

A CHRISTMAS PLAY FOR EASTER

by Jacqueline Hurley



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A Christmas Play for Easter

A children's animal-themed play

Jacqueline Hurley

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

SILLY GOOSE

Preferably female, Sunday school aged.

WISE OWLS 1-3

Owls may be male or female; however, since several of the play's larger parts require girls, three male owls may help distribute the roles a bit more equally between the boys and girls.

VIRGIN MARY HEN

An older girl.

ROMAN FOXES 1 and 2

Older boys or girls.

(Adult Sunday school teachers may play these characters.)

MARY MAG D' HEN

A younger girl.

ANIMALS

Chicks, bunnies, farm dog, etc. Include a farm animal part for every child in the Sunday school.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

Silly Goose gathers animals in the barnyard to stage a play about the birth of Jesus. Three “wise” Owls poke fun at her idea, timing, and selection of cast members until they are invited to take part. The Owls learn they can be wise to the world or wise in Christ. The traditional reading of Luke 2 takes place with all the animals helping to act it out. Virgin Mary Hen lays a beautiful egg, representing Christ, in the manger. The egg is passed about, and each animal listens to it then recites a blank verse signifying Jesus’ earthly ministry. Suddenly, two Roman Foxes smash the egg! All grieve. Then, Mary Mag d’ hen discovers that even though the shell broke, the little chick that was inside is very much alive!

Memorized Verses

This is an excellent time to showcase your Sunday school department’s Bible memorization. These Bible verses use the words of Jesus from one of the Gospels – in other words, the red letters. You may use additional verses or cut down on the number of verses – it all depends on the size of your group. Use one verse per child.

Costumes

You may use animal costumes if you have access to them. Otherwise, all costumes are indicated by simple cardboard visors fitted to each child’s head. The brims and bills of each visor should be colored or painted with well-defined features and in bright colors. For example, Silly Goose wears a cardboard visor with a large orange bill and large oval-shaped eyes on the visor’s brim. Ears, whiskers, etc. may protrude from the brims or bill to enhance the effect. Optional orange hunting gloves may be worn by the Owls to grip their perch.

Props

Script and pen for Silly Goose, two large plastic swords or clubs (small wooden baseball bats would work) for the Roman Foxes, two large signs that say “Time Passes” and “Three Days Later,” an egg (see how-to instructions below), and a stuffed toy chick to represent the Resurrection.

For the egg: A 12”-14” party balloon covered in papier-mâché becomes the egg. Cover the balloon with a layer of white paper towel strips dipped in a mixture of half water and half glue. When the “egg” is dry, it may be painted in beautiful colors. (Watercolors may be used to bleed into the wet paper towel before drying, if that is preferred.) The layer of paper towel strips glued to the balloon will need to be sturdy enough to hold up for the Sunday school children’s verses, but thin enough to be broken with plastic swords or clubs when the time comes.

Set

Utilize any set pieces you wish that fit the barnyard theme. The Owls need some sort of perch at Stage Right. The easiest option would be a long table. You could also use a pole mounted on stands. Three microphones are recommended. One is positioned in front of the Owls, another in front of Silly Goose, and a third is available for the various Animals as they approach Center Stage for their parts. You will also need a manger that is large and sturdy enough to hold Virgin Mary Hen, the papier-mâché egg, and the stuffed chick.

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1 (*OWLS 1-3 are positioned behind their perch at Stage Right.*
 2 *All other ANIMALS sit in front pews and wear their costumes*
 3 *or visors. SILLY GOOSE enters with a play script and pen in*
 4 *hand and stands at Stage Left.*)

5 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*Loudly*) **Everyone, everyone!** (*ANIMALS*
 6 *making their individual sounds appear and gather around*
 7 *SILLY GOOSE. The OWLS climb on their perch and sit in a*
 8 *row at Stage Right.*) **I have an idea for something we can**
 9 **do today. Let's put on a play about Christmas and the**
 10 **birth of Jesus!**

11 **OWLS 1-3:** (*From their perch*) **Hoot, hoot, hoot ...** (*The OWLS*
 12 *actually say the words loudly in unison, allowing their "hoots"*
 13 *to rise and fall, giving the effect of hysterical laughter. All three*
 14 *carry on for some time.*)

15 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*Upset*) **What's so funny?**

16 **OWL 1:** **It must be a comedy. Comedies are all about timing,**
 17 **and your timing is hilarious!**

18 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*Defensively*) **What's wrong with my timing?**

19 **OWL 2:** **It's almost Easter, Silly Goose. Great time to do a**
 20 **Christmas play!** (*OWLS 1-3 hoot with laughter as before.*)

