

FREE SCRIPT • **A Christmas Nativity** by Myrth Burr

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SCRIPT

by Myrth Burr

Premiered in 1994 as the Provo City Christmas Pageant and played for several years



Newport, Maine

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This pageant may be produced free of charge for community, municipal and Church functions. Any use of the script for a production where actors are paid will incur a ROYALTY fee of \$50, total.

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

Jeremiah
Moses
Enoch
Micah
King Benjamin
Isaiah
Alma
Samuel
Angel
Mary
Joseph
Innkeeper
Stable Boy
Three Wisemen
Herod
Priests and Scribes

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PRODUCTION NOTES

- NOTE: Anything in [BRACKETS] is not spoken.
- To make the choir fuller and fuller, choir members who can return each night are invited to do so, with thanks.
- Flutes, harps, and other ancient instrumental sounds would enhance the music if it could be recorded with Those instruments by skilled musicians.
- Cymbals and/or shell horns would lend themselves to announce each prophet, apostle and the voice of Jesus Christ.
- The Herod scene could almost be "obscene" with lavish, exotic colors and costumes - even colored light, perhaps.
- In contrast, simplicity should be emphasized in stable set and costumes of Mary, Joseph, the Stable Boy, the Innkeeper, Shepherds, etc.
- It is suggested that all cast members rehearse exaggerated gestures so that they will be clear to the audience. Practice dramatic, loose gestures of arms and hands, body stances and mobile faces at home well in advance of performances.
- Make assignments and get commitments well in advance for:
 - Programs/scripts
 - Ushers (using dim flashlights, perhaps)
 - Costumes/prop people
 - Makeup crew
 - Chair set-ups and take-downs
 - Lights/sound/music
 - Advertising/invitations

A CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

[Recorded MUSIC MEDLEY of instrumental sacred Christmas MUSIC to welcome audience]

NARRATOR: Over the years, we humans have been privileged recipients of prophetic utterances. But many of us either have not heard them, or have not understood them, or have not had the faith to heed them. The holy scriptures record these enlightening communications from the Lord's chosen spokesmen. Hear the words of the prophets!

Hear the Prophet Jeremiah!

[It is suggested that cymbals or horns could be used to announce any prophet]

[RECORDED MUSIC down and out. PROPHET JEREMIAH stands frozen in position as LIGHTS come up full on him]

PROPHET JEREMIAH: Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. King Messiah shall reign and his name shall be called 'The Lord, our righteousness.' *[Jeremiah 23:5,6]*

[LIGHTS move to MOSES]

NARRATOR: Hear the words of Moses!

PROPHET MOSES: The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me; unto him ye shall hearken. *[Deuteronomy 18:15]*

NARRATOR: Hear the words of Enoch!

ENOCH: In the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of the Only Begotten, is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, who shall come in the meridian of time. *[Moses 6:57]*

NARRATOR: Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying:

ENOCH: When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh shall the earth rest? I pray thee, show me these things. *[Moses 7-54]*

NARRATOR: And the Lord said to Enoch, 'Look, and he looked, and beheld the Son of Man, and all the inhabitants of the earth from the beginning to the end.' Even that great city Jerusalem will be destroyed! Remnants of Enoch's people will be carried away and scattered. But the Lord has said that in his own

due time.

ENOCH: 'I will gather my flock out of all the countries ... and bring them again to the fold. And I will set shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking,' saith the Lord. A Messiah shall be born, a Savior for my people! [*Jeremiah 23:3-5*]

[LIGHTS down and out on JEREMIAH, ENOCH & MOSES]

[LIGHTS up on MICAH]

NARRATOR: Hear the Prophet Micah's words!

MICAH: Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me. For he wrote of me: 'A Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem - but thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little among thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth ... that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting to everlasting. [*Micah 5-2*]

[LIGHTS down on MICAH]

NARRATOR: Over the years, prophets on both sides of the world continued to prophesy of the coming of the Son of Man.

[LIGHTS up full on NEPHI]

Hear the words of the Prophet Nephi in the ancient Americas!

[Cymbals or horns]

NEPHI: Yea, even six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord raise up among the Jews -- even a Messiah or, in other words, a Savior of the world. [*1 Nephi 10:4*]

[LIGHTS down and out on NEPHI LIGHTS full up on KING BENJAMIN]

NARRATOR: Hear the Nephite prophet, King Benjamin!

[Cymbals or horns]

KING BENJAMIN: The time cometh ... and is not far distant, that ... the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven 'with power' and shall dwell in the tabernacle of clay and shall go forth among the children of men working mighty miracles. [*Mosiah 3:5*]

As he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of Heaven and earth the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary. [*Mosiah 3:8*]

[LIGHTS down and out on KING BENJAMIN. LIGHTS up full on ISAIAH]

NARRATOR: Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah!

[Cymbals or horns]

[MUSIC -- perhaps Hallelujah Chorus -- under Isaiah's words]

ISAIAH: *(Speaks with solemnity)* Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; and he shall reign forever and ever. *[Isaiah 7-14, 9:6]*

[MUSIC comes in softly and builds to a majestic climax, then steady under the voice of Narrator]

NARRATOR: Many more prophets have repeated the same glorious message. Hear the words of the Prophet Alma, in the Americas, who proclaimed:

[Cymbals or horns]

ALMA: Christ shall be born of Mary at Jerusalem. *[Alma 7-10]*

[LIGHTS down and out on ALMA. LIGHTS up on SAMUEL standing on the wall.]

