

OPERATION CHRIST CHILD

by Daniel Wray



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Operation Christ Child

A Christmas play from the other side
by Daniel Wray

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(With the exception of Michael, Angel roles are not gender-specific.)

Raphael

An angel, preferably with some singing ability.

Michael

Probably the in-charge angel.

Ariel

One of the cherubim, the angel of youth.

Gabriel

Angel who visits Mary.

Zuriel

Another angel.

Seraphiel

The Chief of the High Angelic Order.

Mary

Mother of the Christ child.

Joseph

Earthly father of the Christ child.

Herod

Devious king.

King 1

Wise man.

King 2

Wise man.

King 3

Wise man.

Shepherd 1

Shepherd 2

Innkeeper

PRODUCTION NOTES

Following is a synopsis of *Operation Christ Child* that you may print in your performance program if you wish:

There's something brewing at headquarters. Nothing will ever be the same. Of course we all know that the shepherds were the first to know about the birth of Christ. Or were they? After all, there were a lot of details that needed attention to make sure that the first Christmas went according to Scripture. It's up to an elite band of angels to make sure everything goes as planned, from arranging accommodations (or the lack thereof) for the holy family, to hanging the star, to informing everyone of the event, to ... well, you get the picture. Join us tonight as we consider what it might have been like two thousand years ago as we look into life B.C. (Before Christmas). Come with us for a behind-the-clouds look at what might have been during the planning of ... Operation Christ Child.

Costumes

The ANGELS wear T-shirts (plain white) and jeans with wings and halos. MARY, JOSEPH, the INNKEEPER, and the SHEPHERDS wear the simple robes and headpieces of the day, with sandals and rope belts. The males may tie a length of cord around their heads to secure their headpieces. The SHEPHERDS should also carry staffs. HEROD and the KINGS should wear robes of richer fabric and/or colors. HEROD may wear a crown.

Set

Although there are several different locations, the transitions from scene to scene were kept simple and only minimal set pieces were used. **Scene 1** takes place in heaven. A fog machine adds to the ambience, if available. (A cooling device made with dry ice is useful so that the fog stays at most six inches off the ground, simulating playing in the clouds. For **Scene 2**, simply add chairs for the "board room" in heaven. In **Scene 3**, the chairs should be taken away. The setting is outside MARY and JOSEPH's houses. No set pieces are needed. **Scene 4** is inside JOSEPH and MARY's houses. They are at opposite sides of the stage. Nothing special is needed, unless you want blankets for them to lie down on. **Scene 5** is back in heaven, with more fog machine if desired. It leads to Herod's palace, but nothing more is required — his crown and dialog set the scene. **Scene 6** is in Bethlehem. You'll need

a door with a sign posted over it, saying “Squeeze You Inn.” **Scene 7** takes place in a field. The only item you’ll need is a ladder draped with a cloth for RAPHAEL to stand on as he appears to the SHEPHERDS. **Scene 8** takes place in the stable, which can be as simple as a manger. Hay bales may be placed around the manger to add to the stable atmosphere. We also placed a bright light in the manger (very effective with the house lights down) to represent the baby Jesus. We used a photo lamp, but a high-powered flashlight would also work.

Sound Effects

Sound of a beeper, deep voice saying “You’re welcome” Off-stage, part of “Glory to God” from Handel’s *Messiah*.

Props

Baseball glove and baseball for ARIEL; three pens and clipboards for ZURIEL, the INNKEEPER, and SERAPHIEL to check things off; a bat, a beeper, and a piece of paper (his “check list”) for MICHAEL; five envelopes with pieces of paper inside (the “assignments”) for the ANGELS; a fake sword for HEROD; a bag with coins inside; and gifts for the three KINGS, such as a decorative bottle, a small carved wooden box or trunk, and a pile of fake gold coins on a tray or a golden object.

A PowerPoint presentation is an effective visual aid to this play performance; however, if you do not have access to a PowerPoint projection system, you may simply put the pictures or phrases on a large sketchbook supported by an easel and flip the pages.

When the PowerPoint calls for selected images, e.g. the photo of the earth from space, you should be able to find them on one of the public domain image websites, such as pdimages.com, or you may use scanned images of original artwork if you have an artist in your congregation who would like to supply the pictures you need.