21 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*To the ANIMALS*) **Just ignore them.** (*Pauses in*
 22 *thought.*) **Now, we'll need a stable. We'll ask the horses**
 23 **and the donkeys.**

24 **OWLS 1-3:** (*Together*) **Hoot, hoot, hoot ...**

25 **SILLY GOOSE:** **Now what?**

26 **OWL 3:** **Have you ever tried working with horses and**
 27 **donkeys?** (*Pause*) **Well, there's a better name for the**
 28 **donkey. Good luck with that!**

29 **SILLY GOOSE:** **Hmmmm ... maybe we'd better use the**
 30 **chicken coop.** (*Pauses, studies script, and scribbles*
 31 *something on script.*) **We'll need a Virgin Mary. Would any**
 32 **of you like —**

33 **OWLS 1-3:** (*Together*) **Hoot, hoot, hoot ...**

34 **OWL 1:** (*To OWLS 2 and 3*) **This is a livestock farm! I think**
 35 **she's kind of missing the point.**

36 **OWLS 1-3:** (*Together*) **Hoot, hoot, hoot ...**

37 **VIRGIN MARY HEN:** (*Rescuing SILLY GOOSE, who is ready to*
 38 *cry*) **I could lay an egg.**

1 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*Looking hopeful*) That would be great, Hen.
 2 You can be the Virgin Mary! (*VIRGIN MARY HEN takes*
 3 *her place, sitting in the manger.*) Next we'll need a Joseph.
 4 (*One of the ANIMALS raises hand and volunteers, stepping*
 5 *toward the manger.*) Thank you for being our Joseph. And
 6 finally, we'll need shepherds and angels.

7 **ALL ANIMALS:** (*Ad-lib volunteer response except JOSEPH, OWLS*
 8 *1-3, and VIRGIN MARY HEN*) I'll be a shepherd! I'll be an
 9 angel!

10 **SILLY GOOSE:** Gather 'round the manger. (*ANIMALS place*
 11 *themselves around VIRGIN MARY HEN.*) Now for the three
 12 wise men. (*Looking up at the OWLS' perch*) Owls?

13 **OWLS 1-3:** (*In unison, looking astonished*) Us? You want us in
 14 your play?

15 **OWL 2:** Silly Goose, we make fun of you all the time. How can
 16 you want us in your play?

17 **SILLY GOOSE:** Because you are wise. But the question is,
 18 are you the right kind of wise? The Bible says you can
 19 be wise to the world, or you can be wise to God. What
 20 will it be?

21 **OWL 3:** I'm in. (*Leaves his perch and joins others around the*
 22 *manger.*)

23 **OWL 1:** (*Searching SILLY GOOSE's eyes*) Me, Goose? Are you
 24 sure? (*SILLY GOOSE smiles and nods.*)

25 **OWL 2:** Wait for me! This rafter's empty without the rest of
 26 you. (*OWLS 2 and 3 join the group around the manger.*)

27 **SILLY GOOSE:** (*Reading from Luke 2 and standing near the*
 28 *manger*) So Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in
 29 Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem. He went there to
 30 register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to
 31 him and was expecting a child. While they were there,
 32 the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave
 33 birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths
 34 and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest
 35 room available for them. (*ANIMALS playing the part of*
 36 *shepherds step apart from the others and pantomime watching*
 37 *sheep with hands over eyes, pointing, looking back and forth,*
 38 *etc.*) And there were shepherds living out in the fields

1 nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. (*One*
2 *ANIMAL goes to them, acting as the “angel of the Lord.”*) An
3 angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the
4 Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But
5 the angel said to them, (*Pantomimes speaking*) “Do not be
6 afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy
7 for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior
8 has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This
9 will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in
10 cloths and lying in a manger.” (*ANIMALS playing the part*
11 *of angels step apart from the rest of the group.*) Suddenly a
12 great company of the heavenly host appeared with the
13 angel, (*They stretch out their arms and pantomime*
14 *proclaiming*) praising God and saying, “Glory to God in
15 the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on
16 whom his favor rests.” (*ANIMALS playing angels exit.*)
17 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,
18 the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to
19 Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which
20 the Lord has told us about.” (*ANIMALS who are shepherds*
21 *go to the manger.*) So they hurried off and found Mary and
22 Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.
23 (*VIRGIN MARY HEN steps off the manger and holds up a*
24 *beautiful pre-positioned papier-mâché egg.*)
25 **ALL ANIMALS:** (*Ad-lib*) Ohhhh! Ahhhh! It’s beautiful! How
26 perfect! (*Etc.*)
27 **SILLY GOOSE:** Even the wise men worshiped him. (*SILLY*
28 *GOOSE steps aside from her place as OWLS 1-3 kneel at the*
29 *manger.*) Isn’t it wonderful, animals? Now, Jesus did not
30 begin his ministry until he was almost thirty, so we
31 need to let this egg incubate. Then we will see what we
32 can learn from him. (*VIRGIN MARY HEN puts the egg back*
33 *in the manger and appears to nest. A stagehand holds up a sign*
34 *that says “Time Passes.” OWLS 1-3 stand and join the others.*)
35 **VIRGIN MARY HEN:** (*Steps off the nest and holds up the egg.*) I
36 hear something. What do you hear? (*She presents the egg*
37 *to MARY MAG D’ HEN, who holds it to her ear. After*
38 *appearing to listen, MARY MAG D’ HEN recites a Bible verse*

