

A script from



“A Modern Day Christmas Experience”

by
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SYNOPSIS

A modern day version of the popular family program *The Christmas Experience*. Includes sometimes dramatic, often funny, contemporary versions of the events leading up to Jesus' birth. The audience journeys to three different settings where three short plays are performed, then gathers for singing, a present day version of the Nativity, a short message, and candle-lighting. **Themes:** Comedy-Drama, Ensemble, Christmas, Jesus, Wise Men, Shepherds, Bethlehem, Nativity, Family

Note: This program contains four scripts (*No "L"*, *The Shepherds*, *The Wisemans*, and *Naive TV*) that are also available individually from Skit Guys.

CAST

Scene 1: The Wisemans

Talia Wiseman: Teen; Christmas is her favorite holiday. Still, she's sense that something is missing in her and her family's lives

Colleen Wiseman: Loving wife and mother, but also increasingly aware of an unfulfilled sense of longing

Bill Wiseman: Committed dad whose pride hinders his ability to see that he cannot provide all of his family's needs, even his own

Scene 2: No "L"

Nick Crassman: Written as male, but may be played by a female. Obsessive hobbyist and holiday decorator

Olivia Martini: Written as female, but may be played by a male. Spacey, considers herself a true 21st century progressive

Ed Gudalboy: Written as male, but may be played by a female. Obsessed with building a shrine to his deceased hound dog Earl

Scene 3: The Shepherds

Dan Shepherd: Father of an unruly clan

Trish Shepherd: Loving-but-stressed clan mom

Nikki: Pre to young teen; On-edge middle-schooler. More anxious and insecure than her family realizes

Colin: (Older teen) Absorbed in his portable game box. Written as male, but may be played by a female ("Colleen")

The Meemies: The younger Shepherd children—there are at least two, but any number may be used

Ms. Angell: Pronounced An-JELL. Any age. Written as female, but may be played by a male (Mr. Angell). Witty, compassionate. Knows the Shepherds better than they know themselves

Scene 4: Naïve TV

Brandon: A popular, self-absorbed food-a-holic

Makayla: Bored by church; into clothes, guys

Denny: Quirky, geeky; determined to be his own person

Note: Denny and Destiny (below) may be combined into a single character simply by assigning their lines to one (male or female) actor.

Destiny: Denny's female counterpart; Destiny and Denny habitually complete one another's sentences, followed by a secret handshake of their own invention

Jasmine: Insecure, but sweet; the youth group's "invisible" girl

Pastor Billy: Easy going youth pastor; committed to reaching his kids

Others: Pre-teen through late teens

HOW

The Wisemans, No "L", and The Shepherds are each presented three times, i.e. for each of three different audience Groups (which means that each Group will see the scenes in a different order). Between scenes, Groups are led, caroling, by Guides to the next station. When performances are finished, the Groups reunite in a large space (e.g. church sanctuary) for singing, homily, a modern Nativity (*Naïve TV*), and (optional) lighting of candles. Progression:

Group 1 – begins at Station 1, then progresses to Stations 2 and 3

Group 2 – begins at Station 2, then progress to Stations 3 and 1

Group 3 – begins at Station 3, then progresses to Stations 1 and 2

SET DESIGN AND PROPS

Stations:

Three performance spaces around which audience members gather (allow room for children and wheel chairs at the front). Sets may be minimal or elaborate:

The Wisemans – Open area suggestive of a mall entrance

No "L" – More intimate space suggestive of a living room

The Shepherds – Mid-sized area suggestive of a family restaurant

Naïve TV – Performed last in sanctuary or meeting area

Christmas Trail:

Luminary-lined path leading from *Initial Gathering* place to each of the three *Stations*, and ending at *Final Gathering* place. The Trail should form a large loop and, if possible, not crisscross. Luminaries (paper bags with candles in them) may be placed close together or far apart, as long as they clearly mark the trail. Decorative luminaries may be made or purchased, although simple white paper bags will suffice. Electric (battery-powered) votive candles are available online and at many stores.

Accompaniment:

The three audience Groups sing *carols* as they travel from station to station. Since dramas do not run exactly the same length, music cues will put groups back in sync when they travel from station to station.

Accompaniment may be handled in one of two ways:

Option #1: Accompanist/musicians play live through p.a. system. All three audience Groups sing the *same* carol at the same time. Beginning of accompaniment is the cue for Groups to start (or resume) their Journey; end of accompaniment is the cue for Groups to stop singing, and for guides to begin introductions (see scripts below).

