



Once
Upon
A
Christmas
Cheery

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A Night To Remember

Once
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A
Christmas
Cheery

a night to remember



Once Upon A Christmas Cheery
Jesus was born in Bethlehem!
Everyone was expecting a baby but no
one was expecting a BABY!

It was a night to remember!
Shepherds rested their flocks.
Angels sang Good News.
Mary and Joseph welcomed a baby boy
and warmed him in a humble manger.

On the other side of the world,
Wise Men packed camels with gifts
and followed a bright star to Bethlehem.

And in our town?
A 'Stranger' Surprise
is happening right now.

Come and see what 'cheery' thing
God can do!!!



ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY ...A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Feature children, teens and adults in separate small groups. Create a wonderful remembrance of that Bethlehem night so long ago when The Baby who changed the world was born.

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY is rehearsed during Sunday School in small groups. **Gather for a final dress rehearsal!**

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY is sprinkled with humor. **Mick and Gabby**, strangers in the night, wander into your Christmas program. A **surprise** awaits the audience when they discover they have been entertaining angels unaware. Challenge your group to think about how they respond to strangers among us! **Sshh! Save the Surprise!**



ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY is interactive. Sing Christmas Carols with audience. *Option: 3 theme songs (dbl channel CD, lyrics, sheet music).* **Add local musical talent!**

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY celebrates with an all church **NIGHT TO REMEMBER** Party.

Snacks, Music. Fun!

*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:
for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”*

Hebrews 13:2



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Index



Introduction.....1-5
 Christmas Director.....6-7
 Just A Word About Memorization.....8
 At A Glance.....9-10
 Adaptations.....11
 Christmas Music Tips.....12
 Stage anProps.....13
 Costumes.....14
 Publicity.....15
 Teachers~Your Leadership Is Valued.....16-17
 Mick and Gabby~Strangers In The Night.....18

Once Upon A Christmas Cheery

Prelude~Procession.....19
 Readers Introduction.....20
 Mick and Gabby Enter.....21-22

Act 1: **There's Something About A Baby!**

Nursery: Bethlehem Baby Shower.....23-24
 Mick and Gabby Speak.....25
 Preschool: Christmas Cheer.....26
 Mick and Gabby Speak.....27
 Kindergarten: New Kid In Town.....28

Act 2: **Big Things In Small Places**

Grade One: The Happy Wanderers.....29-31
 Mick and Gabby Speak.....32-33
 Grade Two: Cheery Secrets.....34-35
 Grade Three: Entertaining Angels.....36-37
 Grade Four: One Day In Davidsville.....38-39
 Mick and Gabby Speak.....40

Act 3: **A Night To Remember**

Grade Five: Wise Men Still Seek Him.....41-42
 Grade Six: A Night To Remember.....43-44
 Pastor Meets Mick and Gabby.....45-46
 Grades Seven-Nine: What's In A Name.....47-48
 Teens: Mysteries Of The Manger.....49-50
 Mick and Gabby Speak.....51-52

Conclusion: Strangers In The Night.....53
 Once Upon A Christmas Cheery Party.....54-55



Christmas Director

Making A Christmas Memory

*“A leader is one who knows the way,
goes the way, and shows the way.”*

~ John Maxwell

**‘Wanna Be THIS Guy? <—
Humor and Inspiration!**

Mold small groups into a well organized Christmas team! No age limits! Assign small group leaders who guide preparations for individual segments.

Make copies and assign individual program sections to Sunday School classes, church committees, small groups of friends and willing individuals who agree to become part of “Once Upon A Christmas Cheery”.

Follow Directions

Individual leaders organize their small group complete with props and costumes and speaking parts. The Bethlehem story is powerful and changes lives every time it is told. **Tell it again!!!**

Prepare Your Heart

For some church members, holiday programs 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!*” “*I do not wanna be THAT guy!*” Put those feelings aside. Dive into this charming Christmas presentation as seen through the eyes of two strangers. May your holidays be forever blessed by this special touch that ends with a surprise.

Delegate

Leaders become involved by preparing their small group. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. **Check with them often.**



Be Positive

Make Christmas events sparkle! It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal preparations, party going and travel. Simple preparations are appreciated by everyone. **Be the Cheerleader!**

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

Pray!

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

Plan!

Print a working copy. Do **NOT** write on this master copy! Mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt as needed. Eliminate, divide or combine parts. List details you will handle personally. Give teachers and participants copies of their segments in a colorful folder. **Again, we say, PLAN!**

Prepare!

Hopefully you have ordered **ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY** with more than one month lead time. Copy materials for groups. Assign responsibility for small group practice to each leader. **First, Prepare...Then, Faith!**

No Memorization!

Some groups enjoy memorization. Others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. Memorization requires lead time and intense rehearsal. Decorate each person's short part with a colorful Christmas backing that faces the audience. Their script segment can be arranged for easy reading. **Cool, Huh?**

This is an ALL CHURCH production!
Involve adults as readers, musicians and leaders.
Small churches: Adapt program to fit number of participants.



Just A Word About Memorization!

To Memorize ~

Love it? Do it! Some groups love the process of rehearsal and memorization. If that is true in your situation, take extra time to stage the program and memorize all parts.

Consider longer lead time and more rehearsals.

Or Not To Memorize ~

Hate it? Forget it! This event is designed to be a full church or school, inter-generational experience. Base group organization on small groups. Ask children, friends, older adults and people who may not normally participate to join the fun. It makes the event much more enjoyable.

If there is limited practice time, consider allowing the participants to hold their parts and read them. Practice in small group settings so that everyone is familiar with their part and can speak with confidence.

Carry printed materials on stage in creative ways. Depending on which segments are being performed, scripts can be backed with colorful paper. After a few minutes, the audience does not notice. It does not affect the quality of the program. **Try It!**

*Whatever presentation method you choose,
This is a memorable Christmas experience.
Have Fun!*



At A Glance

Base adaptations on available participants. Insert Christmas Carols and local talent music. Eliminate or combine groups as desired.

This is a sample peek at the full event. Change as desired.

Prelude

Processional

READERS INTRODUCTION

MICK AND GABBY ENTER



ACT 1:

There's Something About A Baby!

Nursery:

Bethlehem Baby Shower

MICK AND GABBY SPEAK

Preschool:

Christmas Cheer

MICK AND GABBY SPEAK

Kindergarten:

New Kid In Town

Audience Sings:

"Away In A Manger"

ACT 2:

Big Things In Small Places!

