



# Nativity Pageant

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORTHODOX CHURCH  
YORK, PA

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## **CAST (In Order of Appearance)**

Narrator #1

Joachim

Anna

Zachariah

Angel #1

Angel #2

Sheep

Narrator #2

Person to carry "Time Passes" sign

People in the Temple, praying

Young Mary

Narrator #3

Narrator #4

Joseph

Narrator #5

Choir (Older Girls)

Grown Up Mary

Angel Gabriel (Could be the same person as one of the previous angels)

Roman Soldier

Cook

Cleaners

Travelers

Innkeepers (#1, #2, #3)

Innkeeper #4 (Speaking Part)

Preschool/ K-1 Students

Narrator #6

Narrator #7

2 Shepherds

Optional: Children to Sing in Russian

## **Scenery and Props**

### **Scene 1**

*Jewish Temple* [Center Stage]

Curtains, Table, Candles, etc. to Represent Holy of Holies

2 Baskets of Fruits and Vegetables for Joachim and Anna

*Joachim and Anna's Garden* [Stage Right]

Flowers and Plants for Garden

*Wilderness* [Stage Left]

Trees

Staff for Joachim

"Time Passes" sign

Baby Doll

### **Scene 2**

*Jewish Temple* [Center Stage]

2 Staves for Joseph: One that's plain (Could re-use Joachim's)

One that sprouted flowers and leaves

### **Scene 3**

*Joseph's House* [Stage Right]

Chair

Basket with Purple Cloth, Needle and Thread for Mary

*Cave* [Center Stage]

Bales of Hay

Ox and Donkey

Manger

Baby Doll (Can use doll from Joachim and Anna scene.)

Signs to put on doors representing inns: "Happy Hotel" "Alehouse of the Serpents" "Nero's Nourishment" "Inn at Bethlehem" or create your own names

Buckets

Rags

Pillowcases stuffed with coats for travelers

Pots

Wooden Spoons

Basket with Bread

Can re-use Baskets of Fruits and Vegetables from Joachim and Anna scene

Bells

Cardboard fish

Painters tape for hanging signs and marking places on the floor

## **Costumes Needed**

Joachim

Anna

Zachariah

Angel 1 (Costume plus wings)

Optional: Angel 2 (Costume plus wings)

Sheep

People in the Temple (Robes- number will vary depending on number of students)

Young Mary (Blue dress)

Older Girls in Choir (Robes- number will vary depending on number of students)

Grown Up Mary (Blue Robe with Covering for Head; optional: Pillow for Pregnancy)

Innkeepers (3-4)

Cooks (Number will vary depending on number of students)

Cleaners (Number will vary depending on number of students)

Travelers (Number will vary depending on number of students)

Roman Soldier

## Scene 1- Joachim and Anna

*(Joachim and Anna's garden is Stage Right. The High Priest Zachariah is standing in front of the Temple Center Stage. Joachim and Anna enter Stage Right with baskets of food.)*

**Narrator 1:** Joachim and Anna were an elderly couple who had been happily married for many years. It was now a feast day of the Lord. They gathered together baskets of food for an offering of thanksgiving and forgiveness as was the custom. They headed toward the temple. *(Joachim and Anna walk to the Temple.)* When they got there, they were stopped by the priest Zachariah.

*(Zachariah raises his hand to stop them.)*

**Zachariah:** You may not enter!

**Joachim:** But why?!

**Zachariah:** Because you do not have any children, it is not lawful for you to offer any gifts. *(Zachariah exits behind the Temple.)*

*(Joachim and Anna look shocked and huddle together, sad)*

**Narrator 2:** Joachim and Anna felt terrible! They had always wanted to have children, but a child had not been given to them. Joachim and Anna went back to their home.

