A Spontaneous Nativity  
(from Luke 2:1-20)

CAST  
(chosen ahead of time)  (can be drawn from the congregation)  
NARRATOR  SHEPHERDS  
MARY  SHEEP  
JOSEPH  ANGELS  
ANGEL OF THE LORD  ANIMALS

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. Everyone sits in the congregation until they are called forward.

SCRIPT  
Only the NARRATOR needs the full script. Give lines ahead of time to the ANGEL of the LORD. Optional: NARRATOR can hand lines on cards to the shepherds and to the angels as they come forward. (If there are only children coming forward, NARRATOR can read those lines instead).

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. 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.

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. (Pause for a moment, look to the family, then look back to the congregation). Our scene is almost complete, but we need some more animals in the stable. We need some cows and donkeys and horses up here around the manger! (Wait for some animals to come forward)

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)

This is the story of our Savior’s birth, as told by Luke’s Gospel. 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!