PowerPoint Slides

- 1 — “IT’S TIME!” (Animate to zoom in.)
- 2 — A picture of the earth zooms in. “The World Needs a Savior!” is animated underneath it, either flying in or scrolling.
- 3 — We ... Have ... That ... Savior ... YOU will make it happen! (It’s best to animate this slide for word-by-word transition for dramatic effect.)
- 4 — OPERATION CHRIST CHILD. (Again, animation if possible.)
- 5 — Picture of man’s inhumanity to man, e.g. gladiators.
- 6 — Picture or silhouette of Jesus.
- 7 — “He is to be born a man, but remain the son of God.”
- 8 — Tribe of Judah, Family of Jesse, House of David.
- 9 — The town of Bethlehem, the city of David.
- 10 — Picture of three kings.
- 11 — “Despised and rejected of men.”
- 12 — “He will be born unto a virgin, and he shall be called Emmanuel, God with us.”
- 13 — Picture of Mary (preferably the actress playing Mary in costume).
- 14 — Picture of Joseph (preferably the actor playing Joseph in costume).
- 15 — OPERATION CHRIST CHILD.

Scripture taken from The New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

SCENE 1

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

(The setting is heaven — specifically, a baseball field in heaven. A fog machine may give the appearance of clouds. All ANGELS are On-stage. The seraphim are playing the cherubim when talk of an upcoming mission arises. The ANGELS discover that they are to plan the arrival of the new Messiah.)

RAPHAEL: Come on, Michael! One more run and we've got the game!

MICHAEL: *(Swinging the bat in warm-up)* No problem! I'm gonna hit this one all the way to earth!

ARIEL: Come on, pitcher, put it in here!

MICHAEL: Forget it! This one's mine! *(He swings and admires the result, watching the imaginary ball fly. He takes off into a home run trot as the other angels cheer.)*

RAPHAEL: Beautiful hit, Mike!

GABRIEL: Nice shot!

ZURIEL: Woo-hoo, Michael!

GABRIEL: That's the ball game!

RAPHAEL: What was the final score, Zurriel?

ZURIEL: *(Looking down at his clipboard)* That would be ... Seraphim one hundred fourteen, Cherubim one hundred thirteen.

RAPHAEL: Wow. High scoring as usual.

GABRIEL: Naturally. After all, you don't make many outs in heaven!

ARIEL: Very true. Nice game, you guys!

ZURIEL: *(Shaking hands)* You too! Same time tomorrow!

ARIEL: Of course!

MICHAEL: *(Jumping on home plate, getting congratulations all around.)* Thanks, guys!

RAPHAEL: Hey Michael, you think they'd enjoy this game down on earth?

- 1 MICHAEL: Of course!
- 2 GABRIEL: Then why don't we introduce it to them?
- 3 MICHAEL: I don't think they're ready for it just yet. After
- 4 all, they're still into chariot racing and gladiators.
- 5 RAPHAEL: True. Maybe after the Messiah comes they'll be
- 6 more ... enlightened. Speaking of which, what do you
- 7 think we should ... *(Stops as a beeper of sorts goes off in*
- 8 *MICHAEL's pocket.)*
- 9 MICHAEL: *(Reading the page)* Oh my goodness!
- 10 ZURIEL: What is it? It isn't from ...
- 11 MICHAEL: Yep. It sure is.
- 12 GABRIEL: Wow! Really? What's it say?
- 13 MICHAEL: It says to gather everyone together in the main
- 14 hall. He says there's going to be a major announcement.
- 15 ZURIEL: A major announcement? What could it be?
- 16 RAPHAEL: I hope it's not another expansion project.
- 17 Paving the streets may end up looking pretty, but it's
- 18 not easy!
- 19 GABRIEL: Tell me. Last time I had gold under my
- 20 fingernails for weeks!
- 21 MICHAEL: Whatever it is, we need to get going — we don't
- 22 want to be late.
- 23 ZURIEL: I gotta stop by and feed the lions along the way.
- 24 MICHAEL: There's no time — he said immediately.
- 25 ZURIEL: All right, but you know they're eating with the
- 26 lambs, right?
- 27 GABRIEL: So?
- 28 ZURIEL: I just hope they remember they're in heaven if
- 29 they don't get fed on schedule.
- 30 MICHAEL: Look, Raphael? You go tell the cherubim to meet
- 31 in the main hall, and tell them it's important.
- 32 RAPHAEL: Got it! *(Exits.)*
- 33 GABRIEL: What do you think it's all about, Michael?
- 34 MICHAEL: I don't know, but I've got a really weird feeling
- 35 that it's gonna be big.

