropriate for your group. Consider the total time as you plan music options. Adapt segments depending on the number of participants. Eliminate segments if necessary or combine as needed.

PRELUDE
PROCESSION

AUDIENCE SINGS: "O Little Town Of Bethlehem"

ACT I: Boring Old Bethlehem

Nursery: Joseph Comes to Bethlehem

Preschool: Village Innkeeper

Kindergarten: Sweet Mary Arrives

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC

ACT II: Bethlehem People

Grades One and Two: Shepherds!

Grades Three and Four: Meeting Angels!

Grades Five and Six: Wise Men From the East

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC

ACT III: A Star Is Born

Middle School: Where Nothing Ever Happens

High School: The Star Of Bethlehem

Adults: The Promise!

CONCLUSION
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

IT'S TIME FOR A "CELEBRATE BETHLEHEM" PARTY!





Adapting

'Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here'

Adapt the program to fit your church needs. *'Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here'* lasts between forty five minutes to one hour, depending upon carols and special music. *'Celebrate Bethlehem'* Party is not included in time frame.

Small Church

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts. For a combined junior/senior high school class, eliminate one presentation and feature your favorite segment. OR, use the same few students to present both segments. Teens and adults are crucial to the small church presentation. Some people participate several times.

Medium Church

Adaptations take the form of personal preference. Choose segments you like best. The goal is to tell the Christmas story so don't leave out anything important!

Large Church

Use as many people as possible. Organize snack makers, servers, prop masters, sound/lighting staff and others who make the program exciting.

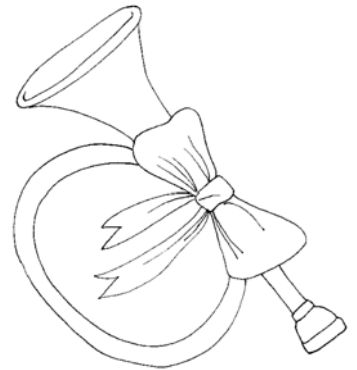
Celebrate Bethlehem Party

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or group of friends to complete party plans. They decorate, plan and prepare food and clean up.



Christmas Music

Coordinate music with music director, organist/pianist. Choose favorite Christmas Carols or follow our suggestions. Include words in a printed program or on a screen.



Carols

Sing traditional Christmas Carols. Practice during Sunday School Opening three weeks prior to performance. It may be fun to choose contemporary Christmas choruses from music you own and enjoy. The entire audience sings this music.

New Music

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES is pleased to present three original Christmas songs composed by Jonathan Miller, GLORY SOUND STUDIOS! Use the songs as desired (solo, group, audience).

Sheet music, words only sheets and double channel CD (sample voice + accompaniment only). Call 1-888-236-5433 or order from our website: www.cemlife.com Listen to the songs in our MUSIC catalog.

Special Music

Feature local church talent. These musical options are NOT in the existing program. Choose music from your own collection. Consider time limitations during planning stages.

VOCAL SOLO
VOCAL GROUP
CHILDREN/ADULT CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO



Stage And Props

"Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here" is a unique presentation using a minimum of props and staging. Each small group carries personal props on stage.

Set Up. Christmas trees, Nativity, twinkle lights, poinsettias and candles already in the sanctuary add to the festive atmosphere. Leave them in place.

Staging. The stage should resemble the ancient Bethlehem street outside the stable at that famous Village Inn. Set up the stable scene at one side of the stage. Center stage is reserved for the two main characters who interact with each small group. The side of the stage where groups enter should contain a hand printed sign pointing to...BETHLEHEM.

Seating. Reserve class/group seating. Assign assistants to sit with young children.

Sound System. Place two or three microphone stands across the stage. If personal microphones are available, attach them to the characters. Speakers must be heard clearly. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

Lighting. Light the existing decorations in the sanctuary but keep the overhead lights off. Place small spot lights on the floor shining up at each microphone.



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Costumes

"Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here" requires simple costuming. When costuming a large group, ask each participant to prepare their attire. Parents of young students may be willing to supply necessary clothing. Follow specific directions for each program segment.



Small groups are supposedly arriving at the scene of the birth of the Messiah, Jesus. Each group wears simple Holy Land costumes. Follow specific directions in the small group segments.

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Holy Land Pattern Suggestions

Pillow Cases: Cut a neck hole in the top of the pillowcase. Cut the front to the neck hole. Cut arm holes. This makes a long vest. Plaid or striped flannel pillowcases work great for little shepherds and wise men. Don't worry about hemming anything!

Fabric: Two wide fabric strips (one over each shoulder) crossed across the back and front, tied with a sash makes a great costume.

Head Wraps: A fabric square over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the head makes a headpiece. Large scrunchies (like girls wear around pony tails) hold the fabric tightly.

Bathrobes: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for headdresses and sashes to complete the costume.



Angels: Use white cotton or silver lame/ fabric. Angels may wear wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel garland taped in a circle on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Angels may wear face/hair glitter for that "extra sparkle"! Bare feet or sandals!

Student Ushers

Once everyone is costumed to perfection, recruit angels, shepherds and wise men ushers who distribute programs and help seat people.

Place students at each door and coach them to say, "Welcome to Bethlehem. May I show you to your seat?" Or, "Where would you like to sit?" It is an added personal touch that is much appreciated by many audience members.

Meet with ushers to explain how to greet guests, especially if students have never done this. Assign a team of two to a specific door.

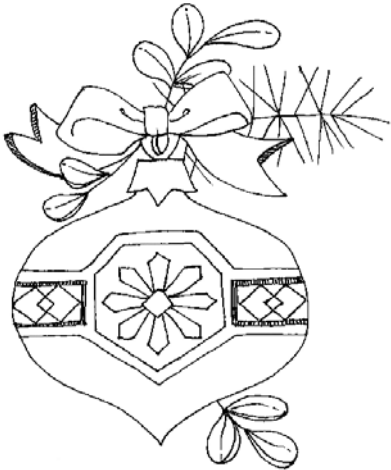
After The Show

Ask participants to remain in costume for the 'Celebrate Bethlehem' Party. They serve beverages, greet guests and wander through the party area while people eat and talk.



Publicity

Publicize *'Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here'* through church communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.



Church Bulletin And Newsletter

Place an announcement in November and December newsletters. If you plan the *'Celebrate Bethlehem'* Party, let people know there will be a Christmas party, including food, following the program.