using the words of Jesus from one of the Gospels. ALL get a chance. Add or subtract verses depending on your group's size. The ANIMALS repeating the verses do not cite the name of the Gospel, chapter, or verse, but those details should be referenced in the program that accompanies this play.)

MARY MAG D' HEN: **"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"** (*Matthew 19:14*). (*MARY MAG D' HEN passes the egg to OWL 1.*)

OWL 1: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me"** (*Matthew 18:5*). (*OWL 1 passes the egg to OWL 2.*)

OWL 2: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"** (*Matthew 18:3*). (*OWL 2 passes the egg to OWL 3.*)

OWL 3: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"** (*John 16:33*). (*OWL 3 passes the egg to ANIMAL 1.*)

ANIMAL 1: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"** (*John 14:6*). (*ANIMAL 1 passes the egg to ANIMAL 2.*)

ANIMAL 2: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you"** (*Matthew 7:7*). (*ANIMAL 2 passes the egg to ANIMAL 3.*)

ANIMAL 3: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching"** (*John 14:23*). (*ANIMAL 3 passes the egg to ANIMAL 4.*)

ANIMAL 4: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me"** (*Matthew 16:24*). (*ANIMAL 4 passes the egg to ANIMAL 5.*)

ANIMAL 5: (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) **"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"** (*Matthew 5:16*). (*ANIMAL 5 passes the egg to ANIMAL 6.*)

1 **ANIMAL 6:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**A new command I**
 2 **give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you**
 3 **must love one another**” (*John 13:34*). (*ANIMAL 6 passes the*
 4 *egg to ANIMAL 7.*)

5 **ANIMAL 7:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**If you forgive**
 6 **other people when they sin against you, your heavenly**
 7 **Father will also forgive you**” (*Matthew 6:14*). (*ANIMAL 7*
 8 *passes the egg to ANIMAL 8.*)

9 **ANIMAL 8:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**But if you do not**
 10 **forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive**
 11 **your sins**” (*Matthew 6:15*). (*ANIMAL 8 passes the egg to*
 12 *ANIMAL 9.*)

13 **ANIMAL 9:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**‘I desire mercy,**
 14 **not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous,**
 15 **but sinners**” (*Matthew 9:13*). (*ANIMAL 9 passes the egg to*
 16 *ANIMAL 10.*)

17 **ANIMAL 10:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**Do not let your**
 18 **hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in**
 19 **me**” (*John 14:1*). (*ANIMAL 10 passes the egg to ANIMAL 11.*)

20 **ANIMAL 11:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**The Son of Man**
 21 **did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his**
 22 **life as a ransom for many**” (*Mark 10: 45*). (*ANIMAL 11*
 23 *passes the egg to ANIMAL 12.*)

24 **ANIMAL 12:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**Go into all the**
 25 **world and preach the good news to all creation**” (*Mark*
 26 *16:15*). (*ANIMAL 12 passes the egg to ANIMAL 13. The*
 27 *following verse must come last. It should be given to an*
 28 *expressive boy or girl who can make the foreshadowing*
 29 *apparent.*)

30 **ANIMAL 13:** (*Holds egg up to ear and listens.*) “**The hour has**
 31 **come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell**
 32 **you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and**
 33 **dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it**
 34 **produces many seeds**” (*John 12:23-24*). (*The ANIMAL*
 35 *delivering this last quote from the Gospel should pause after*
 36 *speaking and to him/herself ask*) **Hmmmm, I wonder what**
 37 **that means.** (*ANIMAL 13 places the egg back in the manger.*
 38 *Then ROMAN FOXES 1 and 2 run On-stage brandishing their*



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