1 **ZURIEL:** You get that just from a text?

2 **MICHAEL:** I dunno. I just haven't had this feeling since ...

3 **GABRIEL:** *(Pause)* You don't mean ... ?

4 **ZURIEL:** Not the eviction! *(They all gasp.)*

5 **MICHAEL:** It's different. Not ominous, like then. But
6 somehow they feel ... connected.

7 **GABRIEL:** Well, let's stop wondering and find out! Come on!

8 **MICHAEL:** You're right. Let's get going. *(They all start to*
9 *exit.)*

10 **ZURIEL:** I'm still a little worried about the lions. I mean, it's
11 my responsibility this month ...

12 **MICHAEL:** Look, if it makes you feel better, I'll text Daniel
13 and see if he wouldn't mind covering them for the day.

14 **ZURIEL:** Good luck. Last time I asked him, he avoided me
15 for a week ... *(Lights down. Five chairs are brought On-*
16 *stage.)*

17

18

19

SCENE 2

20

Angels We Have Heard on High

21

22 *(The setting is a board room in heaven. The fog machine, if*
23 *used, should still provide "cloud cover" for the ground.*
24 **SERAPHIEL** stands before the other **ANGELS**, who are
25 *sitting in the chairs.)*

26 **SERAPHIEL:** *(As all ANGELS are carrying on conversations*
27 *among themselves)* All right, all right, settle down, please!
28 Settle down! *(Getting frustrated)* All right, I didn't want
29 it to come to this, but — *(Claps a rhythm, as a preschool*
30 *or kindergarten teacher does to get the children's attention —*
31 *clap, clap, clap-clap-clap. The ANGELS return the clap and*
32 *are quiet.)* You know how much I hate that. Anyway,
33 we've got some major news to go over and a major
34 project to roll out, so I'll need your undivided attention.

35 **RAPHAEL:** What is it, Seraphiel? What's the big project?

- 1 **SERAPHIEL:** Well, as most of you know, we've been
 2 anticipating an intervention in the human world for
 3 quite some time.
- 4 **ALL:** (*Murmuring ad-lib*) What? Is it time? Is he talking about
 5 the Messiah?
- 6 **SERAPHIEL:** If I could direct your attention to the screen
 7 at my right, it should all become clear to you. (*Points the*
 8 *remote at the screen and the PowerPoint presentation begins.*
 9 *He will click the remote to bring up all the slides. The first*
 10 *slide comes up — "IT'S TIME!"*) Behold!
- 11 **ALL:** (*Together*) Oooohh! Ahhhh! (*The next three slides come up*
 12 *automatically. Slide #2 — a picture of the earth zooms in,*
 13 *followed by: "The World Needs a Savior!" Slide #3 — "We ...*
 14 *Have ... That ... Savior ... YOU will make it happen!" Slide*
 15 *#4 — "OPERATION CHRIST CHILD." The ANGELS all*
 16 *applaud and give each other high fives.*)
- 17 **MICHAEL:** Seraphiel, this is extremely exciting! We've been
 18 waiting such a long time! But I'm just a bit confused ...
- 19 **RAPHAEL:** Yes. Operation Christ ... Child?
- 20 **SERAPHIEL:** I knew this would be the first question. You
 21 see, for what seems like an eternity, we've been
 22 watching Adam's race continue their downward,
 23 hopeless spiral. (*Slide #5, man's inhumanity to man.*)
- 24 **ARIEL:** Yes, we have. And we knew that eventually the
 25 Almighty would send his son to redeem mankind ...
- 26 **ZURIEL:** But we always thought that would mean ...
- 27 **SERAPHIEL:** A grown son? Jesus, perhaps?
- 28 **GABRIEL:** Exactly! How in the world is a small child going
 29 to redeem mankind?
- 30 **SERAPHIEL:** If you'll allow me to roll out the plan, I think
 31 you'll find it intriguing. You see, it will be Jesus. But he
 32 will redeem mankind by becoming one of them.
- 33 **MICHAEL:** What? (*Gasps from the other ANGELS.*)
- 34 **ARIEL:** But how in heaven's name can that happen? Jesus
 35 is God!