Option #2: Each group sings a *different* carol tied to the drama they are about to see (e.g. "We Three Kings" before *The Wisemans*), either a cappella or with traveling accompaniment (e.g. guitar). This may result in dissonance if groups are not well separated from one another during journeys.

Note: If Option #2 is chosen, chimes or trumpet should be used to cue all three groups to resume their journey at the same time.

Ornaments:

Four paper Christmas ornaments are inserted into each program/bulletin. These may be purchased or made out of colored construction paper by volunteers. They represent each of the four dramas presented, as well as important traits of Jesus (you may wish to print a Bible verse on the back of each)

Stable: *No L*

Shepherd's Crook: *The Shepherds*

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Star: *The Wisemans*

Heart: *Naïve TV*

Programs/Bulletins:

Should include lyrics to carols and any additional items desired (explanations, credits, notes/response page), along with inserted Ornaments (above).

Candles: (Optional) – Each audience member receives a candle for lighting during final portion of program. You may wish to use a large Christmas candle or advent wreath to begin the lighting.

A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY STEP-BY-STEP

Initial Gathering:

Audience members gather as they arrive in an entrance area (e.g. church foyer). Each is given a program containing the order of the service (optional) and lyrics to the carols that will be sung. Cookies, wassail (spiced apple juice, cold or heated), or other treats may be served, as Christmas music plays. Once the announced start-time arrives, the speaker (perhaps the same pastor/preacher/teacher who does the homily at the end of the service) welcomes the audience, explains the themes and purpose of the event and how it will occur. Guides gather audience into three groups of more-or-less equal size. (Size of stations will impact how large audience groups can be. If you anticipate a large number of people, you may want to schedule more than one presentation of A Modern Day Christmas Experience.)

First Journey:

Guides lead each carol-singing group along the Christmas trail to a pre-determined station.

First Presentation:

When singing ends, guides speak a few words of introduction (see scripts below) and dramas begin. At end of dramas, guides lead brief discussion with reference to paper ornaments (see scripts). If music Option #1 is chosen (see above), sound of accompaniment through p.a. system is cue for each group to resume singing and journey on. If music Option #2 is chosen, a trumpet or chimes sounds from some central location, signaling all Groups to resume their journey.

Second Journey:

Guides lead groups, caroling, to next station where process is repeated (Introduction, Drama, Discussion).

Second Presentation:

As with First Presentation

Third Journey:

As with Second Journey

Third Presentation

Journey Home:

After third round of presentations, guides lead their groups, caroling, along the Christmas trail to the final gathering place.

Final Gathering:

Group members are given candles (optional) as they enter, singing, into the final gathering place (e.g. church sanctuary or fellowship hall). When the last of the group members arrives, singing concludes. Length and order of this segment is flexible, but the following elements are recommended:

Naïve TV (final drama):

If possible, platform should be pre-set for both the play and the segments that follow, so that presenters can move from one segment to the next without breaking the flow.

Homily (brief message):

Given by speaker (same or different speaker from initial gathering). It is suggested that this message be used to tie together the four themes/ornaments employed during the dramas: star, stable, shepherd's crook, and heart

Candle Lighting:

Light first candle from a central candle (perhaps an advent wreath themed around the four ornaments). From the first candle, speaker or worship leader lights guides' candles. They, in turn, light candles of individuals seated at end of each row. Audience/congregants then "pass the light" down their rows.

Concluding Song/Benediction:

Audience/congregants are invited to leave with lighted candles while singing (e.g. "Silent Night"). They are encouraged to place the four ornaments on their Christmas trees and to discuss (perhaps on Christmas Eve) what these symbols mean to them.

PURCHASE

"The Wisemans"

What In this modern take on the story of the Magi, the Wisemans, a family of seekers, discover the true meaning of Christmas. **Themes:** Comedy-Drama, Christmas, Guidance, Giving, Faith, Love, Wise Men, Magi

Who Talia Wiseman – (teen) Christmas is her favorite holiday. Still, she senses that something is missing in her and her family's lives
Colleen Wiseman – Loving wife and mother, but also increasingly aware of an unfulfilled sense of longing
Bill Wiseman – Committed dad whose pride hinders his ability to see that he cannot provide *all* of his family's needs, even his own.

