

SCRIPT

A CHILD IS BORN

(Play begins with Sarah & Jack in the attic. The attic should be positioned at the side of the stage, leaving the centre of the stage for the story to be acted out.)

Sarah: Right, we've found the Christmas tree, the fairy lights, one box of baubles and one box of tinsel.

Jack: Good, I think that's everything. *(He shouts down to mum.)* Mum we've found all the Christmas decorations. Can we start putting them up now? *(Pause)* Mum! *(Pause)* Mum! Are you still there? Can you hear me? Where's she gone? She was there a minute ago!

(Meanwhile Sarah starts looking around the attic.)

Sarah: This attic is a lot bigger than I thought. I didn't know mum and dad had so many books. Lend us the torch a minute. It's a bit dark over here. Ow! What was that I just kicked? Another dusty old book. It must have fallen off the shelf. *(She picks it up, blows the dust off and opens it.)* It doesn't look like it's been opened for years. How strange, it doesn't have any words or pictures in it. The pages are all blank.

(Story Guide suddenly appears behind Sarah.)

Story Guide: That's because this book doesn't need words and pictures.

(Sarah, still unaware of the Story Guide turns to Jack.)

Sarah: What did you say?

Jack: I didn't say anything.

(The children turn and are suddenly startled by the Story Guide.)

Sarah & Jack: Ah! Who are you?

Story Guide: Allow me to introduce myself. I am your Story Guide and you must be Sarah and Jack. I have the ability to take you back in time and bring you forward again. I can make you happy or sad, make you laugh or cry. I can take you to places you only dream of. It all depends on the story really.

Sarah: But how do I know what the story is? All the pages are blank.

Story Guide: Oh no my little ones, I can assure you the pages are most certainly not blank.

Jack: But if the pages are not blank, why can't we see anything?

Story Guide: Ah, that's simple. It's because you are not wearing your reading glasses.

Sarah But we don't need glasses, our eyes are fine.

Story Guide: If your eyes are fine, then why can't you see the words? Please let me assist you. *(He pulls out a pair of colourful glasses)* These, my little ones are what I call the eyes of revelation. As you put them on the book will reveal its story to you. All will become perfectly clear.

(Sarah & Jack put the glasses on.)

Sarah: Hey, that's amazing! There are words on the pages. It says 'A Child is Born'.

Story Guide: But yes, of course, for this story contains the very heart of Christmas.

Jack: A child is born? But thousands of babies are born all over the world everyday. So what's so special about this one?

Story Guide: Well first we must travel back thousands of years to the time of the ancient prophets of Israel. For they foretold the birth of a child who would one day reign as king over the whole world.

(Track 19 - Time travel music is played as characters move to the side of the stage. This could alternatively be a shaken tambourine or chimes.)

Song 1: FOR UNTO US (Track 1/10)
(Prophets prophesy as introduction music is played.)

Jack: O.K. You've got my attention now. So the prophets foretold the birth of a king. But how, when and where was he to be born?

Story Guide: My dears, these are questions that you alone must find the answers to. I am merely here to guide you. Use your eyes of revelation and see what the book reveals.

(Sarah & Jack look at the book while the time travel music is played. Mary enters the stage.)

Sarah: Through a window I see a young woman. I think... yes! her name is Mary. She seems to be both happy and excited. Soon she will be married to a carpenter named Joseph, whom she has grown to love very much. She is sitting alone when it suddenly happens without warning. The room fills with light and an amazing angel stands in front of her. Mary is frightened. But shh! he is speaking.

Angel: Greetings! You who are highly favoured, the Lord is with you. Mary, do not be afraid, for you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to name him Jesus. He will be great, the son of the most high God. The Lord will give him a throne and he will reign forever.

Mary: But how can I have a baby? I'm not even married yet.

Angel: The spirit of the most high God will overshadow you and place his seed within you. His father will not be of this earth but of God in heaven.

Sarah: Now Mary is wondering to herself whether anyone will believe the message that the angel has given, but as the light fades, she is left with a strange peace and great excitement, for God's son is going to be born and she has been chosen to be his mother.

Jack: And now Mary is running to the carpenter's shop to tell Joseph the wonderful news.

Mary: Joe! Joe! Ah there you are. I've got some exciting news to tell you.

(Joseph carries on working.)

Mary: But I think you had better sit down first.

Joseph: Sorry Mary, I'm a bit busy at the moment darling. I promised I'd finish this table for a customer tonight.

Mary: Joseph, please sit down. Just give me five minutes. The news I have to tell you cannot wait.

Joseph: O.K. Mary, you have my full attention. What's happened?

Mary: Joseph, We're going to have a baby.

Joseph: Oh my darling, once we get married I can't wait to start a family. You know I want us to have children.