Grade 1:

The Happy Wanderers

MICK AND GABBY SPEAK

Grade 2:

Cheery Secrets

Audience Sings:

"O Little Town Of Bethlehem"

Grade 3:

Entertaining Angels

Audience Sings:

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night"

Grade 4:

A Night In Davidsville

MICK AND GABBY SPEAK

ACT 3:

A Night To Remember

Grade 5: Wise Men Still Seek Him

Audience Sings:

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

Grade 6:

A Night To Remember

Audience Sings:

"Joy To The World"

PASTOR MEETS MICK AND GABBY

Grades 7-9:

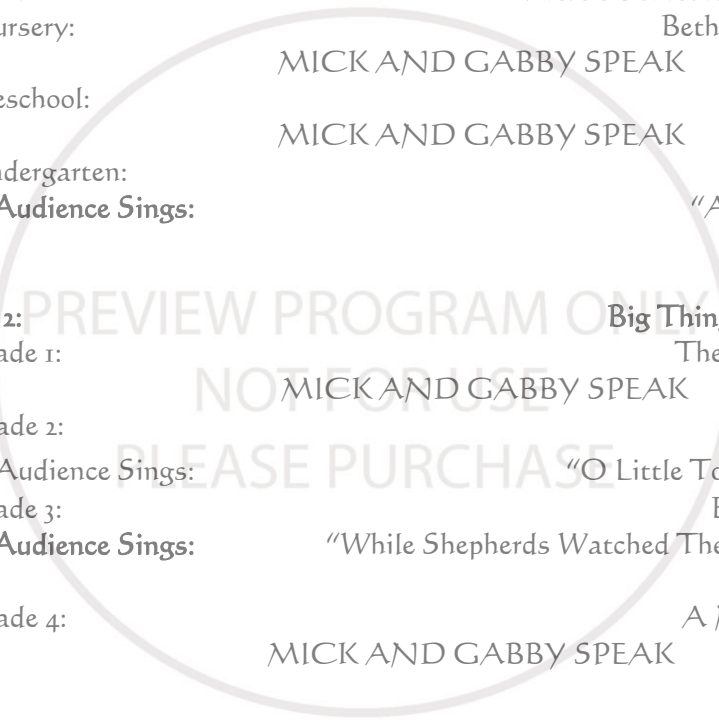
What's In A Name?

Audience Sings:

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

Teens:

Mysteries Of The Manger



MICK AND GABBY SPEAK

CONCLUSION:

Strangers In The Night

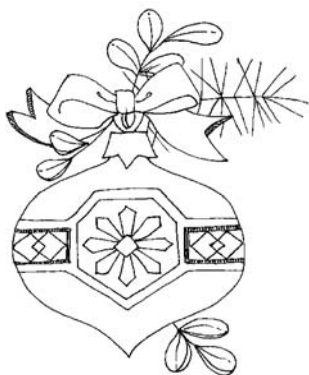
A Gift To You: Why We Give
Closing Prayer

Option: Candle Lighting Ceremony
Audience Sings: Christmas Carol Medley of your choice

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER PARTY!

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Adaptations

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY lasts about forty five minutes, depending upon music and personal additions or eliminations made to the original program. **A Night To Remember Party** is not included in this time frame. Adapt to fit local Christmas traditions. *It can be completed in less time.*

Small Church

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts. Don't worry about correct ages for the segments. The segments are meant to be performed by any age as needed. Feature your favorite segments.

OR, use the same students to present two or more segments. Adults are crucial to the small church presentation. Ask older teens and adults to participate.

Medium Church

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

Large Church

Involve as many people as possible. Organize musicians, speakers, snack makers, servers, prop masters, sound /lighting staff and volunteers who make the program exciting.

A Night To Remember Party

Ask an adult Sunday School class, parents or group of friends to complete party plans. They decorate, plan and prepare food and arrange for clean up. *A Night To Remember Party* is a fun option. If there is no time for a social gathering, plan a great program and eliminate the party!



Christmas Music Tips



Coordinate music talent with the music director, organist and pianist. Every Christmas Carol is sung by the audience. Include hymn book page numbers in a printed program or use a projection system to flash words.

Audience Christmas Carols

Select traditional and contemporary Christmas songs from your personal church music collection. The audience sings these favorite songs. Insert carols wherever desired.

New Music: Once Upon A Christmas Cheery Melodies

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES is pleased to present three original Christmas songs composed by Jonathan Miller for **Glory Sound Studios, Winston-Salem, NC!** Use these songs as desired. (Solo, group, audience, background).

These songs are purchased separately. Sheet music and Split Channel CD available for three new songs! We ship USPS or choose to download the double channel CD and sheet music from our web site: www.cemlife.com to save time, shipping and handling. Call CEM for information!

Special Music ~ Make It Personal!

Feature local church talent. These musical options are NOT in the existing program. Insert where desired. Choose Christmas music from your collection. Talented people from church or community can make your program sparkle!

VOCAL SOLO
CHILDREN-ADULT CHOIR
INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE

VOCAL GROUP
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR



Stage and Props

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY...A NIGHT TO REMEMBER is a Christmas program using a minimum of props, no special staging or backdrops. Small groups carry personal props. Keep it simple.



Set Up

The church sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas. Christmas trees, nativity scene, twinkle lights, poinsettias, candles and other displays add to the festive atmosphere.

Leave those items in place.

Mick and Gabby

Two strangers speak from the audience, aisles and back of the room. Traveling microphones or a stationary microphone are helpful.

Entertain Strangers!

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Seating

Reserve small group seating. Assign adult/teen assistants to sit with young children. Participants sit in the audience and come to the stage to present their short segment.

Sound System

Place several microphones across the stage. Attach personal microphones to the main speakers. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program for the audience.

Lighting

Turn off normal lighting and overhead sanctuary lights. Light Christmas trees, candles and other mood lighting. Place small spot lights on the floor if desired.



Costumes

When costuming a large group, ask each participant to provide their costume. Parents may be willing to come up with bathrobes, caftans and headgear. Not every group needs to be costumed. Some groups wear regular clothing.



Costume Suggestions

Some characters may need costume help. Make large capes for the wise men. Make shepherd staffs from cardboard, plywood, small tree limbs or dowel rods. Suggest bathrobes, sandals, sheets, long t-shirts with rope belts, bare feet, simple caftans, jewelry and head wraps.

PILLOWCASES: Pillowcases work well for little children. Cut a neck hole in the top of the pillowcase. Cut up the front to the neck hole. Cut armholes in the sides. This makes a long, vest type costume. Sometimes plaid or striped flannel pillowcases are available and work great for shepherds and wise men.

FABRIC: Two wide strips of fabric one over each shoulder, crossed across the back and front of the child, tied with a sash makes a good costume too. Use colorful fabric.

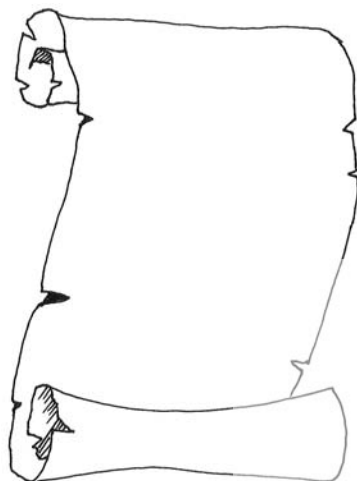
HEAD WRAPS: A square of fabric over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the top of the head makes a headpiece. If you make large scrunchies (*like girls wear around ponytails*) and put them over the square fabric around the head, it holds the fabric on well.

BATHROBES: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales and resale shops. Wrap in front and use contrasting fabric for head dresses and sashes to complete the costume.

ANGELS: Dress angels in white cotton or silver lame' found in most fabric stores. Angels may wear cardboard wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel taped in a circle on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Angels may wear face and hair glitter for that "extra sparkle"!



Publicity



Publicize through all normal church communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Bulletin and Newsletter

Print an announcement in November and December newsletters and in the weekly bulletin. If you plan **A NIGHT TO REMEMBER PARTY**, let people know there will be a Christmas celebration following the program.

Local Newspaper

Include an announcement with holiday publicity. Talk to a reporter and photographer to see if a feature article is possible.

Television and Radio

Advertise on local television cable advertising channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service.

Social Networking ~ Web Site

Does your group have a web site? This is the perfect opportunity to advertise the program. Take pictures, include a short description, dates, times and party plans!