When Present; Christmas

Wear (Props) Casual-nice winter clothing: overcoats, gloves, mufflers, etc.
Props: Three large boxes—big enough for a stroller, a crib, and a mobile—plus a few smaller boxes or bags
Setting: May be presented on a bare stage. Or with simple suggestions of a mall at Christmas-time: one or two fake-looking trees, sale signs, canned Christmas music

Why Matthew 2:1-1; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7-8

How Talia is at the heart of this piece, drawing out feelings that have been latent in her mother and father.
Note: In addition to the Introduction and Discussion at the end, *Guide* has a line half way through the script, as well

Time Approximately 6 minutes

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As caroling ends, **Guide** speaks or paraphrases these words of introduction (make them your own).

Guide: Even the wisest people are incomplete without the Lord. But Deuteronomy 4:29 says, "You will find him if you seek him with all your heart and all your soul." "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king," the Bible tells us, wise men (seekers) came from the east," following his star. It's Christmas Eve at Middleton Mall...

The **Wisemans** enter.

Colleen: I thought the mall's Holiday Festival of Trees was better than last year.

Talia: Really? It always seems the same to me. We should've just bought everything online.

Colleen: And missed the—

Talia: Phony trees and plastic snow?

Colleen: Well, look who's become all jaded! Where did Christmas-is-my-favorite-holiday Talia Wiseman go?

Bill: Yeah, elf girl, what about Santa?

Talia: Seriously, Dad?

Bill: Well, last year—

Talia: Last year me and Maya did Santa-selfies because Santa was her Uncle Kevin. This year it's just some rent-a-Claus.

Bill: Whoa, when did you suddenly go all moody-broody teenager on us?

Talia: I'm not... (*sighs—this has been building up for some time*) The mall's not what I love about Christmas, Dad—you guys are! But even then... Don't you feel it? (*Her emotions growing*) It's like I'm missing something. We're missing something! Look, I know this is a stupid time to blow up, but I've been keeping this inside for so long that I just...can't anymore!

Colleen: I understand, sweetie. It's true. I've been feeling it too. (*Touching her daughter's hair*) We'll have cocoa and talk when we get home, OK?

Colleen and **Talia** embrace. **Bill** waits awkwardly. They finally break.

Bill: So we meet back here at nine, right? Have wish-lists, will buy!

Colleen: *(Putting a finger to his lips)* A little less fake holiday cheer, honey.

Bill: Yeah. OK. Boy, what's up with us, huh? *(Changing gears)* Hey, when we get home Max will be back from the soccer party and we can play a game. *(Sudden thought; to Colleen)* Oh, were you going to buy something for the contractor who's putting in our cabinets?

Colleen: Joe? Yeah, I thought maybe something small. His wife just had a baby, you know.

Talia: *(Perking up)* Really? You guys, this is crazy-bizarre! I dreamed about that last night, over and over again!

Colleen: Well, he is a sweet young man.

Talia: No, I mean, I only met him once, Mom, and I didn't even know about the baby. But in the dream, I knew! And his wife, she looked right at me and said she had to tell me something!

Colleen: Tell you what, sweetie?

Talia: I don't know, but it seemed really important.

Colleen: Funny, he actually invited us over. *(To Bill)* Did I tell you? Tonight. Imagine that! They're so young—just starting out—and they have almost nothing. But he said they read the Christmas Story aloud every year.

Bill: "Twas the night before Christmas—"

Colleen: No, honey. The other one. The one in the Bible.

Talia: Mom, what if that's what she wanted to tell me? I mean I've never heard the actual—

Colleen: It was only a dream, honey.

The Wisemans stare at one another for a moment, then break away with a nervous laugh.

Bill: OK, shoppers, start your engines!

All three Wisemans move hesitantly away, each stealing a glance back at the others.

Narration *(spoken or on-screen):* Two and a half hours later...

Colleen enters with a huge box, plops it down, her face transformed with delight. Waits a moment. Dials her phone.

Colleen: *(Into her phone)* Hey, done yet? Uh, no, I sort of changed gears.
Talia enters, beaming, a very large bag in her arms.

Colleen: *(Continuing)* OK, see you in a sec. *(Hangs up. Looks at Talia's bag, then back at Talia)* You look like the cat that ate the canary.

Talia: It's a mobile, a *Christmas* mobile! Oh, Mom, it's got a star and angels and a little manger! It's so adorable, I wish I was—

Colleen: And would that be for your 17 year old brother or your 46 year old dad?