*(Joachim and Anna, looking very sad, take their baskets and walk Stage Right to the garden where they set them down.)*

**Narrator 2:** Joachim decided to go into the wilderness to pray for 40 days and 40 nights.

*(Joachim moves Stage Left to the wilderness.) (Sheep enter in the wilderness.)*

**Narrator 2:** At the same time, Anna prayed in her garden.

*(Anna walks around her garden, praying sadly)*

**Narrator 1:** Anna prayed to God with tears and a sad heart.

*(Angel #1 enters Stage Right)*

And then, an angel came to her saying:

**Angel #1:** Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer and will give you a child. Everyone in the whole world will know of your child!

**Anna:** My child will be a gift to God. I will dedicate my child to the Lord and the child will serve Him all the days of its life.

*(Angel #1 exits Stage Right. Angel #2 enters Stage Left and goes to Joachim.)*

**Narrator 2:** At the same time, an angel appeared to Joachim saying:

**Angel #2:** Joachim, the Lord has heard your prayer and will give you a child. Everyone in the whole world will know of your child.

**Narrator 1:** Rejoicing, Joachim took his great flocks which he promised to sacrifice to God and returned to be with his wife. He was very excited to receive God's promise.

*(Joachim leaves the wilderness with the sheep and stands Center Stage.)*

*(Angel #2 exits Stage Left. Anna joins Joachim Center Stage. They smile at each other and do a "side hug." They exit Stage Right.)*

**Person enters Stage Right and walks across the stage with "Time Passes" sign. Exits Stage Left.**

**Narrator 1:** Nine months later, a baby girl, whom they named Mary, was born to them.

*(The sound of a crying baby is heard offstage. Anna and Joachim enter Stage Right with a baby doll wrapped in a blanket.)*

**Anna:** Oh, Joachim, I am so happy! We finally have the baby we prayed for! The Lord has heard our prayers!

**Joachim:** Yes, the Lord has greatly blessed us! Thanks be to God!

*(Joachim and Anna exit Stage Left and walk to the back of the hall.)*

**Narrator 2:** Mary was a happy baby. Her mother protected her and kept unclean things away from her. Anna knew that Mary was a special child, set apart to live for God.

**Person enters Stage Left and walks across the stage with "Time Passes" sign. Exits Stage Right.**

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## Scene 2- The Presentation of Theotokos in the Temple

*(Zachariah enters from behind the temple and stands Center Stage. A group of people enter Stage Left and walk about in front of the Temple, praying.)*

**Narrator 3:** When Mary turned 3 years old, her parents took her to the Temple to dedicate her to the Lord, so she could safely grow in service, understanding, and love for God.

*(The people praying in the Temple separate into two groups- half on one side of the Temple and half on the other side.)*

*(Joachim and Anna enter offstage and walk up the stairs to the Temple, holding Young Mary's hands.)*

**Narrator 4:** That special day that Mary went to the Temple, we now remember as The Presentation of the Theotokos. On that day, Mary's parents held her hands as they presented her to the high priest, Zachariah, in the Temple.

*(Joachim, Anna, and Young Mary stand in front of Zachariah.)*

**Narrator 4:** Inside the Temple there was a special place called the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and even then, this took place only one time a year.

*(Zachariah and Young Mary bow in front of the altar. Joachim and Anna stand at each side of the Temple entrance. Zachariah takes Mary inside the Holy of Holies and brings her back out to the group of people.)*

**Zachariah:** *(loudly)* This is Mary, a gift from God, and she is to be magnified!

*(People looked amazed, whisper to each other, and smile. Young Mary dances Center Stage.)*

**Narrator 3:** Mary was so happy to be there! She danced, and all of Israel loved her.

*(Joachim and Anna exit down the steps. Zachariah and Young Mary exit Stage Left. The people who prayed exit Stage Right and Stage Left.)*

**Person enters Stage Right and walks across the stage with with "Time Passes" sign. Exits Stage Left.**

*(Zachariah and Grown Up Mary enter Stage Left and pray in front of the Temple.)*

**Narrator 4:** Mary grew up in the Temple, and was now was a young woman who was fourteen years old. She could not stay in the Temple forever. But where could she go? Her elderly parents had died long ago. Zachariah prayed about what to do. It was decided that she should get married to a good man who could take care of her and watch over her. But who could this be? *(Zachariah paces back and forth.)* A sign was needed from God. *(Zachariah raises his hands and looks up.)*