1 SERAPHIEL: As I was saying, we've known for a while that
2 our intervention was necessary. Through a thorough
3 analysis of the Scriptures, we know a few things about
4 how it needs to happen. *(Slide #6, picture of Jesus.)* The
5 first thing we know is that he must be born a man.

6 GABRIEL: Born? As in a baby? Have you confirmed this?

7 MICHAEL: Yes, have you? It seems awfully risky.

8 ZURIEL: I'll say! Babies are kind of small ...

9 GABRIEL: And fragile.

10 ARIEL: And helpless!

11 RAPHAEL: And mortal. Is this a great plan?

12 SERAPHIEL: Actually, it is a perfect plan. *(Slide #7.)* He is to
13 be born a man, but remain the Son of God.

14 ARIEL: Of course.

15 SERAPHIEL: *(Slide #8.)* He is to be born a descendant of the
16 tribe of Judah, the family of Jesse, the house of David.

17 MICHAEL: That narrows it down a bit ...

18 SERAPHIEL: *(Slide #9.)* The Scriptures also say he is to be
19 born in the town of Bethlehem, which is the city of
20 David. *(Slide #10, the picture of the three kings.)* He will be
21 known to some very learned kings from Seba, Tarshish,
22 and Sheba, who will travel miles to bring him gifts.

23 GABRIEL: Uh, excuse me?

24 SERAPHIEL: Yes, Gabriel?

25 GABRIEL: I'm a little confused. What kind of royalty resides
26 in Bethlehem? Isn't it a rather small town?

27 SERAPHIEL: Yes, it is. Why are you asking about royalty?

28 GABRIEL: Well, if God is to become man and is to redeem
29 him, he would be born into power, right?

30 SERAPHIEL: As I mentioned before, it is a perfect plan. I
31 didn't say it would be a predictable plan.

32 RAPHAEL: So he won't be born into royalty?

33 SERAPHIEL: Hardly. *(Slide #11.)* The Scriptures say that he
34 is to be "despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). So
35 he will have a rather lowly entrance into the world.

- 1 **GABRIEL:** Then who *will* he be born to?
- 2 **SERAPHIEL:** Well, here's the best part. (*Slide #12.*) He will be
3 born unto a virgin, and he shall be called Emmanuel,
4 God with us.
- 5 **ALL:** (*Murmuring*) A virgin? Isn't that a bit unorthodox?
- 6 **SERAPHIEL:** Oh, that's not the half of what will be
7 unorthodox. We're done with the days of Sodom and
8 Gomorrah, when we dealt with things with swift justice.
9 Jesus will go to earth to turn things upside down. So we
10 start with his arrival.
- 11 **ARIEL:** Do we know specifically to whom he is to be born
12 yet?
- 13 **SERAPHIEL:** Yes. (*Slide #13, the picture of MARY.*) Her name
14 is Mary. (*Slide #14, the picture of JOSEPH.*) She is
15 betrothed to a man named Joseph. She is a Godly
16 woman and has been chosen by God himself for this
17 destiny.
- 18 **ARIEL:** Wow. That's quite an honor.
- 19 **SERAPHIEL:** The highest. (*Slide #15, "OPERATION CHRIST*
20 *CHILD."*) Now, there are a lot of details to be worked out,
21 and we must start immediately. Each of you has been
22 assigned a task, and there are only a few short months
23 to prepare. We must start immediately. (*Hands out*
24 *envelope assignments.*) In these envelopes you will find
25 your individual assignments. Please begin work
26 immediately and report back to us when you have
27 completed yours. (*Pause*) And of course, one other
28 note — you will *all* be expected to be on hand at the
29 actual event. Choir practice will begin this Thursday
30 evening. Are there any questions?
- 31 **MICHAEL:** Do I have to be a soprano again?
- 32 **SERAPHIEL:** Yes, of course. We all do. Any other questions?
33 Good. We haven't time to waste. Let us know if you need
34 anything, and good luck!
- 35 **RAPHAEL:** (*To GABRIEL*) Well, what do you think?

1 GABRIEL: Wow! This is all terribly exciting!

2 RAPHAEL: I know — I can't wait to see what my assignment

3 is!

