

## **The Nativity Show Extravaganza A Paper Bag Pageant**

This paper bag pageant does not rely on rehearsals beforehand. There are no words to memorize as the narrator reads the script. This pageant is written in a light hearted old fashioned variety show style (including some groaners or jokes). Enjoy and encourage those who take part to play up their roles, make noises, move around, and have fun.

You are free to use this pageant at no cost. I'd love to hear from you if you use it and to hear how it went. If you see any typos, spelling mistakes, etc. please let me know so I can continue to polish this document.

The play can be done with hymns throughout or the hymns can be removed for a more condensed pageant.

Blessings to you and your congregation,  
Micol Cottrell

What you will need:

Large paper leaf bags with costumes: Mary, Joseph, Angel #1, Angel #2, Angel #3, Inn keeper, 4 Shepherds, 3 Kings, sheep, Star, any other characters you wish to add.

Props: Signs: "Welcome to Nazareth", "Welcome to Bethlehem", "Welcome to the Far East", "oh – ahh", "applause", and "The end."

You can have people chose specific characters or you can do it like a surprise bag where people find out who they are playing when they open the bag (which is a lot of fun). It is also fun to have children and adults take part.

Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_'s (church name) Nativity Show Extravaganza. It's a paper bag pageant. The way we do it is pretty simple. On the steps (or name other location) are a lot of paper bags. They don't contain my lunch. Inside the bag you will find a character name and a costume. If you want to be in our pageant you simple choose a bag. You never know who you will be. The actors improvise the movements to the story I'm going to read - you make it up as you go along. Now, if you don't want to be in the pageant you're not off the hook. The audience is the choir, the landscape and the villagers. I'll let you know what you have to do.

While we get ready we'll leave you with this commercial message brought to you by "It Came Upon Glass polish" – nothing's makes your glass midnight clear like It Came Upon

Hymn: Please join me in singing

It came upon a midnight clear # 44 in Voices United.

I have heard that the actors are ready... before we begin I would like to introduce to you the cast of The Nativity Show Extravaganza

brought to you by (church name), the fine people who bring you Sunday Worship each week.

We are excited to have with us Mary the mother of Jesus. Hey Mary, take a bow.

Angel #1, where are you... well why don't you take a bow.

Joseph, who could forget you... come on out Joseph.

Angel #2, it wouldn't be a show without you.

Inn keeper – if you weren't here, I don't know if we could go on.

Shepherds – well, isn't this wonderful... Sponsoring you today is Abel Cane's fine shepherd crooks... if you have sheep to shepherd do it in style with Abel Cane.

Three Kings... are your around here somewhere?... Come on out.

And who could forget the star of our show... the Star!

And of course... lets not forget the town's people, the scenery and the (church name) Singers... all of you.

Actors, please have a seat while we get ready to present our show.

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In times past, whenever the people of God were oppressed, or troubled, or had gone astray, God would raise up for them a deliverer

who would rescue them from oppression and restore their freedom as God's people. But at the time of our story, it had been many long years since such a deliverer had appeared. The people were ruled by one foreign power after another and a long line of corrupt and cruel kings. But the people did not forget King David, the shepherd boy from Bethlehem, who had gone on to become their greatest king.

(ohh-ahhh sign – lifted for congregation)

The people were looking for a messiah from the line of David, someone anointed by God as king, someone who would deliver them from all that was oppressing them and restore the Kingdom of Israel.

(applause sign – lifted for congregation)

Now according to the Gospel of Luke, the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way: **The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings,**

**favoured one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.”**

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Let us go to Nazareth. [Sign: Nazareth] Here we are!

We find Mary doing some housework. Mary was sweeping and signing to herself. Oh, oh Mary, what’s that?... Here comes someone to visit you... oh look It’s Angel #1. Mary looked up and Saw Angel #1, jumped in surprise and said “Who are you?” (encourage Mary to say “Who are you?”)

Angel #1 looked at Mary, shook her hand and said, “Well hello... my name is Angel #1..... I have an incredible offer just for you.... You’ve heard of God, the maker of such great things as the world.... Well God is with you and wants you to have a son and call him Jesus.”

(ohh-ahh sign)

Mary looked at the angel and said "Sure"

Thank you Mary and Angel#1, have a seat.

(applause sign)

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The Gospel of Matthew tells the story a little bit differently: **When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus."**

Down the street from Mary we find Joseph hard at work - come on out Joseph. He is a carpenter. There he is now, hammering away making something wonderful. What are you making Joseph? (wait

for response) Well that is just swell. Let's watch Joseph at work. He is picking up a piece of wood, hammering some nails. He is picking up another piece of wood and hammering some more. Well look at that, he's made a baby crib! Hey Joseph, you may just want to hold onto that. While he was at work some of the villagers - that's you audience - came up to him and said "Hey Joseph, Mary's pregnant!" (get audience to repeat after you). Joseph is shocked. He hits his hand with the hammer. Oh, Joseph that has got to hurt. Joseph, you look tired. Are you tired? Maybe you should lay down and have a nap.

Joseph lays down and falls asleep. Listen, you can hear him snore. Joseph is dreaming. Let's take a look at what he is dreaming about.