Talia: For the baby, silly! Only I kinda—

Colleen: *(Looks at Talia's receipt)* Only you kinda spent every penny you had?

Bill enters, lugging a huge box. Sets it down. Looks sheepish.

Bill: What? It's a stroller...a really good one. *(Defensively)* Hey, they're going to need one. *(Looks at Colleen's box)* And?

Colleen: Crib. I make no excuses! *(Turning to Talia)* Honey, it's the sweetest little baby crib you ever saw!

Talia: Oh, Mom, this is it! This is what we're supposed to do! We have to go there!

Talia and **Colleen** turn and look at **Bill**.

Beat.

Bill: Well, duh! Obviously we have to take these to them tonight!

Talia: Yes!

Colleen: But how? I mean, they live way out at the edge of town.

Bill: I remember their address! Isn't that amazing? It's like a miracle! I mean, I only heard it once and I remember it! I think. Anyway, the car's got *On-Star* and it'll lead us to them.

Colleen: Gee, I haven't heard the Christmas story since I was little.

Talia: The *real* Christmas story, the one in the Bible?

Colleen: Yeah. I think I'd like...I think I *need* to hear it again.

The **Wisemans** leave together as "We Three Kings" swells up on the mall loudspeakers.

Discussion

Guide asks:

Why had the Wisemans past Christmases without Jesus seemed to be enough for them?

Did they realize on their own that Christmas was incomplete without Jesus, or did God reach out to them?

Do you know anyone whose Christmas is "incomplete"? Could you be a "star" helping guide them towards Jesus?

When accompaniment resumes or chime/trumpet sounds, the Guide leads his/her group, singing, to the next Station or to Final Gathering.

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"No L"

What In a modern suburb, we meet three holiday planners who have "no room" for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Great set-up for a talk on changing our plans to make room for God's. **Themes:** Comedy, Ensemble, Christmas, Nativity, Manger, Crèche, Faith, Unbelief Bethlehem

Who *Nick Crassman*– Written as male, but may be played by a female. Obsessive hobbyist and holiday decorator
Olivia Martini– Written as female, but may be played by a male. Spacey, considers herself a true 21st century progressive
Ed Gudalboy– Written as male, but may be played by a female. Obsessed with building a shrine to his deceased hound dog Earl

When Present

Wear (Props) Couch and chair with optional table between; contemporary clothing.

Why Luke 2:7; Proverbs 19:21; Psalm 81:12; John 1:11-12

How No "L" is broader comedy (farce) than the other scripts, but don't go overboard with it; deliver the puns as if they were straight lines. Practice to make the "Who's On First"-style timing work for you!

Staging: Angle the couch and chair to form a V. Keep action moving by having each character rise and describe their holiday plans in turn.

Time Approximately 6 minutes

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As caroling ends, **Guide** speaks or paraphrases these words of introduction (make them your own).

Guide: 2000 years ago there was no room for Joseph, Mary, and the soon-to-be born Jesus. Sadly, in many people's hearts today, that's still true. To make room for God's plans, we have to be willing to let go of our own!

Olivia is on the couch. **Nick**, wearing a Santa hat, ushers **Ed** to couch. **Ed** sits, kicks off his boots.

Nick: Ho, ho, ho! (Reacting to **Ned's** feet) Whoa! Merry, Merry! (A bit sourly) Even if there are only two of you. I'm telling you, we could slam dunk the holiday decorating contest if everyone on the block participated. Thirteen houses, thirteen letters in "Happy Holidays!" Thirteen giant sheets of plywood. Have scroll saw, will cut!

Olivia: Except I wanted to be the space between Happy and Holidays, Nick. (Doing her impression of space) I am planets... I am stars... I am—waaaahhh—space!

Nick: Nice, Olivia, but it doesn't matter because there are only four of us. Once again our "neighbors" (making quote marks with his fingers) are "too busy" with "other things" like baking cookies for shut-ins and doing toy drives for orphans. Where's their holiday spirit, anyway?

Ed: Uh, Nick, there's only three of us. I counted. Twice.

Nick: Right, Ed, but Holly and Barry Lovegood said they might join us, and that would make four houses. So I thought, "Hmm, what can we spell with four letters?"

Ed: Well, pretty much every word my cousin Norton uses. (Snickers)

Olivia: Tofu!

Ed: (Looks down at his boots on floor) Boot! (Looks at foot) Foot!