Local Newspaper

Include an announcement with church holiday programming publicity. Talk to a reporter to see if a feature article is possible. Include pictures!

Television And Radio

Advertise on your television cable channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service. It may be one more avenue of great publicity. Check it out!

Christmas Card Invitations

Christmas Card invitations are effective for families who send their children to Sunday School but are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.



Teachers

Pray! Prepare! Present!

Adapt 'Bethlehem..Nothing Ever Happens Here'
To Fit Your Group Needs

Involve As Many Students As Possible

More students than speaking parts? Divide existing parts. Less students than speaking parts? Combine existing parts. Assign specific people the tasks of holding visuals, carrying props and costuming.

Highlight Individual Parts

Do you desire to have students memorize speaking parts or read them? If reading, print scripts on white copy paper. Highlight individual parts using a colorful highlighter.

Practice With Your Small Group

Use the first few minutes of Sunday School class each week to practice and discuss costuming and props. Assign specific parts and tasks. Adapt the segment to fit your group. Use the people available by adjusting the parts to fit the size of the group.

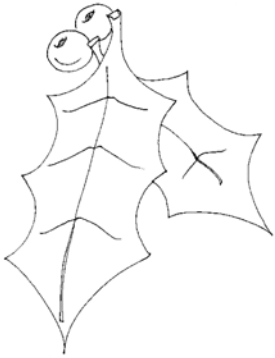
Communicate With Parents

Let parents know when to have their children at rehearsals. Invite parents to attend the performance and be sure they know what their child must bring. Collect props and store them in the classroom.



More For Teachers --

Your Leadership Is Valued!



Show Up With A Smile

Meet your small group. Dress in appropriate costumes, line up and enter the sanctuary as directed. Sit with your group in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your speaking part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they have problems. Stage fright is not uncommon!

After The Program

Stay for the 'Celebrate Bethlehem' Party. Collect props and materials before attending the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle and enjoy the experience with your students and their families.

If You Need Help

The Christmas Director is available but you are responsible to have your group ready to participate. The program comes together with little formal large group rehearsal.

Enjoy The Experience

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch the lives of children and adults. Take time to enjoy your small part of the bigger picture. The Bethlehem Story is classic and life changing. The spiritual experience is amazing!



JUST A WORD ABOUT MEMORIZATION!



Throughout the program we mention that memorization is not necessary and that is true. This is designed to be a full church, inter-generational experience. Base people organization on Sunday School groups but ask friends, older adults and people who may not participate normally. It makes the event so much more fun!

If you have a limited amount of time to practice with your group, consider allowing the participants to carry their parts on stage and read them. Practice sufficiently in small group settings so that everyone is familiar with their part and can speak with enthusiasm even though reading it.

Carry parts on stage in creative ways. Depending on which segments are being performed, scripts can be backed with colorful paper, decorated with appropriate images.

Shepherds: Sheep
Angels: Sparkling glitter
Wise Men: Crowns, wrapped gifts
Main Characters: Brown paper bags wrinkled to look old

Or, just make copies of the segments that each person can hold on regular paper. After a few minutes, the audience does not notice and it does not affect the quality of the program at all.

Some churches love the process of rehearsal and memorization. If that is true in your situation, take the time to stage the program and memorize all parts! Whatever you choose, this is a great Christmas experience. Have fun!



Main Characters ~

Bethlehem Boys



Two people portray The Bethlehem Boys. (If **boys/men are not available, these characters can be The Bethlehem Girls**) Choose two people who enjoy being on stage. They hold the program story line together. Adults may be a good choice or teens who are confident. The only requirement is that they have 'attitude'.

How To Be A Bethlehem Boy

Filled with attitude, the Bethlehem Boys lead groups on and off stage for each segment. As small groups tell the story of Jesus' birth, their disheartened criticism begins to change. Their understanding of the real meaning of Christmas is the foundation of the program.

They are funny, sarcastic and totally misinformed; yet they treat each small group with respect. Questions are asked and answered. Life begins to change because of these spur of the moment encounters with the very people who visit the stable and discover Baby Jesus.

**NO MEMORIZATION!
PLACE SCRIPT IN A HOMEMADE SCROLL.**

What To Wear

Have fun being ancient Bethlehem citizens. Dress in simple Holy Land costumes. Follow costume suggestions in the program or design your own outfit from available materials.



STAGING

*The stage should be set up in three sections.
Keep props as simple as possible.*



Section One

A small area at one side should contain a hand printed road post sign: BETHLEHEM. Print on brown cardboard and attach to a post. The sign must be large enough to have more words printed on it by one of the characters at the beginning of the program. (Nothing Ever Happens Here.) All small groups enter the stage from this side.

Section Two

Center stage is the area where the Bethlehem Boys greet small groups and characters heading to the stable in Bethlehem. This should be a large spot so everyone can comfortably be seen by the audience.

Section Three

The third staging area should be at the other end of the platform and represents the nativity in the Bethlehem stable. This is where the groups go to see Baby Jesus and worship. Set up benches, greenery, manger, seat for Mary, sheep, hay, star, etc. to represent the traditional nativity scene.

MEMORIZATION: No one has to memorize their parts unless desired. Think of a creative way for people to carry their portion of the script. Use crinkled brown bags as a backing or tan paper. Some of the parts can look rolled up like an old scroll.



BETHLEHEM

...NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE

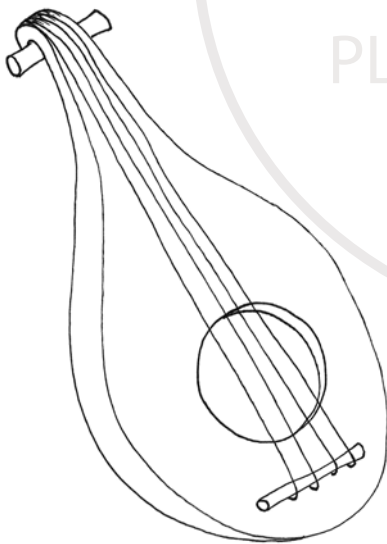
The Prelude

Church musicians (organ/piano/keyboard) play Christmas music as the audience gathers.

If using our original music, consider having the same songs played so the audience hears the melodies and become familiar with the choruses.



