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# A Preschool Nativity: Short Version

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# A Preschool Nativity: Short Version

Christmas play designed especially for preschool and kindergarten children. With no memorized lines required, this simple retelling of the birth of Jesus allows even the shyest little ones to participate with confidence. Children walk to their places, hold small props, and stand in familiar poses while a narrator tells the traditional nativity story in warm, easy language perfect for young audiences.

Featuring Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, wise men, and even optional animals or a star bearer, this play captures beautiful photo moments for families while keeping rehearsal needs minimal. The script uses soft music, simple costumes, and calm staging to create a peaceful, joyful setting that works in any church, classroom, or small venue.

Ideal for children ages 3–6, this preschool nativity is widely used by small churches, Christian schools, and daycare programs because it requires very little preparation, runs smoothly even with wiggly children, and faithfully communicates the heart of the Christmas message. With its simplicity, flexibility, and charming child-led warmth, *A Preschool Nativity: Short Version* is a delightful and reliable choice for your holiday program.

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# A Preschool Nativity: Short Version

*An Original Christmas Play for Preschoolers*

**Length:** ~15 minutes

**Cast:** 8–12 children, plus 1–2 narrators/helpers

**Style:** Traditional set, simple play script, almost no speaking parts for children

## Cast of Characters

**Narrator 1**

Reads most of the story in a warm, calm voice. Can be an older child, youth, or adult.

**Narrator 2 (optional)**

Helps with longer readings, or can lead the congregation in short carols.

**Mary**

A preschool girl in a simple robe and veil. She mostly holds the baby doll and smiles.

**Joseph**

A preschool boy in a simple robe. He stands beside Mary and gently “protects” her.

**Angel (1–3 children)**

Dressed in white with tinsel or paper halos. They stand with arms outstretched and later “visit” the shepherds.

**Shepherds (2–4 children)**

Wear simple robes or oversized T-shirts with fabric belts. They carry plush sheep or simple staffs made from cardboard tubes.

**Wise Men / Magi (3 children)**

Wear bright robes, paper crowns, and carry lightweight “gifts” (boxes wrapped in gold, small bags, or ribbons).

Star Bearer (optional)

Carries a star on a stick and leads processions slowly across the stage.

**Animal Helpers (optional: 1–2 children)**

Can be a cow, donkey, or sheep with simple ears or headbands. They sit or stand near the manger.

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## What You Need on Stage

- Simple manger with a baby doll wrapped in cloth
- Small bales of straw or brown/gold fabric for “hay”
- Simple bench or stool for Mary and Joseph
- A large star (hanging above or carried on a pole)
- Soft background music: instrumental carols or one quiet piano/guitar
- Optional: microphone for the narrator

## Stage Notes for Leaders

- Children do not need to memorize any lines.
- A helper/teacher can gently guide children where to stand.
- Let children be children. If someone waves to a parent or sits down, that's okay.
- Keep the lights warm and not too bright.
- Encourage parents beforehand: the "cuteness and chaos" is part of the blessing.

# SCRIPT

### [Prelude]

(Soft Christmas music plays: instrumental "Away in a Manger" or "Silent Night." Children are seated off to one side with a teacher. NARRATOR 1 steps forward.)

**NARRATOR 1:**

Welcome, everyone. Tonight we have a very simple nativity play. Our preschoolers will help us remember the story of the very first Christmas, when Jesus was born. They have only a few actions to do, so you may see more smiles, waves, and giggles than lines… and that is exactly how we like it.

***(Short pause.)***

NARRATOR 1:

We invite you to listen, to watch, and to whisper a prayer of thanks for the Child who came to bring us hope and peace.

***(Music fades gently. Lights stay soft.)***

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## SCENE 1 – MARY AND JOSEPH

*(Teacher leads MARY and JOSEPH slowly onto the stage. If you have a STAR BEARER, the star walks in front of them, then moves to one side or stands near the back. MARY and JOSEPH stand at center without the baby yet.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Long ago, in a little town called Nazareth, there lived a young woman named Mary. Mary loved God very much. She tried to listen to God with all her heart.

***(MARY smiles and looks up, hands folded or gently touching her heart.)***

**NARRATOR 1:**

Mary was promised to a man named Joseph. Joseph was kind and good. He also loved God.