NARRATOR: Hear the words of the Prophet Samuel, being commanded by an angel of the Lord, who cried unto his people:

[Cymbals or horns]

SAMUEL: And now it came to pass that I, Samuel the Lamanite, do prophesy many great things. I give unto you a sign; for five years cometh, and then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name. And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming.

[LIGHTS full, moving in the sky and across Heaven]

Behold, there shall be great lights in the heavens, insomuch that in the night before he cometh, there shall be no darkness, insomuch -- there shall be one day and a night and a day and it shall appear unto man as if it was one day. And behold, there shall a new star arise, such as one as you have never beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. And behold, this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in the heavens insomuch that you shall be amazed and wonder and fall to the earth. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life. Behold, the angel of the Lord commanded that I come and tell you these things. *[Helaman 14:1-7]*

[SAMUEL flings cloak around himself, looks into distance and makes dramatic exit.]

[LIGHTS full, indicating presence of an angel]

NARRATOR: And the Angel Gabriel came unto Mary who lived at Nazareth, a town in Galilee, saying: "Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his

name Jesus. He shall be great and be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom shall have no end." [Luke 1:28, 30-33]

[BLACKOUT as STAR comes on BRIGHTLY. Recorded MUSIC begins.]

[CHOIR comes on to sing "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"]

[MARY and JOSEPH enter from a distance up to entrance of stage during next narration. They are greeted by the INNKEEPER who comes forward to meet them, bowing, making pantomime conversation, gesturing for STABLE BOY, who bows and motions for MARY and JOSEPH to follow him to the stable where a STABLE BOY indicates manger, then goes to animals to work with bales of straw. HE exits]

[Soft MUSIC throughout silent action as transition]

NARRATOR: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed, and all went to be taxed, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. [Luke 2:1-5]

[MUSIC indicating time lapse]

And so it was while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. [Luke 2:6-7]

[MUSIC "Christmas Lullaby"]

[CHILDREN VOCALISTS or a Children's Choir enter and sing "Christmas Lullaby." JOSEPH approaches from rear of stable carrying the BABE tenderly and laying him in the manger -- returns to MARY, gently assisting her to front of stable where he places blanket over a bale of straw near manger and helps MARY be seated, giving SHEPHERDS time to come onto set on first note of music below.]

[MUSIC "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains" played quietly under narration]

NARRATOR: And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. [Luke 2:8}

[SHEPHERDS now come from many direction, looking upward in awe at the STAR. In astonishment, the SHEPHERDS move into and onto the entire stage, then stop looking up fearfully toward angel choir above.]

[STARLIGHT on full. Angelic MUSIC throughout all present action and behind next narration]

NARRATOR: And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which is 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: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' *[Luke 2:10-12]*

[HEAVENLY CHOIR members may blend voices with recorded music softly enough for NARRATOR to be heard, but increasingly stronger]

[LIGHT of some kind shooting into the heavens and trees. LIGHT on angel]

NARRATOR: And suddenly, there was with the angel, a multitude of heavenly Hosts praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will to men.'

[CHOIR full as they sing "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains]

[SHEPHERDS in state of excited confusion, pantomime speaking among themselves as they move toward the manger in groupings. ANGELS exit unobtrusively]

NARRATOR: And it came to pass, as the Angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, 'Let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.'

[SHEPHERDS move toward stable taking positions near and inside by MARY and BABY. SHEPHERDS are reverentially distanced, however, not speaking to or touching MARY and BABY]

[LIGHT SHOW fades out]

NARRATOR: And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. .

[SHEPHERDS motion goodbyes and exit hurriedly]

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. *[Luke 2:18-19]*

[LIGHTS lowered except for two bright spots focused on MARY and the STAR]

[PAUSE for effect]

[LIGHTS full up. MUSIC for "We Three Kings..." begins. HORNS announce 3 Wise Men]

[WISEMEN enter as though following the STAR, making pantomime conversation, pointing, etc. and make their way to HEROD]

NARRATOR: When Jesus was just a toddler in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wisemen from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star

in the east, and are come to worship him.'

[LIGHT also on HEROD and SCRIBES]

When Herod the King heard these things, he was troubled. When he gathered all the chief priest and scribes together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea. For it is written, out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.'

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wisemen, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared and sent them to Bethlehem. 'Go, search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I might come and worship him also.' *[Matthew 2:1-5, 7-8]*

[WISEMEN point to STAR and reposition themselves as though arriving at the family home in Nazareth -- moving throughout next narration]

When they heard the King, they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. *[Matthew 2:9-10]*

[WISEMEN show great joy and move a little livelier]

And when they came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him -- and when they had opened their treasures, they presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. *[Matthew 2:11]*

[First WISEMAN approaches MARY, JOSEPH and CHILD at their home. Bows, kneels, in reverence, slightly covers face. PAUSE. Back up, into position. Second, and third do the same. EXIT as NARRATOR describes their leaving]

And being warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. *[Matthew 2:12]*

[LIGHT rests on MARY through next narrative]

[MARY sits transfixed through narrative]

NARRATOR: Mary must have felt her heart overflowing, for she, the mother of Jesus, had seen the rejoicing of shepherds, and later watched the glorious adoration of the Magi. In her memory, she must have kept Gabriel's glorious promises about her son. 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ... and of his kingdom there shall be no end.'

[NARRATOR speaks with full voice]

Are we listening now? Do we hear? Will we make place in our hearts for Jesus?

Hear the voice of Jesus!

VOICE of JESUS: *(can be recorded)* I am the light and life of the world, he that followeth me shall not

walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. *[John 8:12]*

[CHOIR "Joy to the World"]

[MUSIC "Joy to the World"]

[POSTLUDE of instrumental medley of recorded Christmas carols)

THE END