Invitations

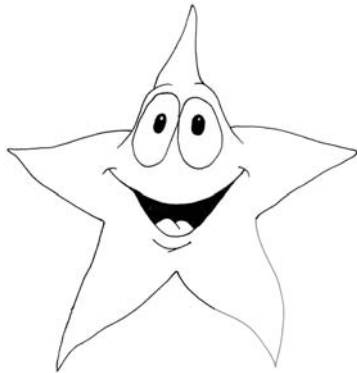
Send family invitations home with students. This is effective for parents and grandparents who are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.

Option: Children can make Christmas cards as a project and attach the invitation to be placed in their take home papers or backpack.



More For Teachers ~

Your Leadership Is Valued!



Involve Everyone.

If there are more students than speaking parts, divide existing parts. If less students, give them more to say. Assign specific tasks holding visuals, carrying props and dressing in costume.

Do not leave anyone out of the fun!

Highlight Individual Parts.

Will speakers memorize their parts or read them? If reading parts, back copies with colorful construction paper, glitter and Christmas stickers or real Christmas cards.

Performance copies must remain in good shape.

Practice!

Rehearse your small group during Sunday School. Plan costuming. If a prop is suggested, decide how this will be provided. Make the segment you are assigned fit your small group.

Adapt as desired.

Communicate!

Tell parents when and where their children should arrive for rehearsal and the performance. Invite them to attend and be sure they know what items or costuming their child is responsible to bring.

Be specific!

Show Up With A Smile!

Meet your small group. Dress in appropriate costume, line up and enter the program area 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.

Stage fright is not uncommon!

Sometimes kids get scared too!



Party Time!

Collect visuals and program copies before the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle with party goers and enjoy the experience with your students and their families.

Fun Time!



Ask For Help

The Director is available. Prepare your small group so they are ready to take to the stage. This 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. Jesus' story is classic and life changing. **The spiritual experience is amazing!**

Notes:

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MICK AND GABBY Strangers In The Night

Two people become central, surprise characters. These actors may be young or old, male or female or a mixture. Choose two people willing to have a great time "hamming it up" with humor. These central characters pull the program together and give comic relief as well as surprise and inspiration.



Mick and Gabby Costumes

Mick and Gabby wear two layers of costumes.

SSHH! IT'S A SECRET!

The inside layer (closest to the body) is an angel costume. It may consist of anything from a t-shirt that says "I'm An Angel" to a full gown tucked into pants and jacket. Hide a tinsel halo in a pocket until the very end of the program. For fun add some loose white feathers that keep falling out of pockets or peek out from under a hat.

Tip: Check out www.amazon.com There are some fun "Angel" shirts available. Choose matching shirts or two different shirts just for fun.

The outside layer should be oversized old pants, huge shirt and old overcoat and shabby hat. Shoes should be oversized and old. The appearance should be that of a down on luck street person. Carry large shopping bags, pull an old wagon or push a shopping cart loaded with junk.

ENTRANCE

Loud! Become homeless strangers who burst upon the program with flourish and loud comments. Sit near the front and move around as directed in the program. After the READERS INTRODUCTION, enter the back of the program area with great flurry and noise. Carry flashlights and shine them around the audience.

*Do not feel as if memorization is needed.
Carry a full script in a shabby, old newspaper.*



Once Upon A Christmas Cheery

a night to remember



The Prelude

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

Special musical talent may be added as desired.

Procession

Gather in an outer room.

Dim program area lights.
Holiday lights remain lit.

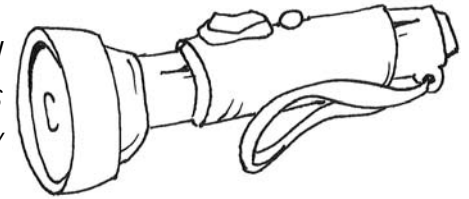
Stage lights and spotlights are shining so participants can read their speaking parts.

The music changes to the theme song, "*Once Upon A Christmas Cheery*" or a Christmas song of your choice. Participants sing as they walk along the center aisle to find their reserved seats. Once everyone is at their seats, sing the song again as a group. If desired, the entire gang can turn around and face the audience as they sing.

*As soon as everyone is in place and quiet,
the program begins.*

Readers Introduction

Readers carry flashlights and are stationed around the edges of the program area. This group reads a serious introduction in serious, slow voices. Read loud, clear and with enthusiasm.



READER #2 reads scripture between the other readers.
Parts can be repeated by fewer readers as desired.

READER #1: The story of Christmas began in eternity.

READER #2: In the beginning was the Word....

READER #3: Before the world was created and time began, God the Father said that His Son would be the Savior of the world. In the Beginning was...Jesus!

READER #2: ...And the Word was with God and the Word was God....

READER #4: When the right time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, that he might save sinful mankind....Jesus was born at just the right time in human history. Roman roads for quicker travel made it possible for the world to hear God's great plan city to city and country to country. Jesus was born! The world found out quickly.

READER #2: ...the same was in the beginning with God.

READER #5: ...that He might save you and me. God's plan was mighty yet simple. Jesus became God's sacrifice for us. Falsely accused. Illegal trial. Roman Cross. Shocking to a world where life is prized.

READER #2: Unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord.

READER #6: Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen. Jesus didn't stay in the manger and He didn't stay in the grave. He arose! Today, as we wait for God's Glorious Unfolding, we return to the days of yesteryear, the night Jesus was born in a tiny village, in a tiny land. That is not the end of the story. It is just the beginning. And there are friends to see and strangers to meet.

READER #7: *Once Upon A Christmas Cheery* a baby boy, Jesus, was born. This is the story of Christmas. We tell it again because the angels said, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good will to men." *It is a Night to Remember!*





Mick and Gabby Enter



Mick and Gabby enter from the back. Come with loud laughter, slaps on the back and friendly comments to each other while walking. They push a shopping cart or pull a wagon filled with junk. They are homeless, street people who have no idea how to behave in church.

MICK: (*Flashlight around the ceiling and walls—not in eyes of audience.*) Whew! How about that weather out there, Gabby? Snow and cold has never been my favorite companion.

GABBY: (*Look around audience in confusion.*) Hey Mick, hush up. Look where we are!

MICK: (*Surprised*) Where are we? Oh, hey there! You must be getting out of the bad weather too. Cold out there, huh? Well, where's the grub? I could eat a horse.

GABBY: No, you couldn't. You'd grow a tail.

MICK: I could so. I always wanted to try to eat a horse. This seems like a good time. Bring on the horse!

GABBY: Mick, as I live and breathe, you take the cake.

MICK: Yeah! I could eat a cake! A whole cake!

GABBY: (*Looking around the audience and sanctuary with a flashlight....*) These folks don't seem to be moving much. Where are we anyway? Is this a....? It is! We ended up in a church!

MICK: (*Aiming flashlight at seated groups....*) No kiddin'? Hey Gabby, look what I found. Kids! A bunch of 'em. All dressed up, too. (*Whispers....*) And they're all lookin' at...US!

GABBY: I think we stumbled upon a Christmas program and it's going on right now. Let's find a seat.

MICK; Awww, I had my heart set on cake.

GABBY: Well, maybe there will be cake later.



MICK: There's a seat. Let's sit over there.

(Make a big production of parking the shopping cart and squeezing into a front pew beside other people in the audience or among the participants.)

GABBY: Okay! Let the show begin! What's this show called anyway?

MICK: I see a paper over there.

ONCEUPON....ACHRISTMASCHEERY. A....NIGHT....TO...REMEMBER.

GABBY: This oughta be good! Just sit there and be quiet. Don't embarrass me!

MICK: I'm hungry. Just sayin'.

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Act I: There's Something About A Baby!