***(JOSEPH stands a little closer to Mary, maybe holding a small walking stick.)***

**NARRATOR 1:**

One day, something amazing happened. God sent an angel to Mary with wonderful news.

*(Teacher gently motions for the ANGEL or ANGELS to enter and stand a few steps away from Mary, hands raised.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

The angel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary. God is with you. You will have a baby. He will be God’s own Son, and His name will be Jesus.”

**NARRATOR 2 (optional):**

Mary trusted God. She said, “I am the Lord’s servant. May it happen just as God has said.”

***(MARY nods gently. ANGELS lower their arms and smile.)***

NARRATOR 1:

Later, Mary and Joseph had to travel to a town called Bethlehem. It was a long journey, and Mary was very tired, because soon the baby would be born.

*(Teacher shows MARY and JOSEPH how to walk slowly across the stage. If available, STAR BEARER leads them. They end near one side of the stage, where the manger will be.)*

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## SCENE 2 – NO ROOM AT THE INN

*(MARY and JOSEPH stand next to the place where the manger will be. There can be a simple "Inn" sign or door if you wish. A TEACHER or older child can act as the Innkeeper, but no lines are required.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

When Mary and Joseph reached Bethlehem, the town was very crowded. Many people had come to stay there. There were no more rooms for them.

*(JOSEPH can knock softly on an invisible door or on a cardboard "inn" door. An adult "Innkeeper" shakes their head kindly and points them toward the stable area.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Every place was full. There was no room at the inn. But one kind person said they could stay in a stable, a place where animals rested.

*(MARY and JOSEPH move slowly to the manger area at center stage. ANIMAL HELPERS, if you have them, can already be there or can join them now and sit or kneel around the manger.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Mary and Joseph did not have soft beds or fancy blankets. They had straw and a simple manger, a feeding place for animals. But they were together, and God was with them.

*(MARY and JOSEPH sit or kneel by the empty manger. Teacher quietly places the baby doll into Mary's arms, or Mary "picks up" the baby from the manger.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

And that night, in that quiet place, the most wonderful thing of all happened. Mary gave birth to her baby, God's Son. She wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in the manger.

*(MARY gently places the doll in the manger and folds her hands. JOSEPH stands or kneels protectively nearby.)*

*(Soft instrumental "Away in a Manger" can play under the next lines.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

This tiny baby looked like any other baby… but He was the Savior God had promised. His name was Jesus.

*(Short pause for families to look and maybe take quiet photos.)*

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## SCENE 3 – ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS

*(While music continues very softly, teacher leads SHEPHERDS to the opposite side of the stage from the manger. They sit or kneel, holding plush sheep.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Not far away, on a dark, quiet hillside, some shepherds were taking care of their sheep. It was an ordinary night.

*(SHEPHERDS pat their sheep or pretend to be sleepy.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Suddenly, the sky was filled with light! Angels from heaven appeared, shining with God's glory.

*(ANGELS enter and stand behind or beside the shepherds with arms gently lifted. If possible, the lights brighten a little.)*

**NARRATOR 2 (optional):**

The shepherds were afraid, but the angels said, "Do not be afraid. We bring you good news of great joy for everyone! Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord."

*(ANGELS can stretch their arms out wide. One angel may say a short line together with the narrator if they are comfortable, such as "Do not be afraid!" or "Good news of great joy!" but this is optional.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

The angels also said, "You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

*(ANGELS point gently toward the manger area.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Then many, many angels filled the sky, praising God and saying…

**NARRATOR 2 (optional, slowly):**

**"**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

*(ANGELS may sway gently or hold hands. Pause for a moment of quiet.)*

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**NARRATOR 1:**

When the angels had gone back to heaven, the shepherds looked at one another. They said, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this baby that the Lord has told us about!”

*(SHEPHERDS stand up slowly. Teacher guides them to walk toward the manger. If you like, the congregation can softly sing the first verse of “Angels We Have Heard on High” while the shepherds walk.)*

## SCENE 4 – SHEPHERDS AT THE MANGER

*(SHEPHERDS arrive at the manger scene and kneel or sit around baby Jesus. ANGELS stand a little behind them, like a backdrop of light.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph… and the baby, lying in the manger, just as the angels had said.