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The Procession

Gather costumed participants in an outer room. Dim sanctuary lights. Existing holiday lights are left burning.

As participants file to their seats, the audience sings a Christmas Carol of your choice or the group may sing the theme song if you have purchased it.

SUGGESTION: Begin this program with the audience singing "O Little Town Of Bethlehem".



BETHLEHEM ...NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE

ACT I: Boring Old Bethlehem

One costumed person (TITUS) enters from the back of the room. He enters slowly, yawning and shuffling his feet as if kicking stones. Once on stage, he hand prints a message at the bottom of a BETHLEHEM sign...



Nothing Ever Happens Here!

TITUS sits on the edge of the stage and in a bored voice speaks:

I live in a place that is boring and old.
Time slides by slowly, always has I am told.
It's merely another star filled night.
Bethlehem heat makes me cranky, oh quite!

Today's just another dust filled day,
I'm wasting my time, I have nothing to do.
I'm hanging around, I'm waiting for you
Nothing happens. I'm sad and I'm blue.

I'm leading my camel to Bethlehem's well
Each day I walk slower, there's nothing to tell.

I'm lonely and restless in this sad little place.
If God only knew the look on my face,
I'm certain He would make my day bright.
I wonder if God even cares for my plight.



Bethlehem–Nothing Ever Happens Here.
I'm sick of this tiring, age old atmosphere.
All I see is an ancient olive tree sway,
Wishing I could find a spot
Where excitement is the game we play .

I'm sitting here wondering why
My sad little life is not filled with cheer.
Missing joy every day.
What can I do?
Nothing Ever Happens Here.

TIMOTHY ENTERS AND CHECKS OUT THE HAND WRITTEN MESSAGE ON THE BETHLEHEM SIGN POST:

TIMOTHY: Hey! Titus, what are you doing?

TITUS: I'm expressing myself.

TIMOTHY: Well, you keep that up and you are going to "express yourself" right into Bethlehem's village jail.

TITUS: Not if you don't tell anybody I did it, Mister perfect Timothy!

TIMOTHY: I never said I was perfect. I'm just....concerned.

TITUS: Well, don't be concerned. I am writing the truth. *Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here!* ...And as far as I am concerned, nothing important or fun will EVER happen in Bethlehem.

TIMOTHY: You don't know that, friend. Why, something could happen today that will surprise the sandals off of you.

TITUS: (*Admiring his work....Stand and dust it off.*) Highly unlikely. It's so boring in Bethlehem that even the shepherds headed for the hills. (*Pointing off stage...*) Look at them out there on the hillside. Every shepherd looks bored. Even the sheep are sleeping.



TIMOTHY: I must admit it's pretty quiet around here. The Roman census should perk things up. I heard lots of home town folks will be arriving to sign their names. Maybe something will happen when they get here.

TITUS: Old Caesar Augustus, sitting on his throne, is making all the Jews travel to their hometowns for this listing. I smell fresh bread baking at the village oven. That's a sure sign of company coming. Who cares? Means nothing to me. I won't get to eat any of it.

TIMOTHY: *(Reading...)* *Bethlehem, Nothing Ever Happens Here.* Maybe you are right. I can't wait until I can get out of here. There! I said it. Maybe I'll head to Jerusalem. I heard there are lots of jobs in the big city.

TITUS: Yeah, me too. We'll go together. I gotta get out of this boring old village. Nothing ever happens here!

TIMOTHY: Look! Here comes someone. And the village children are with him. Let's see what's going on.

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NURSERY

Joseph Comes To Bethlehem

ACTORS: Nursery Teacher, Children (Birth-Age 3), Parents, Joseph (teen or adult)

Teacher, parents and children (Birth-Age 3) arrive on stage. Everyone is dressed in Holy Land costume. Each child carries one artificial flower to give to Joseph. Divide speaking parts between available participants. Walking with them is one person (any age) who is Joseph, arriving in Bethlehem. NO MEMORIZATION NECESSARY

TEACHER: I think we can help you, Joseph. See? Here is the sign post. You have finally arrived in Bethlehem.

JOSEPH: I certainly appreciate your directions. What does that sign say? "Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here." Is that true?

PARENT: Oh, those rotten kids are at it again! Who wrote that on the BETHLEHEM sign? Don't look, children. That's not true!

PARENT: We *do* like the quiet life in Bethlehem. I wouldn't say "nothing" every happens here. In fact, we are about to be invaded by throngs of guests from every area of the country signing their names on the census.

JOSEPH: Like me! I am of the family of King David. You do know that David was born in Bethlehem, right?

PARENT: King David is our claim to fame. We tell our children stories of David who killed Goliath, ran from King Saul and became King.



JOSEPH: Your children are beautiful. My Mary is about to have a baby too. Would any of you volunteer to help us find a place to stay while we are in Bethlehem?

TEACHER: You can try the Village Inn. Old Innkeeper McHamus usually has a room or two. We are taking our children on a picnic so we can't come with you.

PARENT: We would like to welcome you to Bethlehem. Here are some flowers for your Mary and her new baby. Children, give our new friend, Joseph a flower.

EACH CHILD/BABY HANDS JOSEPH A FLOWER THEY HAVE BEEN CARRYING WHILE ON STAGE.

JOSEPH: How kind of you. I am sure these flowers will cheer Mary up. She's not feeling well. I think that baby is coming soon.

PARENT: How exciting! I hope you can find a quiet place just in case the baby surprises you.

JOSEPH: Me too! This is one time I hope your village sign is right, "Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here".

EVERYONE LAUGHS!

ENCOURAGE THE LITTLE ONES TO WAVE GOODBYE TO JOSEPH AS THEY LEAVE THE STAGE.

JOSEPH REMAINS ON STAGE.



THE BETHLEHEM BOYS AND JOSEPH

JOSEPH: Hello there! Can you direct me to the Village Inn?

TITUS: We could but we're bored so we're not really interested in helping anyone right now.

JOSEPH: I really need help. I'm from Nazareth and I must find a safe place where our baby can be born.

TITUS: I suggest you get out of Bethlehem. Nothing ever happens here and nothing ever will.

TIMOTHY: Titus! At least be polite to our guest. I am sorry, sir. If you look in that direction (*Point*), you will see our Village Innkeeper coming along the path. That is the very man who will give you a room.