Nursery

Bethlehem Baby Shower



Since these little ones (Birth-Age 3) cannot speak, each mother speaks. Seat the group as if they are attending a party carrying small gift bags and tissue. If you do not have enough mother/baby participants, ask the folks you have to speak several times and give several gifts.

Gift Items: *If one or more items is not available, Mention it as wrapped or inside a gift bag.*

Diaper, Hammer, Heart, Lamb, Music Note, Key, Carrot, Star, Bible.

CHURCH ORGANIST PLAYS A QUIET CAROL AS BACKGROUND MUSIC DURING THE PRESENTATION. PLAY THE CAROL IN A HIGH, TINKLING OCTAVE AS IF PLAYING A LULLABY DURING A PARTY.

TEACHER: This Bethlehem Baby Shower is long overdue. Jesus was born over 2000 years ago. We're late! What did you bring to honor our special baby?

MOTHER #1: (*Diapers*) Just thinking of Mary alone in a small town, I shiver. God trusted a young, rookie couple to care for His Son. She wrapped Him in 'swaddling clothes'. She might have been thrilled to have disposable diapers. When I meet Mary in heaven, I'm going to ask her how she felt that night—mother to mother!

MOTHER #2: (*Hammer*) I always imagine Joseph as young and eager to begin his family with the love of his life. Little did Joseph know how complicated family life was going to become in light of God's request. We want to honor a brave dad, Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. (*Whisper*) It's a hammer to get his business started.

MOTHER #3: (*Heart*) What do you give God who has everything? He owns mountains and oceans. He has enough animals--and they are not even stuffed animals! God owns all of heaven and earth. Our hearts are given to our Heavenly Father who loved us and sent Jesus.

MOTHER #4: (*Plush Lamb*) We honor the shepherds. Every day we hug that little lamb. God's Lamb was Jesus. The shepherd's lambs were alone in Bethlehem's hills when they ran to town to find Jesus. Nobody liked shepherds very much. God loved them enough to give them the first peek at His special baby.



MOTHER #5: *(Music note made from poster board and glittered)* Angels watched everything that went on in Bethlehem that night. We offer this small gift to honor the angels' tender, loving music the night Jesus was born.

MOTHER #6: *(Key)* Bethlehem's Innkeeper never gets credit. He sounds uncaring. He offered an animal stable. It would be like asking one of us to give birth out in the garage. Only worse! The Innkeeper offered the best place he had. He didn't turn Mary and Joseph away. He offered a quiet, warm, private place where a new mother could curl up with her baby and where the baby could get fresh water and a soft bed. Our key reminds us that one humble inn welcomed a scared young couple who needed help.

MOTHER #7: *(Carrot)* Do you suppose the animals in the stable nudged Joseph for a little pat on the head or an extra handful of oats? We think so. God let those animals witness to the most important night in the history of earth. They deserve a treat!

MOTHER #8: *(Christmas Star Ornament)* Wise men followed a star and, after an exciting adventure with King Herod, found Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They brought practical gifts to help the family survive during their years in Egypt. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh may not be gifts we bring to a baby shower. In those days they could be sold for real money. We are thankful for those travelers who gave wonderful gifts.

MOTHER #9: *(Bible)* Our church keeps telling Jesus' story year after year. Our babies will grow up learning about God's great love. God sent Jesus to be our Savior. May we never forget His great gift. Read it for yourself.

TEACHER: *(To Audience....)* What a great Bethlehem Baby Shower! We have celebrated Jesus the best way we know how.



Mick and Gabby Speak



MICK: *(Standing up in the audience....)* Aww, that was so cute. I want to give a baby gift for the Bethlehem Baby Shower. Quick! What have you got in your pocket, Gabby?

GABBY: *(Standing up in the audience....)* Let me see. I have a button, a feather, a piece of gum. What do you have?

MICK: My pockets are empty. I don't even have a piece of candy. This is a tragedy. I've got nothing to give the baby.

GABBY: Don't feel bad, Mick. Just sit down and enjoy the show. We'll think of just the right present later.

MICK: Still hungry. Can I have your gum?

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Preschool Christmas Cheer!



Preschool students (Ages 4-5) and teachers. Each child wears present day clothing and carries a baby doll wrapped in a blanket. Arrange the group on stage holding their wrapped dolls. Preschool children participate by responding. They answer their teacher's questions (if there are several teachers, divide the parts) at the appropriate time.

TEACHER: I see babies! Lots of babies! How beautiful. Show them to our guests. *(Children show off their baby dolls to the audience.)* Who's birthday is coming?

CHILDREN: *(In Unison....)* Jesus!

TEACHER: Where was Jesus born?

CHILDREN: *(In Unison....)* Bethlehem!

TEACHER: Not long ago you were babies snuggled in warm blankets...but not anymore! You are growing into wonderful children. Who do you love?

CHILDREN: *(In Unison....)* We love Jesus!

TEACHER: Let's share our love for Jesus with everyone. Guests, we ask you to cheer with us. We'll say our Christmas Cheer first and you respond as loud as you can!

CHILDREN: *(Shouted as a Cheer....)*

We love Jesus, yes we do!
We love Jesus, how about you?

AUDIENCE RESPONDS

We love Jesus, yes we do!
We love Jesus, how about you!

**REPEAT BOTH PARTS OF THE CHEER AT LEAST THREE TIMES.
CHILDREN, THEN AUDIENCE, THEN CHILDREN, ETC.
IF THE CROWD GETS INTO IT, CONTINUE IT
FOR A MINUTE OR TWO...LOUDER AND LOUDER!**



Mick and Gabby Speak

GABBY: *(Stand up...Continue to shout the cheer alone, with great enthusiasm after the preschool children sit down.)*

**We love Jesus, yes we do!
We love Jesus, how about you?**

MICK: Sssshhh! Do you want to get us thrown out of here?

GABBY: *(Loud whisper....)* Oh, sorry. I just got carried away. What's next?

MICK: I hope it's cake but I bet somebody's gonna sing. Let's watch!



OPTION: Special Music
or Audience Christmas Carol
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KINDERGARTEN

New Kid In Town



Divide Kindergarten students into Speaking "Choirs". Students wear their Christmas best present day outfits. Say the choir parts with the students. If a small group, everyone says the entire poem or ask specific students to say separate sections alone.

TEACHER: There's a new kid in town! It's a boy and he's a great guy. Have you met him yet?

SPEAKING CHOIR #1

We would see Jesus, new kid in town.
We would see Jesus, now don't make a sound.

SPEAKING CHOIR #2

We would see Jesus, asleep on the hay.
We would see Jesus, he's coming today.

SPEAKING CHOIR #3

We would see Jesus, the angels sang.
We would see Jesus, the shepherds ran!

SPEAKING CHOIR #4

We would see Jesus, under the star.
We would see Jesus, wise men came from afar.

SPEAKING CHOIR #5

We would see Jesus, come with us now.
We would see Jesus, come with us, bow.

TEACHER: (To the audience....) Our Kindergarten class invites each of you to see Jesus. Come with us. There is a new kid in town and he wants to be your friend. We invite you to sing "Away In A Manger" with us.

**AUDIENCE JOINS
KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS
AS THEY SING "AWAY IN A MANGER"
Verse 1 Only**



ACT 2: Big Things In Small Places

Grade One



The Happy Wanderers

Actors: Teacher, Grade One Students

Costumes: Holy Land Travelers

Divide speaking parts between available participants.

Students walk from the back of the sanctuary.

Walk slowly as if exhausted.