*(SHEPHERDS look at the baby. Some may gently reach out a hand toward the manger but not touch.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

They were filled with joy and wonder. This baby was the Savior, sent from God. He came not to a palace, but to a simple stable, so that everyone—from kings to shepherds—could come close to Him.

***(Short pause.)***

**NARRATOR 2 (optional):**

The shepherds praised God. As they went back to their hills, they told everyone they met about this special child named Jesus.

*(If a shepherd is comfortable, they can say softly with the narrator, “Thank You, God, for Jesus,” but this is optional.)*

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## SCENE 5 – WISE MEN FOLLOW THE STAR

*(While everyone else stays in place by the manger, the STAR BEARER and WISE MEN step to the opposite side of the stage, as if they are far away. Music can change softly to a different carol, like "We Three Kings" instrumental.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Far away in another land, some wise men studied the stars. One night, they saw a bright new star in the sky.

*(STAR BEARER holds the star up high. WISE MEN point and look "up.")*

**NARRATOR 1:**

They knew this star was a sign. A great King had been born. So the wise men got ready to travel. They packed gifts and followed the star, because they wanted to worship the new King.

*(WISE MEN start to walk slowly behind the STAR BEARER, taking a long curving path toward the manger.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

The journey was long. The wise men walked and walked. But still, the star shone ahead of them, leading the way.

*(If they pause, the narrator can stretch this slightly, to give time for them to reach the manger.)*

**NARRATOR 2 (optional):**

At last, the star stopped over the place where Jesus was. The wise men were very, very happy.

*(WISE MEN reach the manger scene. They stand or kneel near the front with their gift boxes.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

They bowed down and worshiped the child. Then they opened their treasures and gave Him their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

*(Each WISE MAN sets down their gift near the manger, one at a time, with help if needed.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

These were gifts to honor Him as King, as God's Son, and as the One who would one day give His life for us.

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## SCENE 6 – EVERYONE AT THE MANGER

*(Now most or all children are gathered in a gentle semicircle around the manger: MARY, JOSEPH, SHEPHERDS, WISE MEN, ANGELS, ANIMALS, and STAR BEARER. Teachers may guide younger children into place.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Now everyone was near the baby Jesus—Mary and Joseph, angels and shepherds, wise men and animals. So many different people, all looking at this tiny Child.

*(Short pause while families watch.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Tonight, we stand close too. We might be parents or grandparents, brothers or sisters, friends or neighbors. But just like them, we are invited to come near to Jesus.

**NARRATOR 2 (optional, slowly):**

Jesus is God's gift of love to the whole world. He came to bring light into our darkness, hope into our sadness, and peace into our hearts.

*(Soft background music begins again, maybe "Silent Night" or "Away in a Manger.")*

**NARRATOR 1:**

In a moment, our children will stay right here while we sing together. While you sing, you are welcome to look at their faces, to look at the manger, and to remember the simple truth of Christmas:

***(Beat.)***

**NARRATOR 1:**

God loved the world so much that He gave us His Son… Jesus.

*(Optional: Congregation sings one gentle verse of "Away in a Manger" or "Silent Night." Children remain still as they are able. Teachers can quietly comfort any child who becomes restless.)*

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## CLOSING BLESSING

*(After the song, music continues softly under the final words. Children remain around the manger.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Thank you, children, for helping us see the nativity story with new eyes. Thank you, families, for sharing this holy moment with us.

*(Short pause.)*

**NARRATOR 1:**

Let us pray.

*(If appropriate in your setting, Narrator 1 or a pastor may pray a short prayer such as:)*

“Dear God, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that He came as a baby to be our Savior and our Friend. Bless these children and their families. Fill their homes with Your joy and peace. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

*(While the prayer is spoken, children can quietly continue to stand or sit. Teachers keep them safe and calm.)*

**NARRATOR 2 (optional):**

From our preschool nativity to your family, we wish you a very blessed Christmas. May the light of Christ shine in your hearts and homes.

**NARRATOR 1:**

**Merry Christmas!**

*(Children can wave gently to the congregation. Soft music grows a little louder. Lights gently fade or stay warm while teachers lead children safely offstage, one small group at a time, keeping the mood peaceful and simple.)*

**[END OF PLAY]**

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