4 GABRIEL: Me neither. What do you think about the being born

5 to a — well, to someone who hasn't — I mean, someone ...

6 pure part?

7 RAPHAEL: Well, *that will make it special. (Opens assignment and*

8 *reads paper.)* Hey, we're partners!

9 GABRIEL: *(Still opening his)* Cool! Look, all I know is I wouldn't

10 want to be the one to have to tell her that she's been

11 chosen. *(Opens envelope and looks at RAPHAEL.)*

12 GABRIEL and RAPHAEL: *(Together, looking at each other)* Oh, no

13 ... *(When the lights go down, all exit, and the chairs are removed*

14 *from the stage.)*

SCENE 3

Angels Watchin' Over Me

20 *(This scene takes place outside MARY and JOSEPH's houses.*
21 *This scene is split — one house on one side of the stage and one*
22 *on the other. The lines should lead in to one another in a comedic*
23 *dialog. GABRIEL and RAPHAEL enter and go to Stage Left*
24 *and Stage Right respectively.)*

25 GABRIEL: Man, when Zuriel said that he would be born of
26 modest means, he wasn't kidding.

27 RAPHAEL: Hey, this isn't the worst I've seen. Remember the
28 Moses thing?

29 GABRIEL: Oh, yeah. That was my first human encounter.
30 Yours too?

31 RAPHAEL: Yep. Remember when the Department of Social
32 Services nearly blew the whole thing by blowing the
33 whistle on Miriam for setting the little guy afloat?

34 GABRIEL: That took some fast talking. Hope this goes more
35 smoothly.

- 1 RAPHAEL: How could it? How do you tell someone that
2 they're going to have a baby when they've never —
3 GABRIEL: (*Interrupting, uncomfortable*) Uhhhh, had one before?
4 Good question.
5 RAPHAEL: Man, you are really freaked about this virgin birth
6 thing, aren't you?
7 GABRIEL: Do you have to use the "v" word? Can we use the
8 word pure? Or chaste? Or maybe ...
9 RAPHAEL: How about virgin?
10 GABRIEL: See? Why do you do that?
11 RAPHAEL: Because that's what she is!
12 GABRIEL: Look. Some of us are just more comfortable using
13 less blunt terms, that's all.
14 RAPHAEL: Well, I think we need to come to terms with the fact
15 that we are traveling uncharted territory here. We may
16 need to step out of our comfort zone a bit.
17 GABRIEL: Look, I'm out of my comfort zone just being here on
18 earth, OK? I would just appreciate a little less directness.
19 RAPHAEL: OK. Whatever you say.
20 GABRIEL: Thank you. (*Acts as though he is completely disgusted,*
21 *stepping into something.*) Oh, gross! I just stepped in ... what
22 was that?
23 RAPHAEL: From the size of it, I'd say it was a camel.
24 GABRIEL: You mean you saw it?
25 RAPHAEL: Oh, yeah.
26 GABRIEL: Why didn't you warn me?
27 RAPHAEL: I couldn't think of a delicate way to say "camel
28 pile."
29 GABRIEL: Thanks a lot!
30 RAPHAEL: OK, this is where we split up. I'll be at Joseph's
31 place up the road a bit.
32 GABRIEL: Can't we do this together? I mean, if you help me
33 tell Mary, I'll help you with Joseph.
34 RAPHAEL: Look, there isn't time. Besides, neither is going to
35 be a picnic.

- 1 GABRIEL: So, before you go, how do you plan on doing it?
 2 RAPHAEL: Well, I thought of doing it quickly — you know,
 3 like a Band-Aid, but the more I think about it, they're
 4 both going to need a more gentle approach.
 5 GABRIEL: Especially Mary.
 6 RAPHAEL: You mean being a virgin and all? *(Smiles.)*
 7 GABRIEL: You know, never mind. Just go do your thing and
 8 I'll do mine. We'll meet back here when we're done.
 9 RAPHAEL: Perfect. Good luck.
 10 GABRIEL: You too.
 11 RAPHAEL: *(Starts to cross to Stage Right but stops and turns.)*
 12 Oh, and Gabriel?
 13 GABRIEL: Yes?
 14 RAPHAEL: You know, Joseph's a virgin too.
 15 GABRIEL: *(Covering his ears, moves to Stage Left.) Ohhhh!*
 16 *(Lights down. GABRIEL goes to Stage Left and RAPHAEL*
 17 *goes to Stage Right.)*