Olivia: Star!

Ed: Toes!

Nick: Well, you're on a roll there, folks, but I already thought of the perfect word! First there's "N"—that's me—then "O" (points to **Olivia**), and then "E" (points to **Ed**). And finally, the Lovegoods at the corner would be "L." But if they don't do it, we've got no "L."

Ed: No L?
Nick: No L.
Olivia: No L?

Nick: Noel, yeah, that's it.

Ed: What's it?

Nick: The word.

Olivia: What word?

Nick: Noel.

Ed: Right, no "L." But what's the word, Nick?

Nick: Oh, also, Beth Liam says she can lend us her crèche.

Ed: Somebody break a leg?

Nick: No, Ed, "crèche." You know, a nativity scene with Joseph and Mary, and the baby Jesus in a manger, and—

Ed: Ohhhh! Nope, sorry, won't have room, Nick, on account I'm already doing my own nativity scene. It's a tribute to my dog, Earl. (*Taking ball cap off, choking up*) Best darn hound there ever was! Next to that big ol' "E"—hey, E for Earl!—anyway, next to it I'm gonna put a big ol' dog house with a dog-Joseph and a dog-Mary, and dog angels and dog shepherds—

Olivia: German shepherds?

Ed: Of course! And dog sheep and dog donkeys and dog... (*thinking*)

Olivia: Dogs?

Ed: Yeah! So, sorry, I won't have no room for them Bible folks.

Nick: Well, I'm sure your canine shrine will be very touching, Ed. What about you, Olivia?

Olivia: Me? Oh, no! I'm planning my own modern, relevant nativity scene, Nick. With Baby "whoever-you-want-him-her-or-it-to-be" right in the middle of the "O." And instead of cows, a soy lattes machine. And no shepherds because, I mean, eeyoo, right? Instead there'll be hemp farmers! And

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the three wise men—excuse me, wise persons—will be Steve Jobs, the Dalai Lama, and Oprah! So, nope, no room for them at my place.

Ed: What about you, Nick?

Nick: Are you kidding? I've been building holiday decorations for the last seventeen years! I've got 4 Santas, 6 Mrs. Santas, 53 reindeer (it's like football—you gotta have a full roster), and 189 elves! So, no, I'm sorry, but my yard is way too full of my own holiday spirit to make room for them! So we'll just have to tell Beth Liam we're doing it our way, and there's no room for Joseph and Mary and Jesus.

Ed: Nope! No room at the E.

Olivia: No room at the O.

Nick: And definitely no room at the N!

Lights out.

Discussion

Guide asks:

Why was there "no room" for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in the scene we just saw?

What other ways—beyond simply ignoring the true Christmas—do people make their own plans instead of making room for God?

What does it mean to you to make room for Jesus in your heart?

When Accompaniment resumes or Chime/Trumpet sounds, the Guide leads his/her group, singing, to the next Station or to Final Gathering.

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"The Shepherds"

What Modern take on the story of the angel appearing to the shepherds on the eve of Jesus' birth. **Themes:** Comedy-Drama, Christmas, Love, Miracles, Shepherds, Bethlehem, Family, Gospel, Discipleship

Who **Dan Shepherd:** Father of an unruly clan
Trish Shepherd: Loving-but-stressed clan mom
Nikki: Pre to young teen; On-edge middle-schooler. More anxious and insecure than her family realizes
Colin: (Older teen) Absorbed in his portable game box. Written as male, but may be played by a female ("Colleen")
The Meemies: The younger Shepherd children—there are at least two, but any number may be used
Ms. Angell: Pronounced "An-JELL". Any age. Written as female, but may be played by a male (Mr. Angell). Witty, compassionate. Knows the Shepherds better than they know themselves

When Present

Wear (Props) Casual clothes
Two tables with chairs
Hand-held game system, menus, pocket-sized toys

Why Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 9:6

How The Shepherds are astonished at what they see and hear—make sure their joy comes through! Find a way for Ms. Angell to slip on and off-stage without being seen by the audience.

Time Approximately 6 minutes

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As caroling ends, **Guide** speaks or paraphrases these words of introduction (make them your own).

Guide: What must it have been like for the shepherds to experience such a life-changing vision? To be told by an angel that the greatest event in history was about to occur! And yet, in a very real way, the miracle happens to everyone who gives their heart to Jesus. Here, we meet a modern day family, the Shepherds, who are about to experience that miracle first-hand.