TITUS: I doubt it. Look at all those little kids with him. He looks busy to me. He looks upset. I wouldn't bother him.

JOSEPH: Thank you. I am forever grateful. By the way, Titus, something just might happen in Bethlehem this very day. You never know.



PRESCHOOL VILLAGE INNKEEPER

ACTORS: Preschool Teacher, Children (Ages 4-5), Innkeeper (any age), Joseph. Everyone is dressed in Holy Land costume. NO MEMORIZATION.

Teacher, children and Innkeeper walk down the center aisle with little children raising their hands like in school and shouting "Me! Me! Me!" all the way to the stage. The Innkeeper is covering his ears and tries to get away from the little children.

TEACHER: *(Helping all children onto the stage...)*
Wait just a moment, kind sir! We only want a moment of your time! We need a place to stay. With all the visitors in Bethlehem, there is nowhere to sleep. Look at these precious faces. How can you say no to them?

INNKEEPER: *(Loudly...)* No!

TEACHER: We'll sing for our supper! Listen to this. You won't be able to send us away once you hear this song. Smile and sing children!

TEACHER AND CHILDREN SING A CAPELLA:

To the Tune "The Wheels On The Bus"

The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo

Moo-moo-moo! Moo-moo-moo.

The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo.

All through the night.

The hay on the ground went crunch-crunch-crunch (repeat)

All through the night.



The Baby in the manger went waa-waa-waa (repeat)
All through the night.

His mother, Mary, went ssh-ssh-ssh (repeat)
All through the night.

TEACHER: Aren't they precious? I am certain you have a room for this little group. We won't take up much space.

INNKEEPER: I have told you that I do not have ANY space in the Inn! There is NO ROOM at the Inn! Go away! Sing to the Innkeeper on the other side of Bethlehem. Trust me, it's a short walk and I won't have to hear you whine and complain.

TEACHER AND CHILDREN LEAVE THE STAGE.
THEY PRETEND TO CRY OUT LOUD.

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JOSEPH AND THE INNKEEPER



Joseph and McHamus, The Innkeeper are alone on stage with the Bethlehem Boys listening in the background.

JOSEPH: *(Standing up straighter and dusting himself off...)* Ahem. Mr. McHamus? May I have a word with you? I have heard you are the best Innkeeper in Bethlehem and....

INNKEEPER: No!

JOSEPH: But you don't know what I want to ask!

INNKEEPER: No!

JOSEPH: But...

INNKEEPER: No!



JOSEPH: (Take a deep breath and talk real fast....) But... my wife is going to have a baby any minute. We are in Bethlehem all the way from Nazareth for the census. We have no place to stay. I will pay you good money. You have to help us. Please, Mr. McHamus, Help us. You will be God's servant and, trust me on this, EVERYONE will know you when we write our story in God's Book.

INNKEEPER: No! (Change of attitude....) Wait a minute. EVERY-one will know my name? You're going to put my name in a book?

JOSEPH: Well, maybe they won't know your exact name but they will read that an extremely kind Bethlehem Innkeeper gave Mary and Joseph a place to stay so our Messiah, Jesus, can be born into this world.

INNKEEPER: (Thinking aloud....) My name, Innkeeper McHamus, the kindest man in Bethlehem, will be in a book that people will read. They will say, "What a wonderful man! We should go over to that Inn and stay there when we are in Bethlehem". That's good marketing.

JOSEPH: Whatever you say, sir. Good marketing. Now let's get down to business. I don't have much time. Which room can we rent?

INNKEEPER: Come with me. I will show you what I have.

**INNKEEPER AND JOSEPH WALK TO THE STAGE AREA
WHERE THE STABLE SCENE IS SET UP.**

INNKEEPER: It doesn't look like much but it's all I have. Fresh hay, warm animals, even a manger box you can use as a baby cradle. I'll bring fresh water and I'll only charge you....half price!

JOSEPH: (Quickly....) I'll take it!

THE TWO MEN SHAKE HANDS AND STAND QUIETLY IN THE STABLE.



THE BETHLEHEM BOYS



Walk together to center stage as if coming out of hiding.

TIMOTHY: That was good! See? Something **is** happening in Bethlehem already. Little children sing.

TITUS: ...and cry.

TIMOTHY: Old McHamus was tricked out of a room. That has to count for something exciting. He never lets that happen.

TITUS: Actually it was the animal stable. I doubt he would have rented it to anyone else.

TIMOTHY: Joseph looks pretty pleased about the deal he made with the Innkeeper.

TITUS: *(Yawning...)* Bo-ring.

TIMOTHY: I don't know about you, but I'm not moving from this spot. Something is going to happen in Bethlehem and I'm going to be here to see it.

TITUS: I'll stick around with you but wake me when something really big happens. *(Pretend to sleep.)* And it better be good!



KINDERGARTEN SWEET MARY ARRIVES

ACTORS: Teacher, Kindergarten children, Mary (any age)

Teacher, children and Mary are dressed in Holy Land costume. The children tenderly help Mary get on the stage. They pat her arm and let her lean on them while on stage.

NO MEMORIZATION

TEACHER: How exactly did you lose your husband, Mary? Bethlehem is a very small village. It's hard to lose a man here.

MARY: *(Taking puffs of breath, like a baby is coming)* I don't know how I lost him. *(Calling...)* Joseph! Joseph!

TEACHER: Children, until we find Joseph, let's make Mary feel better. She's so far from Nazareth and she doesn't know anyone in Bethlehem. What can we do to help her?

ALL CHILDREN: *(In Unison)* We can sing to her!

MARY: That sounds wonderful! Maybe Joseph will hear you and will find me. Sing, children, sing!

TAKE ME OUT TO THE STABLE

(Tune: "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" -Sing A Capella!)

Take me out to the stable, out to where Christ was born.
Show me the manger He used for His bed.
Show me the sweet doves who cooed by His head.
And let's look way up at the heavens, look for the star where He lay.
For it's why-we-have Christmas morning,
It's Jesus' Birthday!



OPTION: Traditional "Away In The Manger"

MARY: I feel better already. You have been wonderful friends. I think I see Joseph over there. Is he standing with that man?

TEACHER: Why yes! That is our Bethlehem Village Innkeeper, Old McHamus standing in the stable. You can meet Joseph there.