TEACHER: Come on, Happy Wanderers. Bethlehem is just a little farther down the road. We can do it!

STUDENT #1: I'm not happy. I can't make it.

STUDENT #2: You can make it. I'll help you.

STUDENT #3: I never wanted to be a Happy Wanderer. My feet hurt.

TEACHER: I have never heard or seen such a gang of complainers. Where are my happy wanderers. I need smiles on those faces. I know how to make this journey easier. Let's cheer our way into Bethlehem!

Choose a fun method of saying this joyful childhood cheer. Teacher and students can say it, read or memorized, in unison. Or, divide into two groups and shout it back and forth as a cheer. Whatever you choose, make it fun to practice and fun to present.

See you later, Alligator!
After while, Crocodile!

Gotta go, Buffalo!
See you soon, Raccoon!

Be sweet, Parakeet!
Take care, Polar Bear!
In a shake, Garter Snake!
Hit the road, Happy Toad!



Can't stay, Blue Jay!
Bye by, Butterfly!

Shake a rug, Lady Bug!
Toodle Loo, Kangaroo!

Swish Swish, Jelly fish!
Chop Chop, Lollipop!

In an Hour, Big Sunflower!
Time to Scoot, Little Newt!

Hasta manana, green Iguana!
Give a kiss, Sweet Goldfish!

Get in line, Porcupine!
Out the door, Dinosaur!

On the bus, Octopus!
To your house, Quiet Mouse!

We are here, Woodland Deer!
You're a gem, Bethlehem!

STUDENT #4: That made the trip go fast!

STUDENT #5: I see Bethlehem! We made it!

STUDENTS STAND ON STAGE: (Jump up and down, Cheering...) Yea!

STUDENT #6: I told you we would make it. I was brave. I was a Happy Wanderer for the whole trip. And I wasn't tired at all.

ALL STUDENTS: (Shouting....) Tell the truth! You were tired!

STUDENT #7: What do we do now?

STUDENT #8: *Let's find Jesus. He's in Bethlehem.*



STUDENT #9: First things first. We have to pay our taxes!

STUDENT #10: Oops, I forgot my money. Do you suppose anyone will notice?

STUDENT #11: Maybe if we sing a song about Bethlehem, we'll get to stay and find Jesus. He's in a manger.

AUDIENCE SINGS: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

As the carol is sung, students will "wander" slowly back down all aisles until they disappear in the back. They return to their assigned seats when the carol is done.

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Mick and Gabby Speak

An usher or someone portraying an usher walks boldly to the seats where Mick and Gabby are seated.



USHER: (Sternly....) Ahem! Excuse me! Could you two...persons....please come with me?

MICK: (Standing up....) We can't go with you. You're a stranger. We were taught never to talk to strangers. Haven't you heard of "Stranger Danger"?

GABBY: (Standing up....) Can we help you, sir? We are enjoying this wonderful Christmas program. If you are lost we can direct you to a seat! In fact, you can sit next to us.

USHER: I am not looking for a seat. You have been disrupting this very serious Christmas program. There must be no laughing and I distinctly heard both of you laugh several times. I must ask you to leave.

MICK: But....but....It won't be the same without Gabby here. I'll talk to him. He'll quiet down.

GABBY: Mick, I think he means BOTH of us have to leave. You laughed too! By the way, isn't the program called "Once Upon A Christmas Cheery"? How can anyone be 'cheery' without laughing?

USHER: I have received complaints.

GABBY: (Looking at audience accusingly....) Okay, that's it! Which one of you complained? Was it you? Maybe it was...you?

MICK: (Sadly....) Forget it, Gabby. We better leave. We're just too cheery to fit in here. This guy said so. It must be true. We'll find another Christmas program to visit in another church. Maybe someone else will have cake.

USHER: Wait a minute. Maybe I was too hasty. I guess no one really complained. I just looked at your clothes and thought maybe ...you would be ...more comfortable...out there (pointing to the door).

GABBY: Out there? You mean outside in the dark? Out in the cold? Out in the alley? Out there with no cake to eat?

USHER: Well, when you put it that way....Let's ask the kids. If they say you can stay, then I'll agree.

MICK: (Looking at children....) Come on, kids! Our fate is in your hands. We're really nice guys. Do we stay or go? (Let audience respond--hopefully everyone shouts "stay".)

GABBY: We're ever so grateful. The show must go on. We want to hear more about Jesus!

MICK: And eat cake.

USHER RETREATS.
MICK AND GABBY SIT DOWN.
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Grade Two Cheery Secrets

Actors: Teacher, Grade Two Students

Costumes: Angels

Divide speaking parts between available participants.



TEACHER: God sent Angels to a shepherds' field near Bethlehem. God's plan was not a secret. God's plan to save us from our sin became Jesus, our Savior!

STUDENT #1: One angel said: "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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; You will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

STUDENT #2: Suddenly many angels showed up praising God,

ALL STUDENTS: (In Unison) "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men".

STUDENT #3: Did you hear that? I didn't know we could sound that good!

STUDENT #5: (Point Downward) Do you see what I see? Over there, on earth. It's a baby being born in that little stable.

STUDENT #4: You mean that stable in Bethlehem? It doesn't look like much. Oh, isn't he cute? And look at all that hair!

STUDENT #5: I knew Heavenly Father wouldn't let us down. He promised to send His Son. Tonight Jesus has arrived.

STUDENT #4: Let's fly down there and get a closer look. We'll guide ourselves by that bright star over there.

ALL STUDENTS: **PRETEND TO FLY.**

STUDENT #6: I think we scared the shepherds. They look a little shaky.

STUDENT #7: They'll get over it. Just think of the story they will have to tell their grand kids. Look at them run!

STUDENT #8: I wonder what will happen next. Earth is a dangerous place to live. Who will take care of that baby? I feel kind of responsible to watch over Him.

STUDENT #9: Heavenly Father wouldn't let Him live on Earth unless there was perfect protection. Maybe we'll get to help.

STUDENT #10: Of course! We angels will get to watch over Jesus! Let's fly!

ANGELS "FLY" TO THE BACK OF THE PROGRAM AREA.

AUDIENCE SINGS:

"ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH"

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Grade Three Entertaining Angels

Actors: Teacher, Grade 3 Students

Costumes: Shepherd costumes.

Divide speaking parts between available participants.



TEACHER: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And suddenly..."

STUDENT #1: (Look up) Did I just see that? What was it? A bird? A plane? Superman?

STUDENT #2: What are you talking about? Maybe we were asleep. Here I am, minding my own business, "abiding in the field, keeping watch over our flock by night." And I thought I saw flying angels. They were dressed in...light! Bright, white light!

STUDENT #3: I saw them too. I'm still shaking. It's like "the glory of the Lord came upon us." I think I'm "sore afraid"!

STUDENT #4: You were SORE afraid? I was too scared to listen.

STUDENT #5: That tall one said something about a baby was happening in Bethlehem. I think it was something like "Unto you a baby is born in David's Town."

STUDENT #6: "Fear not." That tall one said, "Fear not"! Ri-i-i-ght. I'm so 'feared' that I think I'm going to throw up.

STUDENT #7: We should have offered them a cup of tea...or something. What kind of shepherds sit with their mouths open being 'sore afraid' and don't offer a cup of tea.

STUDENT #8: I heard them say "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Sounds like good news if I heard it right. They seemed like a "right friendly lot" even if they didn't stick around long.

STUDENT #9: They said there's going to be a sign of some kind. Maybe a ONE WAY sign or a STOP sign or a STREET sign. What should we do now? Seems like we ought to do something. Go someplace.

