

**A Spontaneous Nativity**  
**(from Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-12)**

**CAST**

(chosen ahead of time)	(can be drawn from the congregation)	
NARRATOR	SHEPHERDS	WISE MEN/WOMEN
MARY	SHEEP	
JOSEPH	ANGELS	
ANGEL OF THE LORD	ANIMALS	
PROPHET (can remain in congregation)		

**SCENE**

Very simple: just two chairs for MARY and JOSEPH, and a wooden box if you have one to represent the manger, but it is not necessary. A doll for the baby Jesus unless there is a baby in the church, in which case you might ask the parents if they would play MARY and JOSEPH ahead of time. If possible, make a star that can be hung above as well. Everyone sits in the congregation until they are called forward (except for the PROPHET, who can remain in the congregation, or move to the back or balcony as your sanctuary design and accessibility allows)

**SCRIPT**

Only the NARRATOR needs the full script. Give lines ahead of time to the ANGEL of the LORD and the PROPHET. Optional: NARRATOR can hand lines on cards to the SHEPHERDS, ANGELS and WISE MEN ahead of time or as they come forward. (If there are only children coming forward, NARRATOR can read those lines instead). Another option: make the congregation the ANGELS and put their line on a cue card.

**PROPS**

Not necessary, but if you have shepherd's staffs and angel wings, they can be handed out. Costumes are also optional, but not necessary.

## A Spontaneous Nativity

### NARRATOR

We are going to tell the story of the birth of the Christ-Child as told in the second chapter of Luke and the second chapter of Matthew. I am going to need you all to help me tell the story. I will ask for volunteers to come up and help be part of a Nativity scene. You don't have to say anything or do anything other than come up here. However, for our younger people, if you want to be a sheep, you can baa like a sheep. If you want to be an angel, you can flap your arms like wings. Think about what part you would like to be as we tell this old, old story.

This is a spontaneous story. While we often think of this story as part of God's plan, something that was waiting to happen for a long, long time—we need to remember that the shepherds were not expecting to see angels in the field. The animals certainly were not expecting to share their space with human beings, let alone a baby! And Mary and Joseph certainly were not expecting to have a baby out in the cold. Much of this story happened by surprise to the people and animals who experienced this story. So as we tell this story, as much as you know this story, imagine it were happening for the first time. Try to think of the spontaneity of the moment, the moment God chose to enter our world and our lives in a new way.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph (*JOSEPH comes forward*) also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary (*MARY comes forward with doll or baby*) to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*(Pause for a moment, look to the family, then look back to the congregation). We need some more animals in the stable. Where are our animals? Come up here around the manger! (Wait for some animals to come forward)*

In that region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. (*NARRATOR pauses, looks to MARY and JOSEPH*) You know, we need some shepherds to come up here and stand around Mary and Joseph. And we could use some sheep! Anyone who wants to be a shepherd or a sheep, come on up. (*Wait for the shepherds and sheep to come forward*). Sheep, can you baa for us? Let us hear your baas! (*Pause and wait for the sheep to baa!*)

Then, an angel of the Lord stood before them! (*Wait for the ANGEL OF THE LORD to come forward and stand to the side*) And the glory of the Lord shown around them, and they were terrified! But the angel said to them,

#### **ANGEL OF THE LORD**

Fear not! For see, I bring you tidings of great joy to all the people! For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! And this will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

#### **NARRATOR**

And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host. Angels—we need some angels to be our heavenly host! Any angels want to come forward? (*Wait for the angels to come forward and have them stand opposite of the ANGEL OF THE LORD, on the other side of the Holy Family and the shepherds and sheep*).

So there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

#### **ANGELS**

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, and goodwill to all

#### **NARRATOR**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

#### **SHEPHERDS**

Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which God has made known to us!

#### **NARRATOR**

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (*Pause for a moment*)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem (*WISE MEN come forward*), asking “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Jesus the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

## **PROPHET**

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

## **NARRATOR**

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*(Pause for a moment)*

This is the story of our Savior’s birth, as told by Luke and Matthew. We heard from the Prophets, we witness the faith of Mary and Joseph, we journeyed with the shepherds as they heard the Angels, and we followed the Wise Men as they followed the star.

This is the Good News: that today and every day, a Savior has come for us. We remember this old, old story, and that this story is alive in us, for we are the body of Christ. Remember this picture, this Spontaneous Nativity today, for this story continues to live in us. Amen, and Merry Christmas!