MARY: The way I feel right now, even if I have to stay in that stable, I'll be grateful. Goodbye friends!

MARY AND CHILDREN WAVE TO EACH OTHER.
MARY MEETS JOSEPH, BOWS TO THE INNKEEPER.

MARY SITS DOWN IN THE STABLE WITH JOSEPH STANDING NEAR.
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN LEAVE THE STAGE.

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AUDIENCE SINGS
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
OF YOUR CHOICE.

ADD SPECIAL MUSIC AS DESIRED.



ACT II: Bethlehem People

BETHLEHEM BOYS

Sit on the edge of the stage and look over at the people getting settled in the on stage stable.



TIMOTHY: I might be wrong but I think things are getting interesting in Bethlehem. And you think nothing ever happens in Bethlehem.

TITUS: I'm not convinced, Timothy. So far we have a cranky innkeeper, a stranger who just paid to sleep in a stable and a gal who is going to be pretty upset when she figures out where she's staying tonight.

TIMOTHY: Hey, look! The shepherds are heading this way. Who ever saw shepherds leaving the hillside. Now that's pretty interesting.

TITUS: We'll see. We'll see.



GRADES ONE AND TWO SHEPHERDS!



ACTORS: Grades 1 and 2 students

Children are dressed as shepherds. Carry sheep. Enlarge the sheep graphic to make a few cardboard sheep which shepherds carry. Shepherds walk from the back of the room to the stable. Divide speaking parts between available students. NO MEMORIZATION

SHEPHERD #1: Where are we going?

SHEPHERD #2: To the City of David.

SHEPHERD #3: The angels said a baby is born today 'in the City of David'. I know that's the other name for Bethlehem. It's where King David was born.

SHEPHERD #4: That's the sign for Bethlehem! We are in the right place. Or, are we? "Nothing Ever Happens Here"? This can't be right!

SHEPHERD #5: Look! There's a stable over there. That's where we should go. What a story we have to tell!

SHEPHERD #6: Did you see the angels? I saw angels! Beautiful angels!

SHEPHERD #7: I saw them and I heard them singing. I'm just a shepherd. Why would angels come and talk to shepherds?

**SHEPHERDS SURROUND MARY,
JOSEPH AND THE MANGER.
SOME STAND AND SOME SIT ON THE FLOOR.**



SHEPHERD #8: Shalom! We are shepherds from the hillside.

SHEPHERD #9: We saw angels, lots of angels.

SHEPHERD #10: And they talked and sang to us. The whole sky lit up. They told us to come to Bethlehem to see our Savior, the Messiah.

SHEPHERD #11: They said we would find a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.

SHEPHERD #12: We got here as fast as we could to see for ourselves what God told us.

SHEPHERD #13: And here you are! The baby in the manger is God's Son, our Savior and Messiah!

SHEPHERD #14: We have to tell everyone we meet what the angels said about this child.

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**SOME SHEPHERDS STAY IN PLACE--STANDING AND KNEELING--
FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM.
THE REST OF THE SHEPHERDS RUN BACK THE AISLE
AND TAKE THEIR PLACES BACK IN THEIR SEATS.**



GRADES THREE AND FOUR MEETING ANGELS!

ACTORS: Grades 3-4 students, Bethlehem Boys



All students dress as angels. White outfits with tinsel halos and wings (or not) work well. Divide speaking parts between available students. NO MEMORIZATION

ANGEL #1: *(To Bethlehem Boys...)* Peace be with you from God, our Heavenly Father.

TITUS: Who are you? I don't believe this!

TIMOTHY: Nothing ever happens in Bethlehem, huh Titus? You are talking to an angel.

TITUS: But, but, I'm not a shepherd.

ANGEL #2: We want to be sure you understand that something very big is happening in Bethlehem today!

ANGEL #3: Don't be afraid. We're here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide:

ANGEL #4: A Savior has just been born in David's town, A Savior who is Messiah and Lord.

ANGEL #5: This is what to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.



TIMOTHY: Hey, that sounds a lot like what the shepherds heard.

TITUS: Ssh, Timothy. Something big is happening in Bethlehem. I don't want to miss it. Did you hear? There's a baby in that manger and it's God's gift to the world, just like He promised us long ago.

ALL ANGELS TOGETHER:

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men!

SOME OR ALL OF THE ANGELS
QUIETLY MOVE TO THE MANGER
AND FILL IN AT THE BACK AND SIDES.
THEY FOLD THEIR ARMS AND HANDS
AND BOW THEIR HEADS.

THEY REMAIN IN PLACE FOR THE
REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM.

TITUS: I am seeing a miracle, right here in Bethlehem. Did you see it, Timothy? Did you see angels? Do you see shepherds worshipping at that stable manger?

TIMOTHY: I see it Titus and I believe we are seeing a miracle.



GRADES FIVE AND SIX WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

ACTORS: All Grade 5-6 students, Bethlehem Boys



Students dress as wise men. Each student carries a gift representing gold, frankincense or myrrh. They should wear crowns. Divide speaking parts between the students available.
NO MEMORIZATION

WISE MAN #1: (*Bowing...*) Pardon me, do you live in Bethlehem?

TIMOTHY: Yes, I have lived here all my life.

WISE MAN #2: Is that sign post correct? "Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here"?

TIMOTHY: Well, it's not exactly correct. We thought nothing ever happened here but we were wrong. Big things are happening here tonight.

WISE MAN #3: We saw His star in the East and we have traveled far to worship him. Where is the king?

TITUS: We think he's the baby in that manger. Shepherds and angels have been praising God and worshipping over there at the manger.

WISE MAN #4: We asked around Jerusalem and discovered Bethlehem is right under the star we have been following. We asked "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" Everybody we talked to said Bethlehem. King Herod said he wants to worship the king too.



TIMOTHY: Herod? I wouldn't believe that man. He's up to no good and may want to hurt this baby.

WISE MAN #5: We have already made plans to go home a different way. First we must present our gifts to the child. Is that the place?

TIMOTHY: That is the place.

WISE MAN #6: Just out of curiosity, who was the wise guy who thought that nothing ever happens in Bethlehem?

TITUS: I admit it, it's me. I never thought anything like this would happen here. It's always so boring around here.