STUDENT #10: The angels wanted us to go to Bethlehem. There will be more answers there. Do you think we have time to brush our teeth?



STUDENT #11: Sure! And comb your hair too! Where do you suppose we'll find this baby from heaven? You know, folks don't let us shepherds in a lot of fancy places.

STUDENT #12: We'll find him just where they said, "You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." I know just the place to look. Follow me.

SHEPHERDS LEAVE THE STAGE.

AUDIENCE SINGS:
"WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED
THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT"

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Grade Four

One Day In Davidsville



Actors: Teacher, Grade Four Students

Costumes: Holy Land

Props: Everyday items

(pots, tools, baskets, wooden spoons, bowls).

Divide speaking parts between available participants.

TEACHER: God's angels shouted, "Good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Common people were busy that night. There were travelers to feed, taxes to collect, laundry to wash and animals to tend. Most folks never knew God's special baby was born in the stable manger down the street. Or, did they?

STUDENTS GREET EACH OTHER WITH "SHALOM" AND CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE STAGE. THE HUSTLE BUSTLE STOPS FOR GOSSIP:

STUDENT #1: Get out of my way. I have twenty guests waiting for a good night's rest at my Inn. If this food doesn't get there soon, I'll be in big trouble.

STUDENT #2: Well, ex-cuse me! Never let it be said I got in the way of a rich business man. (Bowing) You go first. I'll just be late for my doctor's appointment.

STUDENT #3: Stop bickering. We're all busy. I need a few extra shekels this week. I've never seen so many people in Bethlehem.

STUDENT #4: The Roman soldiers pushed the crowds back and made everyone stand in line for hours...just to register our names in some silly nose count that old Caesar Augustus demanded. And why do we have to go to our hometowns? What a waste of time and drachmas.

STUDENT #5: By the time they count us, another baby will be born. A baby boy was born down the street just an hour ago. The travelers couldn't find a place to stay so the baby was born in the stable. I heard they are using a manger as a cradle. Can you believe it? A manger turned into a cradle!

STUDENT #6: This is no place for a baby to be born. Too many people. Too much dust. Too little food.

STUDENT #7: We're supposed to be God's chosen people. Didn't God promise to send us a Messiah who would save us?



STUDENT #8: God has His ways. Why, that baby born down the street could be the Messiah God promised.

ALL STUDENTS: (Laughing In Unison) Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha! That will happen!

STUDENT #9: Hmmm, do you think so? Scripture does say that God's Son will come as a baby. Maybe we should take a look at that baby in the manger.

STUDENT #10: It could happen. It's worth a look. Who knows, God might have entered the world in a very special way tonight. Maybe the Messiah is here in Bethlehem!

MOMENT OF SILENCE--THINKING--A LONG PAUSE--

ALL STUDENTS: (Loudly....) Nah!

Everyone goes their way,
carrying items and chatting as they leave the stage.

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Mick and Gabby Speak



Jump out of your seats as the Bethlehem Townspeople leave the stage. Run onto the stage to deliver your lines.

MICK: *(Calling to the students leaving the stage.)* Come back! It COULD happen in Bethlehem. It COULD happen tonight. Look for your Messiah! Find that baby!!!

GABBY: *(Calling to the same students)* It IS the baby down the street! Check it out. We'll go with you.



MICK: It's no use, Gabby. They're gone. Doesn't anyone look for Jesus anymore?

GABBY: I'm beginning to wonder, dear friend. When I think of how wonderful the Christmas story is, I'm afraid people miss God's greatest gift.

MICK: Is there any way we can help? Two sensible, street smart, well dressed people like us should be able to think of something to shake folks up.

GABBY: I wish I could shout "God loves you" from the roof tops. That would get their attention. Let's try it!

BOTH: GOD LOVES YOU!

GABBY: Did anybody hear us?

MICK: I don't know. It's awful quiet out there. Try it again.

BOTH: GOD LOVES YOU!

VOICE FROM BACK OF THE ROOM: Sit down and be quiet!

**MICK AND GABBY WALK SLOWLY AND SADLY
TO THEIR SEATS.**

ACT 3: A Night To Remember

Grade Five

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Actors: Teacher, Grade Five Students

Costumes: Wise Men

Props: 3 gifts

Divide speaking parts between available participants.



TEACHER: After Jesus was born, wise men arrived in Jerusalem. "Where can we find the newborn king of the Jews? We want to honor and worship him. We saw a star in the eastern sky that said he has been born."

STUDENT #1: King Herod demanded that his leaders find all the written words that told where this king of the Jews would be born. The Messiah. They looked it up and reported, "Bethlehem, in Judea".

STUDENT #2: Herod smiled his fake smile at the Wise Men and a fake tear was in his lying eyes, "Go and search for the young child. Leave no stone unturned. When you find him, come and let me know. I will come and worship him too."

STUDENT #3: By the way, did you like that guy? He seemed a little too smooth to me.

STUDENT #4: I always thought you were wiser than you look. Herod didn't seem like a "worship the kid" kind of guy to me. I think he was lying.

STUDENT #5: I've got the gold!

STUDENT #6: I've got the frankincense!

STUDENT #7: I've got the myrrh!

STUDENT #8: What are we waiting for? The star is resting over that house. Inside there's a young child waiting for help.

STUDENT #9: And when they got to the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother and fell down and worshiped him. They opened their treasures. They presented gold, frankincense and myrrh.



STUDENT #10: And being warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they went home to their own country another way using their lap top computers, GPS, Apple Smart Phone, I-Pads and Map Quest. They called home and asked for them to 'leave the light on'. Truly wise in every way!

TEACHER: Hey! Cut it out! No adding to the story.

ALL STUDENTS: (In Unison) ...they went home to their own country another way.

AUDIENCE SINGS: "WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE"

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GRADE SIX

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Actors: Teacher, Grade Six Students

Costumes: Present day clothing.

Props: Every student carries a festively wrapped gift or gift bag.

Divide speaking parts between available participants.



TEACHER: It's time to open our presents.

STUDENT #1: Me first! I can't wait to open my presents.

STUDENT #2: Wait. We're not done decorating. Everyone knows the rule: "First you decorate and then you open presents."

STUDENT #3: No! The rule is: "First you decorate, then you sleep, then you eat breakfast, then you open presents." It's been fun hearing the Bethlehem story. I can hear it again and again and never get tired of it.

STUDENT #4: All of you are wrong. The one and only true rule is: "If there are presents present and you are present, open presents as soon as possible." I'm present! Me first!

TEACHER: Not so fast! My rule is: "First we talk about WHY we give each other Christmas presents and THEN we open presents."

STUDENT #5: When Jesus was born, it became "A Night To Remember". We celebrate God's BEST gift, Jesus. He is the gift that we get to keep forever.

STUDENT #6: A Night to Remember. What a great way to think of Christmas. I remember my favorite Christmas present was a bicycle my mom and dad his on the front porch. I was so happy when I saw that big red bow.

One Reader or Divide between readers: Option: Christmas music in background

It isn't the flowing ribbons,
draped and curled with extra care
or the fine and fancy bows
tied with ornamental flair

It isn't the label on the box,
the sum of money spent
or anything that shows the length
to which you obviously went.

The beauty of a Christmas gift
cannot be seen by all.
For the loveliness of giving
is a feeling, grand and tall.

It's the genuine offer of love,
the yearning to make a connection
a show of honest gratitude,
a display of sincere affection

STUDENT #8: Good Christmas presents that are very 'cheery' come with good memories. The best present is the baby Jesus who came to Bethlehem and changed the whole world.