*(Enter Joseph)*

**Narrator 4:** An elderly man named Joseph came to the Temple to see if he would be a good husband for Mary. He laid his staff before Zachariah. *(pause- prop person pushes flowered staff out to Zachariah from behind the scene)* Suddenly his staff sprouted forth flowers and green leaves! *(Zachariah picks up the staff with the flowers and holds it up high, acts surprised.)*

**Narrator 3:** This was the sign Zachariah had been waiting for. Joseph would be the husband of Mary.

*(Zachariah sets down the staff. He takes Joseph's right hand and Mary's right hand and joins them together.)*

**Narrator 3:** Mary and Joseph were now betrothed.

*(Zachariah, Mary, and Joseph exit down the stairs.)*

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**(Major Set changes. The Temple set is removed or is turned around and becomes the Cave. Joachim and Anna's Garden becomes Joseph's house.)**

### **Scene 3- The Annunciation**

*(Mary enters Joseph's House from the stairs with basket of sewing, sits on the chair and begins to sew.)*

**Narrator 5:** In Joseph's house, Mary continued her holy life by working, studying the Scriptures, and praying. Zachariah was pleased that Joseph was taking good care of Mary. He asked her to sew a new purple veil for the Temple. One day while she was quietly working, an angel suddenly appeared.

*(The Angel Gabriel enters Stage Right and surprises Mary.)*

**Narrator 5:** The Bible tells us in the book of Luke, "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary."

*(Older girls who comprise the Choir enter Stage Right.)  
(They sing the following song. The angel Gabriel and Mary pantomime the motions in the song.)*

**The Angel Gabriel Song (time:2:00) for girl choir**

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail,' said he, 'O lowly maiden Mary,'  
most highly favoured lady: Gloria!

2. 'For now a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honor thee,  
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,'  
most highly favoured lady: Gloria!

3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,  
'my soul shall laud and magnify His holy name,'  
most highly favoured lady: Gloria!

**Mary:** Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be unto me according to thy word.  
*(Angel Gabriel exits Stage Right. Mary and the choir exit down the stairs and go to the back of the hall.)*

**Person enters Stage Left and walks across the stage with “Time Passes” sign.  
Exits Stage Right.**

**Signs are put on the doors to indicate inns. Set up cave.**

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**Scene 4- The Inn and the Holy Birth**

*(Roman soldier enters Stage Right and stands Center Stage.)*

**Roman soldier:** (Reads Luke 2:1-5)

“And it came to pass in those days, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This census first took place when Quirinius was governing Syria.

So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David,

To be registered with Mary his betrothed wife, who was with child.”

*(Enter innkeepers, cleaners, cooks, etc. down the center aisle from the back of the hall. There is the hustle and bustle of many people.)*

*(Improvise some lines: “People will be coming soon!” “Hurry up with that bread!” “Clean the tables!” etc. Decide what the lines will be and who says them during rehearsals)*

*(Travelers enter from the back of the hall go inside the inns. Mary and Joseph enter last from the back of the hall. Inns are busy and full... they knock on three doors... improvise dialogue. Joseph knocks on the door on Stage Left.)*

**Last Innkeeper:** *(tired and grouchy, tripping over someone as he comes to the door)* Yes?!

**Joseph:** Kind sir, do you have a roo....

**Last Innkeeper:** *(interrupting)* all our rooms are taken and there are people piled upon the floor everywhere! I tripped on someone just to answer the door for you.

**Joseph:** Oh! I am sorry, but you see, my wife is about to have a baby *(points and smiles at her)* and we need a place to stay.