SCENE 4

The Magnificat

- 23 *(Stage Left is MARY's bedroom — Stage Right is JOSEPH's.*
 24 *MARY and JOSEPH are both lying on the floor as if sleeping*
 25 *as GABRIEL and RAPHAEL creep closer. The next few lines*
 26 *appear shared, although neither ANGEL can hear the other.*
 27 *The ANGELS may mouth the other's questions or may speak*
 28 *in unison at times.)*
 29 RAPHAEL: *(In a stage whisper)* Joseph! Joseph!
 30 GABRIEL: *(In a stage whisper)* Mary!
 31 JOSEPH: *(Groggily, startles and jumps a bit, staying on his "bed.")*
 32 What is it? Who are you?
 33 MARY: *(Groggily, startles and jumps a bit, staying on her "bed.")*
 34 What on earth are you doing in my room?
 35 GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary.

- 1 **RAPHAEL:** For I am a messenger of the Lord.
2 **JOSEPH:** What do you want of me?
3 **GABRIEL:** Mary, you have found favor with God. You are
4 filled with God's beauty!
5 **MARY:** What does this mean?
6 **RAPHAEL:** It means that God has chosen Mary to be the
7 mother of his Son.
8 **JOSEPH:** What? The mother of God's son? What does that
9 mean?
10 **RAPHAEL:** Well, uh, you see, Joseph, she's going to have a
11 baby.
12 **JOSEPH:** Mary is going to have a —
13 **MARY:** Baby? Oh, my! *(Long pause)* Are you sure?
14 **GABRIEL:** Yes, Mary. You are blessed among women!
15 **MARY:** But when will this happen?
16 **GABRIEL:** Well, it should be about ...
17 **RAPHAEL:** Nine months from now!
18 **JOSEPH:** But that would mean that she is with child now!
19 That's —
20 **MARY:** Impossible! I'm betrothed, but I've never even been
21 with a —
22 **JOSEPH:** Man! How in the world could this be? I've never so
23 much as — .
24 **MARY:** Been in Nazareth with my family! How in the world
25 could I be —
26 **JOSEPH:** Pregnant? But how can this be? She's still a —
27 **MARY:** Virgin! I can't possibly be with child!
28 **GABRIEL:** Uh, I know. Look, can we just use the term
29 "pure"? I've kind of got an issue with the "v" word. In
30 any case, the spirit has moved upon you, Mary, and you
31 are with God's child.
32 **RAPHAEL:** She is truly blessed among women.
33 **JOSEPH:** Is this possible? I know that Mary is a godly
34 woman, but it can't be —
35 **MARY:** True? How can it possibly be? *(Thinking)* Oh, my

- 1 Joseph! How will I ever explain this to —
2 JOSEPH: My parents? Our friends? What will the priest say
3 when I tell him —
4 MARY: I'm pregnant? How in the world can I expect Joseph
5 to still want to —
6 JOSEPH: Marry her? I'll just have to call things off. No one
7 would blame me for calling things off now! I mean, this
8 is a —
9 MARY: Disaster! That's what this is! Why me? Why would
10 God think this is something I can even —
11 JOSEPH: Handle? How can anyone handle something like
12 this?
13 RAPHAEL: God has chosen you, Joseph.
14 GABRIEL: God has chosen you, Mary. *(Both pace, pondering*
15 *the information that has been given to them.)*
16 MARY: Me, the mother of God.
17 JOSEPH: Mary is going to have a baby because she was
18 chosen of God.
19 MARY and JOSEPH: *(Together)* This is not going to be
20 easy ... *(They both lie back down as the ANGELS meet at*
21 *Center Stage.)*
22 RAPHAEL: *(Tiredly, as they come closer together)* Hey.
23 GABRIEL: *(Looking sheepish and tired as well)* Hey.
24 RAPHAEL: So, how'd it go with you?
25 GABRIEL: Not so good. You?
26 RAPHAEL: Yeah, well ... Coulda been a bit smoother ...
27 GABRIEL: Yeah. Mine too. Well, at least we're done now,
28 right?
29 RAPHAEL: All but the singing for us. *(Looking down)* Look
30 out!
31 GABRIEL: Oh, good grief! Thanks! Almost stepped in
32 another one.
33 RAPHAEL: You can say that again.
34 GABRIEL: *(Whining)* I hate earth. *(Lights down as they exit.)*
35

SCENE 5
We Four Kings

(The setting starts out in heaven, then transitions down to earth and HEROD's palace. ARIEL runs up to ZURIEL carrying a baseball glove and ball, and they end up discussing their assignments.)