AUDIENCE SINGS: JOY TO THE WORLD

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Pastor Meets Mick and Gabby



PASTOR: (Greeting Mick and Gabby at their seats....) I heard we have special visitors. Welcome to our church. I'm Pastor_____. Come on stage with me.

MICK AND GABBY FOLLOW PASTOR ON STAGE.

MICK: Are we in trouble? We didn't mean to make trouble. Honest! We have been sitting quietly waiting for cake.

PASTOR: Cake?

GABBY: Pastor, Do you really believe all the stuff they're hearing about the shepherds and the angels and the wise men....

MICK:and the baby Jesus.



PASTOR: I believe the whole Christmas story! Do you believe it?

MICK AND GABBY: (*Winking broadly and poking each other with elbows*) Yeah, sure! We believe God sent His Son. We believe in angels and shepherds and wise men. Mostly we believe in angels....and cake!

PASTOR: You can't kid a kidder. I sense something different about the two of you. How did you find your way into our church?

GABBY: We saw the lights and just walked in the front door like everybody else.

PASTOR: (*Slyly....*) Where do you live?

MICK: (*Stalling....*) Well, sometimes here, sometimes there. We are traveling folks. "Pack Up and See the World" is our motto. Isn't that right, Gabs?

GABBY: Yeah! We travel light. We travel lean and mean. There's no other way to go. In fact, you could say "we fly the friendly skies" when we travel.

PASTOR: I'm glad you chose our church. Thank you for coming. Go back to your seats and enjoy the rest of the show.

GABBY: Thank you kindly Pastor. We'll do just that.

PASTOR WALKS AWAY.

MICK: *(Calling after the Pastor....)* Hey! Pastor! Does that mean we get cake? Chocolate is my favorite! And I forgot to ask...is there ice cream? Maybe Butter Pecan Ice Cream? I love that stuff! How about kool aid? I love cherry kool aid! And turkey! Will there be turkey? With mashed potatoes and just a touch of cranberry sauce? Gotta have that cranberry sauce.

GABBY: Oh, stop it Mick. Just sit down and watch the show.

MICK: *(Sitting down reluctantly....)* It's a simple question. Why won't anyone just tell me if we get cake?

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Grades Seven-Nine

What's In A Name?

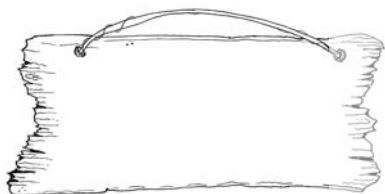
Actors: Teacher, Grades 7-9 Students

Costumes: Present day clothing.

Two students become Mary and Joseph with Baby Jesus.

Props: Signs with separate names.

Divide speaking parts between available participants.



MAKE SIGNS

Print eight names on separate posterboard signs with a rustic look. Print large enough for audience to read each word. JESUS, CHRIST, STAR, EMMANUEL, KING, SON OF GOD, SON OF MAN, LORD.

MARY AND JOSEPH WITH BABY
SIT AND STAND CENTER STAGE.

STUDENTS WITH SIGNS ENTER AND STAND ONE AT A TIME IN A SEMI
CIRCLE BEHIND MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY.

TEACHER: God's angel said "Name Him **Jesus**". Little did Mary and Joseph know His name would be wonderful! God sent Jesus to earth as a sign for the nations. There was peace and salvation for everyone who listened with faith ears.

STUDENT #1: JESUS! (Walk to front holding sign.) It's the name Mary shouted everyday. "Jesus, come with me to the well." And Jesus is the name Joseph called, "Hold the hammer that way, Jesus."

Many boys were named Jesus during those days. An angel appeared to Joseph and said, "Call him Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) The angel told Mary to call him Jesus because, "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest." (Luke 1:31, 32)

STUDENT #2: CHRIST! (Walk to front holding sign.) God's people waited for centuries to meet Jesus. He was called the CHRIST. The names mean "anointed" or "chosen of God." "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, A Savior, Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:8-11)

STUDENT #3: STAR! (Walk to front holding sign.) Jesus is called a star, a light, a sun! "...there shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17) "Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:1)



STUDENT #4: **EMMANUEL!** (Walk to front holding sign.) Emmanuel means "God with us." God came to live with us. He "pup tented" among us. It's as if God is camping out with us on earth as part of our gang. "Behold a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel...."God with us." (Matthew 1:22, 23)

STUDENT #5: **KING!** (Walk to front holding sign.) We can trust Jesus the King. "Rejoice greatly!... Shout aloud....! Your King comes to you; triumphant and victoriousAnd he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea."
(Zechariah 9:9, 10)

STUDENT #6: **SON OF GOD!** (Walk to front holding sign.) God is proud of Jesus in every way. He announced, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The angel told Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

STUDENT #7: **SON OF MAN!** (Walk to front holding sign.) Jesus was God and Man. Jesus was born. He laughed and cried. He lived in a small village. He worked; He got tired; He slept. But...Jesus was more than a man. Jesus is God Who came from heaven to be our Savior.

STUDENT #8: **LORD!** (Walk to front holding sign.) Jesus is Lord. This name tells us that Jesus is Master, Ruler over all things in heaven and on earth. He is also Ruler over sin and death.

TEACHER: Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, is Lord of lords and King of kings. We are awed at God's love when we consider that God sent His sinless Son to earth to be our Savior. May we always remember the names of Jesus!

Exit



Teens: **Mysteries of The Manger**

C~SAT: (Christmas Story Advent Test)

Actors: Teens, two or three or more can huddle together casually

Costumes: Present day clothing

Divide speaking parts between available participants.

Teens sit casually on stage, floor and against a wall with Bibles, scripts and pencils.

Student #1: Who knew we would have to take a Christmas test.

Student #2: The C~SAT. The Christmas Story Advent Test! I didn't even know taking a test was a requirement to get to Heaven. This is the most important test we ever take....other than the SAT's to get into college.

Student #3: Maybe we can combine our IQ's and pass this thing. I have my #2 pencil. The test is multiple choice. How hard can it be?

Student #4: Judging by the first question, it is tricky.

1. Joseph was originally from... (Luke 2:3)

A. Bethlehem, B. Nazareth, C. New York City, D. Jerusalem, E. None of the Above
I know it's not New York City so I'm going to guessB. Nazareth.

Student #5: Bzzz. Wrong! It's A. Bethlehem. He worked and lived in Nazareth but he returned to Bethlehem - "his own city".

2. What did the Innkeeper say to Mary and Joseph?

A. "No room in the inn." B. Come back later and see if someone cancels their reservation" C. "Are you crazy? Do you see this crowd?" D. "Follow me. I have a place out back in the stable." E. None of the above

Student #6: Hmm, either A. No room or D. Follow me. I'm looking at the story and guess what? The Bible doesn't mention an innkeeper because the inn was probably more like a guest room in a house. The answer is E. None of the above! Next question:

3. How many people saw His star in the east and who were they?

A. 3 Shepherds B. Mary and Joseph C. 3 Kings D. CNN, Fox News and MSNBC E. None of the Above
This is a tricky question. The Magi saw the star in the east. The Bible doesn't say how many there were and they were not kings but astronomers who studied the stars. So the answer is...are you ready for this? ... E! None of the above.



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Student #7: I think the answer to #4 is donkey but it could be like the old joke, "What kind of car did the disciples drive? A Honda because they were all in one Accord." Or, "What kind of lights did Noah have on the ark? Flood lights." Or, "How did Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden? They were driven out in a Fury".