The **Shepherds** enter, their younger children (**Meemies**) running amuck.

Trish: Hey! Hey! C'mon guys! Now, I know you're all goofy-tired, but—

Dan: (*To the rescue*) No grass until the sheep get in their stall!

This is family code. **The Meemies** run and dive into chairs, giggling, acting like sheep.

Meemies: (*Overlapping one another*) Bah! Bah! Bah! Bah!

Dan: OK, so who wants a hamburger?

Meemies: (*More overlapping*) Me! Me! Me! Me! Me! Me!

Nikki: How far to Grandma and Grandpa's?

Trish: 154 miles, Nikki, same as when we got out of the car—

Dan: (*Looks at watch*) 42 seconds ago.

Trish: I'm tired too, but whining won't change—

Nikki: (*Whining*) I'm not whining! And I refuse to sit with the Meemies; they're all sticky and gross!

Colin: Come on, Picky Nikki, you can sit with me.

Nikki: I hate it when you call me that!

Nikki drags herself tragically over to **Colin's** table. **Meemies** squabble over menu, toys, etc.

Trish: (*Wearily*) Dan, honey, tell them a story or something, will you?

Dan: I don't... (*Looks at Trish, sees her pleading eyes. To the kids*) Who wants a Christmas story?

Meemies: Me! Me! Me! Ooooo! Me! Me! Me!

Dan: *(Big breath, trying to sound enthused)* OK, so there was this kid who really, really wanted an air rifle for Christmas.

Nikki: I hate that movie!

Angell: *(Suddenly stepping into view)* Cute, but you can do better than that, Shepherds.

Trish: Whoa! Where did you—how did you know our name?

Angell: I'm Ms. Angell, the Night Manager.

Dan: Here at Whoopees?

Angell: Think bigger, Dan. Lots bigger. Now... *(to Meemies)* Who wants a miracle?

Meemies: Oooo! Me! Me! Me! Me! Me!

Dan: I don't see that on the menu. Is it a special?

Angell: About as special as it gets. *(Stands on chair)* It was nightttime, and the Shepherds were keeping watch over their flock... *(Gestures to Meemies)*

Meemies: *(Jumping to floor and pretending to graze)* Bah! Bah! Bah! Bah!

Angell: ...who were grazing *silently* nearby. *(Snaps her fingers)*

Meemies immediately become quiet.

Trish: I'll give you a million dollars if you tell me how you did that!

Angell: When an angel appeared. *(Jumps down from chair)* At your service.

She curtsies, then goes over to Colin and touches his game box.

Colin: *(Looking up)* Whoa! What did...where did all the hearts come from? "Eternal life points?"

Angell: I know the Designer personally.

Angell touches **Colin's** chest. He jerks, as if awakened from a dream, puts his game box away, and goes and sits across from Dan.

Colin: Dad?

Dan: What, Colin?

Colin: I don't know what I want to be, and it's freaking me out. Can we talk about it...soon?

Dan: *(Smiling, caught off guard)* Of course, son.

Angell: *(Gently shuts **Nikki's** gaping mouth for her)* And no more fear for you, sweetie. You're not alone. God loves you so much! *(Touches **Nikki's** heart)* He's going to live right here from now on.

Nikki gasps, rises, hugs **Ms. Angell**, then goes and sits next to **Trish**, putting her head on her shoulder. **Trish** stifles a sob.

Angell: This day the Savior is born in your hearts, Shepherds, and you will never be the same again. That miracle that happened 2,000 years ago? Well, it was so big—*is* so big—that it's still happening! And here's the sign. When you look for Jesus, you'll find him, right here—born anew inside of you. *(Touches **Dan's** chest)*

Dan: Whoa! Holy—

Trish: Dan!

Dan: No, I mean that literally! He's here! God is *with* us!

Angell: "Emmanuel." He's got other names too. *(Touches **Trish's** chest)*

Trish: *(Gasps)* Oh, my— Wonderful Counselor! Prince of Peace!

Angell: Yep! *(To the entire family)* Your faith is a baby, Shepherds, just like Jesus was. But if you love him, if you live your life for him, your faith will grow, and you'll soon realize: everything that matters is about him. And anything that isn't? Well, it doesn't really matter. Now, Shepherds...

Angell gestures for family to rise. They do, and then cluster excitedly around her.