**Last Innkeeper:** *(leans head out the door to get a better look)* Ah, yes, I see. That is a problem.

**Joseph:** Is there ANY room at all for us?

**Last Innkeeper:** *(scratching his head, sighs)* I guess you could squeeze into our stable. I have already bedded the animals for the night, so there is fresh straw on which to lay.  
*(They all walk towards the cave and enter, the donkey and ox are happy)*

**Last Innkeeper:** Well, it should comfortable enough I suppose. You can't beat fresh straw for a bed.

**Joseph:** Thank you, sir. God bless you.

*(Innkeeper goes back to his inn. Mary and Joseph settle in the cave. People come out of the inns and stand Center Stage in front of the cave and sing the Nativity Kontakion.)*

**Nativity Kontakion** (time: 1:00)

[http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/nativity\\_of\\_our\\_lord-prefeast\\_series.pdf](http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/nativity_of_our_lord-prefeast_series.pdf)

The Virgin cometh today  
To the cave to give birth  
Ineffably to bring forth  
The Word eternal  
Therefore, rejoice O earth  
At the message  
With the angels and shepherds  
Give glory to him  
Who shall appear by His own will  
As a young child  
He who is from eternity God.

*(At this point, the people stand on either side of the cave. Mary has the baby in her arms. Mary and Joseph look lovingly at the baby.)*

**Narrator 6:** And so it was, that 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.

*(Preschoolers to 1st graders are seated in chairs in front of the stage and enter up the steps. They turn toward the audience and stand at the front of Center Stage.)*

**Preschool- 1<sup>st</sup> graders:** (time: 25sec)

Baby Jesus, (cradle arms) God's own Son, (point to heaven)  
Surely loves us (cross arms), ev'ry one.(point to everyone)  
There he lies (point to manger), asleep on hay; (tilt head on clasped hands)  
Let Him come to you today. (2 hands out front, point to audience, palms open)  
*from SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS*

*(Angels from previous scenes flank the cave. Children dressed as sheep stand next to 2 shepherds in the wilderness, Stage Left. They make their way to the cave during verse 3.)*

### **Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (time: 1:00)**

Infant holy, Infant lowly, for His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, and still knowing,  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Swiftly winging, angels singing,  
Bells are ringing, (*Have someone ring bells here*) tidings bringing:  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all,  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the Babe was born for you,  
Christ the Babe was born for you.

**Narrator 7:** St. John Chrysostom writes, "Come then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth..."

*(Children enter to sing in Russian.)*

### **Heaven and Earth (*in Russian first*) (total time: 2:00) Everyone sings in English**

Heaven and earth, Heaven and earth  
Now sing in triumph  
Angels and people, angels and people  
Join in celebration  
(Chorus)

#### Chorus

Christ the Lord is born  
Come and behold him  
Choirs of angels singing  
Wisemen are appearing

Christ the King greeting  
Shepherds retelling joyfully the wondrous story  
Come and adore him, come and adore him  
Lying in a manger  
Mary the virgin, Mary the virgin  
Keeps watch o'er the Savior  
(Chorus)

**ALL (pick your languages):**

[In Greek] Christos Gennate! Doxasate!

[In Arabic] Al-Masih woolihda! Fih-majidooh!

[In Russian] Христос родился прославили его Christos Razdajetsja! - Slavite Jeho!

[English] Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

## **Resources**

[orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Christmas\\_hymns.html](http://orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Christmas_hymns.html)

<http://ww1.antiochian.org/music/library>

[http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/sacred\\_music/CarolsOfTheNativity.pdf](http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/sacred_music/CarolsOfTheNativity.pdf)

[http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/21\\_heaven\\_and\\_earth\\_christmas\\_carol-hilko\\_11-18-2013\\_final.pdf](http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/21_heaven_and_earth_christmas_carol-hilko_11-18-2013_final.pdf)

[http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/nativity\\_of\\_our\\_lord-prefeast\\_series.pdf](http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/nativity_of_our_lord-prefeast_series.pdf)

## **Preschool - 1st grade Assignment**

Baby Jesus, (cradle arms) God's own Son, (point to heaven)

Surely loves us (cross arms), ev'ry one.(point to everyone)

There he lies (point to manger), asleep on hay; (tilt head on clasped hands)

Let Him come to you today. (2 hands out front, point to audience, palms open)