4. How did Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem?

A. Camel B. Donkey C. Walked D. Joseph walked, Mary rode a Donkey E. Chariot of Fire F. Who knows?

Student #8: Quit joking around. She rode a donkey and Joseph walked because he was the guy and was being polite. It's in every picture. Everyone knows that.

Student #9: Not so fast, O smart one. The Bible doesn't say! Answer: F. Who knows? See if you can get this one.

5. There was snow that first Christmas...

A. Only in Bethlehem B. All over Israel C. Nowhere in Israel D. Somewhere in Israel

Student #10: Got it! Just learned it in Geography! The answer is D! There is always snow on Mt. Hermon in Israel! Here's a good one. Stay on your toes to get this right.

6. The wise men stopped in Jerusalem...

A. To tell Herod about Jesus B. To find out where Jesus was C. To ask about the star D. To buy presents E. None of the above.

Student #11: The wise men thought Herod would know where to find Jesus. The Jewish leaders knew where the Messiah would be born. They weren't interested enough to travel the four or five miles to Bethlehem to see for themselves. What makes this quiz tricky...and so much fun... is that the wise men did not know His name was Jesus. They called him the 'king of the jews'. They found out later his name was Jesus. So even though none of the quiz answers are correct I say B. To find out where Jesus was!

Student #12: My brain is tired. I thought I knew every detail of the Christmas story and I found out I don't know much. I plan to go back and read the whole story from Luke 2. Time to get out of here and turn our quizzes in to get our grades. Let's hope we passed the test!

Exit





Mick and Gabby Speak

Mick and Gabby speak from center stage. Drop oversized hobo clothing, one piece at a time, on the floor revealing themselves to be angels with angel costumes underneath.

A reminder: After you disappear, take off your angel costumes. When folks see you at the Party, deny all involvement as an angel. Ask who they thought they saw. Keep angel identities a mystery. It's just as Heavenly Father would expect!

MICK: (Standing on stage, sniffing....) Aww, that was a beautiful story. I am glad we wandered into this church and saw this great show about Jesus. I got all the C-SAT questions right. I'm so proud of myself. (Sniff, sniff)

GABBY: Mick, pull yourself together. You know why we're here.

MICK: (*Sighing....*) I know. We're here for the cake. But there's something about that story.....

GABBY: Mick, cut the act.

MICK: (*Taking off oversized coat....*) Right! We did our job. The story about Jesus has been told one more time. It was told in this familiar place. With these smiling faces.

GABBY: (*Taking off oversized coat....*) Just in time. This coat was getting mighty scratchy.

MICK: (*Taking off rest of oversized clothing to reveal "Angel" clothing....*) I'll never forget the night you flew over Bethlehem shouting about God's Baby being born in a manger. You were great, Gabriel. It was a Night To Remember.



GABBY: *(Taking off rest of oversized clothing to reveal "Angel" clothing....)* Heavenly Father gave the orders, I am just His messenger. But you! You were terrific, Michael. You are God's favorite warrior angel. You were determined not to let anything happen to Jesus from the moment He was born in Bethlehem to this very moment.

MICK: *(Place tinsel halo on head....)* Well, there was that moment at the Cross outside Jerusalem when I thought I failed. Jesus died. The sky turned dark and the veil in the Temple was torn in two pieces. It seemed like Heavenly Father gave up on His whole plan of salvation. Boy, that was a bad day.

GABBY: *(Placing a tinsel halo on head....)* Turned out just fine. Heavenly Father was in control the whole time. From the first moment Baby Jesus took an earthly breath in Bethlehem to His last breath at Calvary outside Jerusalem, God was watching, protecting, sending us on heavenly missions.

MICK: We rolled that heavy, cold tomb stone and sat down to say to scared friends, "Do not be afraid; for I know you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead." (Matthew 28:5-8)

I'm blessed to be Heavenly Father's warrior angel. I get to go on missions with my friend, Gabriel, the world famous messenger angel. What's next? Any word from (pointing upward....) You know Who?

GABBY: *(Looking upward and winking....)* Come to think of it, I just got a message from Heavenly Father that there's a church down the street getting ready to perform their Christmas program. We can make it just in time if we hurry.

**MICK AND GABBY LOCK ARMS IN A FRIENDLY MANNER,
AND WALK BACK THE CENTER AISLE DISAPPEARING OUT THE DOOR.**

MICK: Do you think they'll have cake?

GABBY: Could be, friend, could be.

Conclusion: Strangers In The Night

A Gift To You: Why We Give

Reader: One Young Person



An African boy listened carefully as his teacher explained why Christians give presents to each other on Christmas day. "The gift is an expression of our joy over the birth of Jesus and our friendship for each other," she said.

When Christmas day came, the boy brought the teacher a seashell of lustrous beauty. "Where did you ever find such a beautiful shell?" the teacher asked. The boy told her that there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found. When he named the place, a certain bay several miles away, the teacher was speechless. "Why....it's gorgeous....wonderful, but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get the gift for me."

His eyes sparkled. The boy answered, "Long walk part of gift."

God came from heaven to a manger, from a manger to a cross, from a cross to the grave and from a grave back to heaven. And we ask, "Why all this trouble, God?" And God says to us, "Long walk part of gift."

And that is why we sometimes entertain strangers in the night, angels unaware!

Audience: Sing Christmas Carols.

(One verse of each.)

OPTION: Add a candle lighting ceremony
with all audience members participating

Invite the entire audience to attend the ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY PARTY immediately following the program in Fellowship Hall.

Young Student:

Prayer

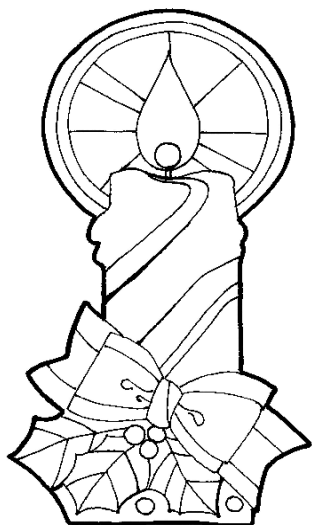
Heavenly Father, **ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS CHEERY** is now a **NIGHT TO REMEMBER**. Thank You for sending Mick and Gabby to remind us of Jesus' Bethlehem story. Help us remember to be kind to strangers and visitors. We never know when we are entertaining "angels unaware"! In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

COME TO THE PARTY!

Once Upon A Christmas Cheery Party!

*Assign party planning to one small group.
This could be a few men and women hand
picked for this purpose or an adult
Sunday School class or group of friends.*



Offer delicious desserts, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.

Because Mick and Gabby mentioned their desire for "cake" during the formal program, it might be a good idea to include a **Christmas cake**.

Words On Cake:

Happy Birthday Jesus! Love, Mick and Gabby

Preparations Before Party Day

Menu: Ask people to bring their favorite Christmas desserts. If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with doughnuts, orange juice and coffee. Provide a variety of favorite beverages!

Seating: Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the gathering. Set up tables and chairs. 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. Feature Christmas centerpieces on each table. These may be as simple as one poinsettia with candles. More elaborate decorations may be designed by the committee. Borrow Nativity sets to decorate each table. Unique groupings make a beautiful presentation and become interesting conversation starters. Add beautiful ornaments as desired.



Preparations On Party Day

Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and boil tea water 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 specific 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 still dressed in Holy Land costume.

After The Party

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.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE
GO HOME!
CONGRATULATIONS,
GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

HAVE YOU
ENTERTAINED ANGELS
UNAWARE?