Angell: *(Continuing)* Go and make known what you've heard—*(Aside)* avoid the Whoopee burger, by the way—and glorify God for all you've seen and heard. Tell everyone—with your words *and* your lives—and all will marvel at these things!

The **Shepherds** embrace **Angell**, then suddenly pull back. She's gone! They laugh joyfully.

Discussion

Guide asks:

Is it surprising that God chose to announce the birth of His son to ordinary people like us? Aren't you glad?

Children are "Meemies." But so are lots of adults. We need to learn to say "You, You" to God, instead of "Me, Me"—every day, don't we?

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." What does it mean to you when you think of Jesus as your Shepherd?

When Accompaniment resumes or Chime/Trumpet sounds, the Guide leads his/her group, singing, to the next Station or to Final Gathering.

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"Naïve TV"

What A naïve youth group rediscovers the meaning of Christmas while reenacting the Nativity. **Themes:** Comedy-Drama, Ensemble, Christmas, Selfishness, Selflessness, Jesus, Faith, Nativity

Who Brandon – A popular, self-absorbed foodaholic
Makayla – Bored by church; into clothes, guys
Destiny – Quirky, geeky; determined to be her own person
Jasmine – Insecure, but sweet; the youth group's "invisible" girl
Pastor Billy – Easy going youth pastor; committed to reaching his kids
Others – Pre-teen through late teens

When Present day; church youth area

Wear Winter clothes
(Props) Flashlights
Table
Chairs
Cardboard box
Punch bowl
Large fishbowl

Why Luke 1:26-56; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20

How The characters go from grumbling to engaged very quickly. To accomplish this, pinpoint the moments the Holy Spirit speaks to them. A suggestion of darkness is all that's needed for "in the dark" segment, with actors using flashlights as mini-spotlights.

Time Approximately 7 minutes

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Suggested Introduction

Speaker: It's hard to imagine how earth-shaking the birth of Jesus must have been for those who lived it first-hand, for Mary, of course, but also Joseph, and those who knew them. What if, instead, it were to have happened in our time? Would our hearts be as ready as Mary's was to say "yes" to God?

*Table with empty punch bowl. Chairs scattered. Some teens, including **Destiny** and **Jasmine**, are already there. Grumbling.*

Makayla: *(Entering)* What? Where's the volcano cake? Pastor Billy said there would be a volcano cake. That's like the only reason I came.

Destiny: Volcanoes never happen when it's raining.

Makayla: That doesn't make sense, Destiny. Nothing you say ever makes sense.

Brandon: *(Entering)* Hey, what up, "Density?" *(Teasing)* Hey, MaKAYla!

Makayla: Hey, BRANDon. *(Displaying her expensive sweater)* Nice, huh? Cost me a bundle but, you know, I just had to have it...and when I see what I want...

Brandon: Whoa. Where's the snacks? Where's the pizza? Where's Pastor Billy?

Destiny: Maybe there *is* no Pastor Billy. Or maybe he *is* the snack table.

***Jasmine** giggles. **Billy** enters, carrying cardboard box, plops it on the table.*

Billy: Hey, all! Merry joy! Happy Christmas-ness!

Brandon: Pastor B, you need help bringing in the stash?

Billy: Uh, yeah, about that—don't got it, dude. Sorry! *(To everyone)* My wife was supposed to pick everything up after work, including the pizza, but, well, she had to stay late and—

Brandon: Whoa! Are you serious? Christmas *is* food, dude! I ate a cheeseburger for lunch just so I wouldn't spoil my pizza appetite!

***Destiny** slips away.*

Makayla: *(To **Brandon**)* Well, yeah—food and things I look hot in.

Jasmine: But we still get to watch the Christmas movie on the new TV, right?

The lights suddenly go out. More grumbles.

Makayla: Are you kidding? Now the power's out?

Destiny: *(Reenters, grabs flashlight from box, puts it under her chin)* Halloweeeeeeen!

Makayla: What? Where'd you get...no, it's Christmas, not—

Brandon: *(Grabs flashlight and fishbowl from the box)* Hey, the flashlights from the Halloween Bash! Remember? We told scary stories! *(Puts jar over his head)* "Where is my body? Ahhhhhhhhh!"

Jasmine: That made me laugh so hard!

Makayla: *(Sarcastic)* Great! No volcano cake and no movie, but, hey, we've got flashlights!

Billy: So, guys, check it out- we'll be the TV! *(Ignoring groans)* And we'll tell ourselves the Christmas story! *(Before anyone can respond, he begins pointing at people)* Brandon, you're Joseph.