WISE MAN #7: Didn't you read the words of your own prophet, Micah? He said:

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me
to be ruler in Israel.
His goings forth are from long ago,
from the days of eternity.
Micah 5:2

TITUS: I've never been much of a reader.

WISE MAN #8: I guess you're more of a sign maker.

TITUS: Not anymore.

**WISE MEN APPROACH THE MANGER,
PLACE THEIR GIFTS AROUND IT AND KNEEL TO WORSHIP.**

***THEY REMAIN IN PLACE FOR THE
REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM.***

**AUDIENCE SINGS A CHRISTMAS CAROL
Suggestion: "We Three Kings Of Orient Are"
ADD SPECIAL MUSIC AS DESIRED.**



ACT III: A Star Is Born!

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Where Nothing Ever Happens

ACTORS: All middle school students become paparazzi reporters.

Dress in Holy Land costumes. Become news reporters for the "Bethlehem Star News", conducting interviews with the people in the stable. Carry small rolled scrolls and feather pens or old pencils. (It might be funny to have one or more reporter wear 1940's fedora style hats with PRESS tucked in the brim.)

The reporters interact with a shepherd, angel, innkeeper, wise man, Mary and Joseph. Be sure to provide copies of this segment to those chosen to participate with this small group.

Divide speaking parts between available people. NO MEMORIZATION



REPORTER #1: *(The news group push their way on stage, past Titus and Timothy and aggressively invade the peaceful nativity scene.)* Excuse me! Excuse me! Press coming through. Give us room. 'Bethlehem Star News' on the scene.

MARY: Shhh, baby sleeping. If you come in here, wipe your feet and by all means, be quiet!

REPORTER #1: Wipe our feet? Are you aware that you are in a stable filled with animals? And it doesn't smell too good in here.



JOSEPH: (*Stepping in front of Mary protectively...*) Who ARE you people? Can't you see a baby has just been born? We are more than grateful for this stable. We need peace and quiet. Move along. Be about your business.

REPORTER #2: (*Bowing...*) We humbly apologize. We are reporters from Bethlehem's local news. We're covering stories about census visitors in Bethlehem. We are stressed and a little thoughtless. We are working with a deadline. May we speak to you and your guests?

SHEPHERD: You may speak to me. I am a Bethlehem shepherd and I have an amazing story to tell. Will it surprise you if I tell you angels spoke to me tonight?

REPORTER #2: Well, I don't want to brag but I know a lot about shepherds. Shepherds are not the most honest of citizens. If you tell me an angel spoke to you, I would not announce it in the news.

SHEPHERD: Fine with me. It's your loss. You'll miss the story of the century and have no one to blame but yourself.

REPORTER #2: I'll risk it.

WISE MAN: (*Bow formally*) I can assure you this baby has been announced by angels and he has been announced by a star. See that shining star above your head? It is not there by accident. God put it there and it guided us to this spot. We have seen your promised Messiah. We have brought gifts to honor the child.

REPORTER #3: Everybody knows 'nothing ever happens in Bethlehem'. You appear to be a wise man but evidently you are not aware that this child is one of many born here. He is no more or less important than any of the others.

WISE MAN: And you know that because....?

REPORTER #3:because NOTHING EVER HAPPENS IN BETHLEHEM! Haven't you been listening?



JOSEPH: *(Smiling....)* Oh, I guarantee you he has been listening. He and his friends are perhaps the only people who have obeyed God and traveled a long distance to see this thing that is happening in Bethlehem.

REPORTER #4: *(Turning to Mary....)* Ma'am, I hate to interrupt you but could you tell me how you came to this place to have a baby in a stable? Wouldn't your own home be more comfortable?

MARY: Certainly. It all started with an angel.

REPORTER #4: Oh, here we go again! These people are obsessed with angels. Angels, if they exist, would not waste their time in Bethlehem. Nothing ever happens here.

MARY: *(Patiently....)* It all started when an angel said I was going have a baby. He mentioned I was chosen by God. I accepted that as an honor even though I was not married. Sure enough I soon discovered I was to have a baby even though I was an innocent girl. Joseph believed me. The closer it came to giving birth, we realized Caesar Augustus was going to force us to travel to Bethlehem for the census.

REPORTER #4: Ahh, now we are getting somewhere. The census. Just when did you sign your name? How did the Romans treat you? How far did you travel and why the village of Bethlehem?

MARY: None of that matters. What matters is that when we arrived, we needed a place to stay. This kind innkeeper gave us his stable.

REPORTER #5: Innkeeper! What's the matter with you? You have a mother-to-be and you can't do any better than an animal cave? Shame on you.

INNKEEPER: *(Bowing....)* So you bring shame to me? I did my best. That is all God asks of me. See for yourself that every room, hallway and courtyard space is filled with weary travelers. At least I offer clean hay, privacy and fresh water.



REPORTER #5: Well, okay. You have a point. May I use the name of your Inn in my article?

INNKEEPER: Feel free to inform the people of Bethlehem that I am their humble servant.

REPORTER #6: Who agrees with us that nothing ever happens in Bethlehem? We want to interview THAT person.

TOTAL SILENCE ON STAGE

REPORTER #6: Come on, don't be shy. I promise to spell your name right.

TOTAL SILENCE ON STAGE

REPORTER #6: So, everyone here thinks something very special happened in Bethlehem tonight?

EVERYONE ON STAGE-IN UNISON: YES!

ANGEL: *(Step from the back of the scene to the front-center stage)* Had you been on the shepherds' hillside you would have heard for yourselves God's message to all people, even "Bethlehem Star News" Reporters.

(If there is a way to illuminate this angel, now would be the time to make him/her as bright as possible. White twinkle lights wound around the inside of the costume, outside and a floor spot light shining upward on the angel work well.)

(Raise arms while speaking....) Don't be afraid! I am here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in the City of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord. This is what you should look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger. *(If desired, quote from King James Version.)*



ALL ANGELS ON STAGE GATHER AROUND THE MAIN ANGEL: *(In Unison)*
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

**ALL ANGELS MOVE TO THE BACK OF THE SCENE,
BOW THEIR HEADS AND FOLD THEIR HANDS.**

REPORTER #7: Wow! Now there's the scoop of the night. Something DID HAPPEN IN BETHLEHEM. I got it first. I got it first. No time to waste. I have to get back to the newsroom before the deadline.