ARIEL: Hey, whatcha doing? Wanna play some catch?

ZURIEL: Are you crazy? I've still got work to do — the event is only weeks away now!

ARIEL: Oh, yeah! I guess when your assignment is done, you kinda lose track of time.

ZURIEL: How come you're done so early? What was your assignment, anyway?

ARIEL: Remember? I was on Star Patrol!

ZURIEL: Oh, yeah! You did do a really nice job on that. You can see that star for miles.

ARIEL: Thanks! So can you play some catch?

ZURIEL: Unlike some people, my job isn't finished yet. That's where I'm headed.

ARIEL: What's your assignment?

ZURIEL: I'm working on making sure King Herod doesn't mess things up with the arrival. You know how paranoid he is.

ARIEL: Speaking of paranoid, even though I know the star looks good, I keep feeling like there's something I should have done. It's bugging me.

ZURIEL: Check your assignment sheet again.

ARIEL: I can't find it! Maybe it's nothing. I know that the kings saw the star and that they know to follow it by the prophecies I pointed out to them, and I think that's all I was responsible for.

ZURIEL: Let's hope. There are a lot of things that have to come together to make this work.

ARIEL: So what do *you* have to do now?

- 1 **ZURIEL:** I told you — I'm going to check on Herod and make
2 sure he doesn't do something crazy.
- 3 **ARIEL:** Can I come? I'm bored.
- 4 **ZURIEL:** I don't know. I mean, mine is a behind-the-scenes
5 assignment. I'm not supposed to have any direct contact.
- 6 **ARIEL:** That's OK. I can be quiet.
- 7 **ZURIEL:** *(With disbelief)* Oh, really?
- 8 **ARIEL:** When I *have* to. Please?
- 9 **ZURIEL:** Oh, I suppose. But remember, no talking when
10 we're there.
- 11 **ARIEL:** *(Making a lip-zipping motion)* My lips are sealed.
12 *(HEROD enters, pacing in his room at one side of the stage*
13 *and talking to himself.)*
- 14 **ZURIEL:** Oh — there he is.
- 15 **HEROD:** I am King! There can be no other king!
- 16 **ARIEL:** Who is he talking to?
- 17 **ZURIEL:** No one. He does this all the time.
- 18 **ARIEL:** Really? Is this healthy?
- 19 **ZURIEL:** Oh, no. I'm sure it's not.
- 20 **HEROD:** Knock-knock. Who's there? King. King who? King
21 Herod, you idiot! Who else would it be?! Off with your
22 head!
- 23 **ZURIEL:** *(Looking at ARIEL, he makes a "crazy" motion with his*
24 *finger circling his ear.)* See?
- 25 **ARIEL:** I think I like my assignment better.
- 26 **HEROD:** So, my advisors tell me there is to be a new king?
27 Ha! We'll just see about that!
- 28 **ZURIEL:** Uh-oh.
- 29 **ARIEL:** What?
- 30 **ZURIEL:** Herod's advisors must have met with him this
31 morning.
- 32 **ARIEL:** So?
- 33 **ZURIEL:** So now he's going to be on the lookout for the
34 event.
- 35 **HEROD:** Idiots! "When?" I asked. "We're not exactly sure,