Brandon: Huh?

Billy: And Jasmine...

Jasmine: *(Panicking)* Me? No, please...

Billy: You be Mary.

Makayla: Wait! What?

Billy: *(Shining flashlight on his own face, indicating others should do same)* "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to the town of Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary."

Destiny: *(Hovering over Jasmine)* Mary, you have been chosen by the Creator of the universe, who is unlimited by space and time—and I'm not making this up, MaKAYla—to be the mother of the infinite Creator's human child! Through you he will invade space and time, and create the Big Bang, the Big Bang to end all Big Bangs! Right here! *(Pokes Jasmine in the tummy and makes an explosion sound.)*

Brandon: Whoa! That's in the Bible?

Everyone looks at **Jasmine**.

Jasmine: Please...I can't...

Billy whispers to her.

Jasmine: *(Continuing)* But I can't do this. It scares me when people look at me. I mean I've never even had a boyfriend. *(Opening up a little)* It's always been just me and my mom, all alone. *(Something clicks)* But, I mean... I mean, if God really did come to me...

Makayla: *(Under her breath)* Like God would pick—

Brandon: Shut up, Makayla. *(To Jasmine)* Go ahead.

Jasmine: I mean, if He came to me, I would... I mean, there's nothing I wouldn't do. *(To God)* I'm a total nobody, Lord. But if *You* think I can do this... *(Finding something within herself)* I want to praise *You* with my yeses, Lord, with *all* of my yeses forever! I mean, that *You* would pick me, that people would *bless* me for saying "yes" to *You*... But then, that's what *You* do, huh? *You* skip right over the cool people and pick the losers... just to show *You're* everybody's God. Everybody! Even me... especially me.

Makayla: Oh, please.

Destiny: Shut up, Makayla!

Billy: So Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit, knowing that no one would understand. How could they? They would accuse her and try to kill her!

Billy signals **Others** in group to taunt **Jasmine**, then whispers to **Destiny**.

Others: *(Surrounding Jasmine, shoving her, getting in her face)* So you cheated on your boyfriend, huh! You know, there's a name for people like you! *(Etc.)*

Billy: But Mary was willing to face anything so that God could save the world through her, through His own son.

Destiny: When Joseph found out, he decided to break up with her in secret so no one would hurt her.

Brandon: *(To God)* Because I'd still love her, Lord. Even if she totally wrecks my heart. I mean...

Billy: But then an angel came to him in a dream and said—

Destiny: She didn't cheat on you, Joe. She's who you thought she was; even better than you thought she was. This is going to be tough, but you have to protect her and the baby.

Brandon: Yes! No matter what, Lord! I *will*!

Brandon runs to **Jasmine**, pulls **Others** away from her, puts his jacket over her. They begin moving around the room.

Billy: Meanwhile, there was a census in Israel and everyone had to return to the town they were from. Mary was about to give birth any minute, but when she and Joseph got to Bethlehem, there was—

Makayla: No room!

Each time **Jasmine** and **Brandon** move to a new position, **Makayla** steps in front of them and says:

Makayla: (Continuing) Oops! Sorry! Not here! Outta luck! Not here either!

Destiny: But they finally found a place—

Others: A stable! For animals! A cave! (Etc.)

Everyone but **Makayla** surrounds **Jasmine** and **Brandon**. **Jasmine** groans. **Brandon** hovers over her protectively.

Billy: Until she finally gave birth...

No baby. Awkward moment.

Makayla slowly removes her expensive cardigan sweater and bundles it up. She places it in **Jasmine's** arms.

Billy: (Continuing) ...to the Savior of the world, who would die for us, for *all* of us.

Makayla: (To herself) Even though we don't deserve it.

Jasmine rises (scene over?) and returns the bundled sweater to **Makayla**. **Makayla** gives it back to her—to keep.

Beat.

Brandon: (To **Billy**) Dude, did you plan this?

Billy: Uh...a little...yeah...with help.

Destiny waves.

Jasmine: Is the power really out?

Billy: Until Desinty flips the breaker back on. *(Grins)* But I'd say the power's already on here. Big time.

Grins, hugs, "Yeahs!"

Billy: *(Continuing)* Come on, guys, help me get the food out of the van. *(To Makayla, as they're leaving)* No volcano cake, though. I don't even know what that is.

Makayla: Neither do I. *(The end.)*

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