He's dreaming that he's sleeping... But look who is coming, it's angel #2.

(ohh-ahh)

Joseph jumps up and says "Who are you!!! Angel two asks "Are you Joseph?" Joseph looks at the angel puzzled and answers, "yes." Angel #2 responds, "Joseph, I've got an offer you can't refuse. You

know God? . . . Well he thinks your one great fella. . . Don't get mad at Mary, that's God's baby. . . Things are going to be a-ok!. . . God's going to take care of you. . . You worried? . . . Forget-about-it!" . . .

(applause)

Well thank you Angel #2, I think that Joseph will sleep better tonight. Have a seat you two.

Joseph slept better after that. He married Mary and they were getting all ready for the new baby but before too long something else happened that interrupted their lives.

The Gospel of Luke says,

**In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who**



**was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.**

We'll watch Mary and Joseph again.

Mary and Joseph are getting ready for the trip to Bethlehem. Mary is packing a few last things, as Joseph brings their donkey to the door. Come on up donkey it's your turn. Hello Donkey, how are things going? (wait for response) Are you ready for the long hike to Bethlehem? (wait for response)

Mary, do you have everything? (wait fore response). Great. Mary puts the bags on Donkey's back and Mary, Joseph and the Donkey head out on their long walk. Up the Aisle you go. It was a long walk. They walk through the whistling wheat (prompt congregation to make whistling sounds)... past the flowing rivers (congregation: river sounds).... through the wind storms (congregation: wind sounds). Now turn around you two and walk back to the front. They came to a sign saying "Bethlehem 2 km" they

walk some more until they reach their destination. They look all around them at this busy city. Joseph, did you by chance make a reservation for tonight? (wait for response) No! Well you better start asking people if you can stay with them?

Joseph and Mary walk around asking the villagers - that's you audience - if they can stay with them. All the villagers shake their heads and say "Nope, there is no room here." Mary and Joseph, how are you feeling? (wait for response) They walk to the last inn – which by the way is up here Mary and Joseph - and they find The Inn Keeper. Come on out Inn Keeper. They ask him/her if he/she has a room for them. The Inn Keeper shakes his/her head and says "Nope No Rooms. . . Don't you know that all the rooms are gone in Bethlehem?. . . But you can stay in the barn ..."

So Mary and Joseph and the Donkey went to the barn. Mary had her baby – show us the Baby Mary

(ohhh-ahhh)

and they laid him in a manger.

(applause)

Thank you Mary and Joseph. Now a commercial from our sponsor Royal David's City Tourism Council. Spend a day, spend a

lifetime – Royal David’s City!!!. Please join me as we sing, Once in Royal David’s City # 64.

The Gospel of Luke continues the story by telling us:

**In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace a peace among those whom he favours!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.**

Well, what a day Mary and Joseph has had. Things are calming down for the happy couple so let's leave them alone so they can rest a bit. Across town, on a lonely hill four shepherds were taking care of their sheep. The sheep run around and the shepherds bring them back together. The sheep baa and baa, and baa. The sheep slowly fall asleep. Then the Shepherds fall asleep. Some of them snore.

As they sleep Angel #3 appears. Come on out Angel #3. Angel #3 nudges the shepherds and wakes them up. The shepherds jump up in fright. Angel three says to them "Do not be afraid. . . I'm here to tell you some good news. . . A baby is born who is the Messiah. . . You will find the child wrapped in bands of cloth. . . and lying in a manger. . ." Then in the sky a lot of angels, a whole multitude of angels, appeared flapping their wings - That you audience... flap your wings. And than, as fast as they appeared, the angels disappear. The Shepherds look at each other, look at their sheep and run off to find the baby – down aisle you go. They ask the town people if they have seen a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger. The Townspeople shrug their shoulders. They run towards

a barn and find Joseph, Mary, and their Donkey. In front of them is a baby wrapped in Cloth. Angels appear - come on up Angels #1, 2, and 3. Flap your wings audience! And they all sung Hymn #75: While shepherds watched their flocks by night.

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Now according to the Gospel of Matthew,

**In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and**

learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

In the Far East. (sign) there were three wise men from the east, who were star gazers - look up in the sky kings. One day as they are looking in the sky, a star appears. Star, where are you? Come on out! The wise men pick up their lamps, and three gift baskets and begin their journey, following the star.

They head past a field of wheat (get congregation to act out a field of wheat)

by a flowing river (get congregation to act out a flowing river)

and through a blowing desert (get the congregation to make wind noises)

The star leads them to Bethlehem (hold up the sign). They ask the town's people if they have seen a baby. The townspeople say no. They finally see a barn with a lot of people in it. The barn is filled with Mary, Joseph, Donkey, The shepherd and they sheep. The three wise men approach and give the baby gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

**And everyone sang *Hymn: We Three Kings***

Well, that's the story. But wait! There's more! The shepherds and kings go forth into the town to tell everyone what they have seen and heard, and the townspeople and the guests at the inn come to see for themselves what has been going on.

[Sign: Applause]

And Mary and Joseph pondered all these things in their hearts.

Let us sing, O Come, All Ye Faithful

***Hymn #60: O Come, All Ye faithful***

[Signs: The End; Applause]