ALL REPORTERS STRUGGLE TO BEAT EACH OTHER BACK TO THE NEWSROOM SHOUTING: No, It's me! I got it first. Don't you get in my way! I got it first!

RUN OUT OF THE ROOM SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER.

JOSEPH: I guess they got a lesson in angels tonight. God has a way of getting His creation's attention.

INNKEEPER: So, nothing ever happens in Bethlehem, huh?

MARY: I have enough that happened to think on these things in my heart for a long time.

SHEPHERD: Sorry to leave so soon but we have to tell everyone we meet that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem tonight. All of Bethlehem must know something happened here.

***ALL SHEPHERDS LEAVE THE ROOM.
WALK THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE AISLE
TELLING INDIVIDUAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS,
"Jesus was born in Bethlehem!"
"God's promise, The Messiah has come!"
"We saw angels and they told us!"***

**EVERYONE QUIETLY LEAVES THE NATIVITY SCENE
EXCEPT FOR MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY.**



HIGH SCHOOL The Star Of Bethlehem

ACTORS: High School Students, Timothy, Titus

This group is dressed in modern day clothing. Divide speaking parts between available teens. They may carry their scripts with them.

NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED.

The group wanders onto the stage slowly, looking around with curiosity. Examine the BETHLEHEM sign post with the added message. Look at the Bethlehem Boys, walk to the Nativity scene where only Mary, Joseph and the Baby are present. The little family does not appear to notice this strange group at first. They are too involved with holding and hugging their new baby.

TEEN #1: Hey everybody, look at this! It's the most ridiculous sign I've ever seen. BETHLEHEM...NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE.

EVERYONE LAUGHS.

TEEN #2: Everyone knows about Bethlehem. A lot of things happened there and it all happened in one night.

TITUS: *(Sitting on the edge of the stage leaning his head on one hand...)* Tell me about it. I'm the one who made that silly sign. Can you believe it?

TEEN #3: You did that? Hey, we have a true graffiti artist here. This is the guy who made the sign.



TITUS: You don't have to laugh at me...or call me names. I don't know 'graffiti artist' but I know something very big happened in Bethlehem tonight.

TIMOTHY: I told you so. I told you so. Lots of things happen in Bethlehem.

TEEN #4: Look over there. It's the stable. How did we get here? Did we travel back in time?

TEEN #5: I see the star! I see the star! Look right above the stable. That must be the star the wise men followed.

TEEN #6: *(Thoughtfully....)* I think I see a brighter 'star'. Look! There is Baby Jesus. He's in a manger just like the angels said. They said if you look for Him you will find him.

MARY: Would you like to hold the baby? He was just born but he has already smiled at us. He's very smart.

TEEN #6: I would love to hold the baby. *(Take the baby and hold him close.)* This baby is the real star of Bethlehem. Don't you see it? This little baby grew up to become all that God promised. He is Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

TEEN #7: You better not drop him! That is a precious bundle you have there.

TITUS: *(Louder each time....)* I'd hold the baby. Ahem, I'd hold the baby. Hey! I said I would hold that baby!

JOSEPH: Titus, would you like to hold the baby? I hear he's a real star.

TITUS: Well, if you insist. *(Hold the baby.)* Until tonight I truly thought that nothing ever happens in Bethlehem.

TEEN #8: Not many people ever got to see Jesus as a baby. I'm so glad to be here.



TEEN #9: The Star of Bethlehem, right here in our arms.

MARY: My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked with favor on the lowliness of His servant.

TIMOTHY: I told you so. I said it right at the beginning, something is going to happen in Bethlehem!

MARY: You are right, Timothy. God came down to Bethlehem tonight and left His own 'star' and we named him Jesus because He's going to save His people from their sin.

TEEN #10: It has been a pleasure to meet you. Our lives have been changed even though we live far down the pathway of the future. The baby God sent is our Savior too.

TITUS: Timothy, who ARE these people? I have spent the last hour being very confused indeed. Is it still true that NOTHING ever happens in Bethlehem?

TIMOTHY: Let's see....angels, shepherds, babies, strangers, people from the future....I'd say a lot happens in Bethlehem, but that's just me, of course.



ADULTS THE PROMISE!



ACTORS: Narrator (modern clothing–use as many narrators as available). *One older man, one older woman (each in Holy Land clothing) to portray Simeon and Anna speaking in the temple in Jerusalem. They interact with Mary and Joseph. Simeon holds the baby as he speaks.*

NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED

NARRATOR: You would think that with all that happened in Bethlehem that night the story of Jesus' birth would be over and done with but there is more to see and hear. Eight days later Mary and Joseph took their baby boy, Jesus, up to the temple in Jerusalem to offer him to God as commanded in God's Law.

JOSEPH: We do? Oh, yes, that's right, we do go to Jerusalem. We must make a sacrifice to God for this wonderful blessing He has given.

MARY: *(Holding Baby Jesus)* Of course we go to Jerusalem, Joseph. We must do everything according to God's command. We will travel to Jerusalem, head for the temple, buy a pair of doves or two pigeons—you DO have the money for the doves, don't you dear?

JOSEPH: Yes dear. *(Looking at audience....)* My wife, the planner. What a woman. I think I'll keep her.

NARRATOR: And so, Mary, Joseph...and Titus and Timothy.... head for Jerusalem. Titus and Timothy just want to see the rest of the story. When they get there, they find a man, Simeon by name, a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful anticipation of help for Israel.



The Holy Spirit told Simeon he would see the Messiah of God before he died. Simeon had a feeling something was about to happen so he headed for the temple.

JOSEPH: Here we are, Mary, isn't the Temple beautiful?

MARY: Indeed it is, dear. What do we do next?

SIMEON: *(Taking the baby from Mary's arms....)* Oh, praise God! This is what I have been waiting for all these years.

"God, you can now release your servant;
release me in peace as you promised.
With my own eyes I have seen your salvation;
it's now out in the open for everyone to see:
A God-revealing light to the non-Jewish nations,
and of glory for your people Israel." Luke 2:25-32
(Kiss the baby.)

JOSEPH: But, but, but....how can this be?

MARY: Simeon! What is this joy you bring us? It is true! This child really is God's Messiah!