Mary: No Joseph, you don't understand, I'm going to have a baby.

Joseph: You're what!?

Mary: An angel came to visit me last night, a great big shiny thing. He lit up the whole room. He told me that heaven had chosen me to give birth to the Son of God.

Joseph: So you're pregnant? An angel huh? Couldn't you make up a better story than that? And to think that I loved and trusted you. This is how you repay me - by getting pregnant! How could you do this to me? We had so much to live for and now you've thrown it all away. Leave me alone Mary.

Mary: But believe me Joseph, it's the truth.

Joseph: Leave me alone. Go on, get out!

(Mary leaves stage crying and repeating the line, "It's the truth.")

Jack: Look at Joseph now! He's working like never before, sawing, hammering, and chiselling until the sun goes down. Now it is too dark to work anymore. He lays down exhausted and falls asleep in a pool of tears, devastated by the news.

(Joseph starts to dream. Angel enters stage.)

Angel: Joseph, Joseph, do not fret yourself about Mary, for she is quite right, she is going to have a baby. God has already placed it in her womb. You are to call his name Jesus, which means saviour, for he will save his people from their sins. So arise Joseph and take Mary as your bride, for as the prophet has said "A virgin will conceive and bear a Son, he will be called Emmanuel, God with us."

Jack: When Joseph awoke the following morning, he felt quite different from the night before, for peace and happiness had filled his heart. Now he knew the baby that Mary carried was God's son.

(Track 19 - Time travel music)

Sarah: Look Jack! A wedding is taking place. Isn't that Mary and Joseph?

Jack: Yes it is. They are getting married just as the angel had said. But they haven't told anyone about the baby. It's a secret given by God, for them both to cherish.

Song 2: ON THIS WEDDING DAY (Track 2/11) *(Wedding guests dance to song)*

Story Guide: *(Guide is crying, he wipes his tears.)* Oh, I'm so sorry, I always cry at weddings. They look so happy together. *(Guide composes himself.)* But now we must move on in time. Nine months to be exact.

(Track 19 - Time travel music)

Story Guide: Now I shall guide you through the next chapter. So read on my little ones.

Jack: It is nearly time for the baby to be born. The Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus, orders everyone to return to the town where they were born to be counted and taxed.

Sarah: The roads are crowded with travellers as they all make their way to their home towns. Mary and Joseph are also travelling a long way to Joseph's home town of Bethlehem. By the time they reach Bethlehem, it is full of noise and bustle. Most of the travellers have arrived before them. It looks like all the inns are full.

Song 3: WE'RE FULL AND OVERFLOWING (Track 3/12) *(Each Innkeeper stands with a sign. The name of an Inn appears on one side and NO VACANCIES on the other. This sign is turned to NO VACANCIES during the chorus.)*

(Joseph knocks at the innkeeper's door.)

Innkeeper: Yes, what can I do for you?

Joseph: Please can you help us? My wife is heavily pregnant and is exhausted from the journey. Please find us a place that she may rest.

Innkeeper: Impossible! As you can see you have arrived too late.

Joseph: But you must help us, my wife is about to give birth.

Innkeeper: Look around and see for yourself, the whole town is chock-a-block. There's nowhere left for you, I'm sorry. *(He shuts the door)*

Joseph: I'm very sorry Mary. Looks like everywhere is full.

(Innkeeper opens the door again and calls them back.)

Innkeeper: Hey! You two, if you're as desperate as you say you are, I've got a place around the back. It's not very comfortable and rather smelly. You see, it's where we keep the animals. But it would be a roof over your head. If you want to stay there for the night you can.

Jack: So Mary and Joseph find shelter in a stable. That night 'A child is born,' just as the angel had promised. Joseph wraps a blanket around him and lays him in a manger. They name him Jesus.

Song 4: OH WHAT A WONDER (Track 4/13)

Story Guide: And so it was, instead of being born in a royal palace, this king was born in a cold, dirty animal shed.

Sarah: Mind you, I bet the people of Bethlehem were queuing up to see this newborn king.

Story Guide: Oh no, quite the opposite my child, the people of Bethlehem slept through the whole event. You see it was 'invitation only.'

Sarah: What do you mean?

Story Guide: Come with me outside the walls of Bethlehem, to a group of shepherds huddled together on the hillside trying to keep warm.

(Track 19 Time travel music. Occasional sheep noises in the background would be effective throughout this scene. Shepherd 1 starts singing to himself.)

Shepherd 1: 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground.' Yes, that's a good line. *(He hums the next line, then says with frustration,)* Oh! I just can't find the lyrics for the second half of this song. I think it could be a hit. If only I could think of some. *(He hums it again.)*