SIMEON: Mary, this child marks both the failure and the recovery of many in Israel. He will be misunderstood and contradicted. Sadly, this will be like a pain of a sword striking you as His mother. However, the rejection will force honesty from those people as God reveals who they really are! Luke 2:33-35

NARRATOR: As Simeon is speaking to Mary and Joseph and they are all praising God, Anna shows up. She is a prophetess and is a very old woman. She has been a widow for eighty four years. She has never left the Temple area, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying.



ANNA: Praise God! What a wonderful day! It makes me feel like singing an anthem to God. I am privileged to meet my Messiah. Let me hold him. (Hold and kiss the baby.) Yes, it is true. God loves us so much that He has sent His own Son into the world to rescue us.

NARRATOR: When they finished everything required by God in the Law, they returned to Galilee and their own town, Nazareth...that is, after a little vacation in Egypt to get away from King Herod who was still mad that he didn't get to destroy God's Messiah. I have a feeling the gifts from the wise men-- gold, frankincense and myrrh--came in quite handy during their Egyptian years.

JOSEPH: Mary, God has blessed us beyond measure.

MARY: Joseph, my dear, it all happened in a little village in Bethlehem where nothing ever happens.

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NOT FOR SALE
EVERYONE LEAVES THE STAGE,
INCLUDING NATIVITY CHARACTERS
WHO HAVE STAYED IN PLACE
UNTIL THIS POINT.
PLEASE PURCHASE



THE BETHLEHEM BOYS

Something Wonderful Happened Here!



Standing near the sign post, alone on stage:

TITUS: (Looking at printed road sign...) "Bethlehem...Nothing Ever Happens Here." How could I have been so dumb. Everything happened here and it was wonderful!

Take a large black marker, X out the original message and print...SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENED HERE!

TIMOTHY: I told you so.

TITUS: You did not tell me so. You wanted to live in Jerusalem just as much as I did.

TIMOTHY: Well, I didn't really mean it. Bethlehem has a sort of, well, a shining quality to it now. Can you see it? Can you feel it?

TITUS: (Looking around....) I do believe I see and feel God's presence in this place.

TIMOTHY: The shepherds are still telling people about the angels who appeared on the hillside. I can hear them down the street shouting "Peace to the people of earth".

TITUS: Don't forget Old McHamus, the Innkeeper. That stable is in pretty good shape and the manger made a perfect cradle for the baby.

TIMOTHY: I have never seen such courage as when Joseph and Mary showed up and demanded a place to stay. And then...the love in their eyes when Jesus was born...well, it made me tear up.



TITUS: Have we ever had Wise Men visit Bethlehem before Jesus arrived? I can't think of any but those guys sure knew what they were doing. They never did swing back to Jerusalem to tell tales to Herod. They even came prepared with baby gifts.

TIMOTHY: And that star! It glowed so brightly that I needed sunglasses!

TITUS: Sun glasses? What are sun glasses?

TIMOTHY: Oh, I don't know friend. I just thought them up. Maybe I could invent sun glasses and then we could put Bethlehem on the map for sure! For a town where nothing happens, we have certainly had a great time.

TITUS: Let's go home, friend. You need to get some sleep. (Shaking head....) Sun glasses! What a crazy idea.

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NOT FOR USE
BETHLEHEM BOYS WALK OFF STAGE
TOGETHER AND BACK THE CENTER AISLE.
PLEASE PURCHASE





CONCLUSION

ASK AN ADULT TO CONCLUDE THE EVENT.
DRESS IN MODERN CLOTHING.

We have just imagined the past as it might have been on the night Jesus was born in a sleepy ancient village called Bethlehem. No one really knows how the citizens reacted to a strange young couple and a crying baby in a stable. It was busy and chances are pretty good that nobody really took much notice.

Bethlehem enjoyed a rich history before Jesus was born. Located in the hill country of Judah, it was first mentioned in the Bible as the place where Rachel died and was buried by the wayside (Genesis 48:7). Rachel's Tomb still stands at the entrance to Bethlehem. According to the Book of Ruth, the valley to the east is where Ruth gleaned in Boaz' fertile fields and returned to town with Naomi. Bethlehem is the birthplace of David and the place where he was anointed king by Samuel. It was from the well of Bethlehem that three warriors brought him water when he was hiding in the cave.

Bethlehem was the City of David but that didn't mean it was a booming metropolis. God carefully chose the time, the place and the people for the moment that history would never forget. It was no accident that something happened in Bethlehem.

But when the fullness of time came,
God sent forth His Son,
born of a woman, born under the Law,
so that He might redeem those
who were under the Law,
that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:4-5



While everyone else was thinking "Nothing ever happens in Bethlehem", God smiled, fulfilled His promise to His people and a baby was born. The Messiah had arrived!

Conclude the event with the singing of familiar Christmas

OPTION: Ask the pastor to lead an inspiring candle lighting ceremony.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE





CELEBRATE BETHLEHEM CHRISTMAS PARTY

Assign party planning to one small group. This may be a few men and women handpicked for this purpose or an adult Sunday School class or women's group.

Offer delicious food, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE PARTY DAY

MENU: Plan the menu. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share. Provide a variety of beverages.

If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with doughnuts, orange juice, coffee and tea.

SEATING: Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the anticipated gathering. Position tables and chairs and serve buffet style with guests standing and moving around the room to chat. Place a few chairs in small circles throughout the area for small group conversation.

MUSIC: Fill the room with Christmas music. This could be live music performed by local church musicians or favorite CD performances.



CENTERPIECES: Cover tables as desired. Christmas centerpieces should be featured on each table.

Ask people to bring their personal nativity sets from home. Feature these precious items on each table. Since each table will have different artistic looks, encourage the guests to walk from table to table to enjoy each nativity set.

PREPARATIONS ON PARTY DAY

Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on the stove to boil while the program is in progress. Set out desserts, cream and sugar. Make your favorite Christmas Punch and place on a nearby serving table.

DURING THE PARTY

Assign people to cut and serve desserts, pour beverages and refill creamers and sugar bowls as needed. Greet guests cordially as they come through the serving line. Move about the group to be sure everyone feels welcome. Find seats for those who may not be familiar with your church. Introduce people. Enjoy the program participants as they mingle with the guests.

AFTER THE PARTY

Don't forget the party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

Go Home To Keep Christmas With Your Family
Knowing you have been a good and faithful servant!