- 1 Your Highness. Soon, we think.” Thanks a lot. How
 2 soon?! I need details! How am I supposed to stop this
 3 king from coming without details? (*Just then, KINGS 1-3*
 4 *enter from Stage Right, as HEROD continues to pace.*)
 5 **ARIEL:** Uh-oh. What are those guys doing here?
 6 **ZURIEL:** Who are they?
 7 **ARIEL:** Those are my three kings from the East. They’re the
 8 ones I hung the star for!
 9 **ZURIEL:** Why would they be coming to Herod?
 10 **ARIEL:** I don’t know! I illuminated them through the ancient
 11 prophecies to follow the star to find the King.
 12 **ZURIEL:** In Bethlehem?
 13 **ARIEL:** Well, I don’t think I mentioned the town.
 14 **ZURIEL:** You didn’t mention the town?
 15 **ARIEL:** No, I thought that would take the point away from
 16 hanging the star. You know, like shouting out the answer
 17 to a crossword.
 18 **ZURIEL:** A what?
 19 **ARIEL:** (*Looking up*) Oh! The star is over Bethlehem, and this
 20 is lined up with it from where they started!
 21 **ZURIEL:** That still doesn’t explain why they’re coming to
 22 Herod.
 23 **ARIEL:** The prophecies, which I pointed out to these guys, tell
 24 of a future king. Where would you look for a king?
 25 **ZURIEL:** In a palace. Oh ...
 26 **ARIEL:** I better stop them before they — (*KINGS 1-3 cross to*
 27 *palace area. KING 1 raises fist and pantomimes knocking.*)
 28 **KING 1:** Knock-knock.
 29 **ZURIEL:** Uh-oh.
 30 **HEROD:** Who’s there?
 31 **KING 2:** King ...
 32 **HEROD:** (*Getting angry and drawing a sword*) King who?
 33 **KING 3:** Oh, my!
 34 **KING 1:** (*Bowing before him*) Your Majesty! We are three
 35 kings ...

- 1 HEROD: *Three kings?! Nobody said anything about multiple*
2 *new kings!*
- 3 KING 2: Your Majesty?
- 4 HEROD: What do you want?!
- 5 KING 3: As my colleague here was about to say, we are three
6 kings from Seba, Tarshish, and Sheba.
- 7 HEROD: Coming to conquer my kingdom?! (*Strikes an*
8 *aggressive posture with the sword.*) We'll see about that!
- 9 KING 2: No, no, sire. We have plenty to deal with within our
10 own kingdoms. We're not trying to conquer anyone.
- 11 HEROD: Oh? Then why are you here?
- 12 KING 1: You see, Your Majesty, we are following a star.
- 13 KING 3: And it is very close to here.
- 14 KING 2: We believe that this star is above where a new king
15 is to arrive.
- 16 HEROD: A new king? (*Aside*) Probably the king my own idiot
17 advisors are telling me about. (*Back to the KINGS*) Go on.
- 18 KING 3: Well, the star is in this general vicinity, and we were
19 wondering if you knew where we might find this king.
- 20 HEROD: No. My advisors are telling me that the prophecies
21 point to the city of David — that would be Bethlehem.
- 22 KING 1: Bethlehem? That would make sense!
- 23 KING 2: Thank you, Your Majesty.
- 24 KING 3: Yes, sorry to have interrupted your ... sword practice.
- 25 HEROD: Oh. Oh, right! No, you're fine. Listen, before you go,
26 tell me more about this king.
- 27 KING 3: We don't know much. Just that he is to be a great
28 ruler.
- 29 KING 1: Perhaps the greatest.
- 30 KING 2: We believe he is to be the Messiah, prophesied
31 throughout the ages.
- 32 KING 3: And that he is to be born soon.
- 33 HEROD: Born? You mean he isn't even born yet?
- 34 KING 2: All we've read hints that the star will signal his birth.
- 35 HEROD: Really? Do your prophecies tell you *when* this event

1 will happen?

2 **KING 1:** We believe it to be imminent.

3 **HEROD:** Well, I'll be. Good luck to you in your journeys.

4 **KING 3:** Thank you, Your Majesty. *(They start to exit.)*

5 **HEROD:** Oh, and gentlemen?

6 **KING 2:** Yes, Your Majesty?

7 **HEROD:** When you find him, come back and tell me so that I
8 may come and worship him as well. Don't want to be the
9 king that gets left out of the gift parade, you know ...
10 heh-heh! Bad etiquette and all ...

11 **KING 1:** Of course.

12 **KING 3:** We're bringing him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
13 *(Pause)* Just so we don't duplicate gifts. *(KINGS 1-3 prepare*
14 *to exit.)*

15 **HEROD:** Thank you. *(Pause as they exit)* Don't worry. I'll be
16 bringing him something different altogether ... *(Laughs*
17 *maniacally.)*

18 **ZURIEL:** *(Looking at ARIEL)* This can't be good.

19 **ARIEL:** No. No, it can't ... *(Lights down. All exit. "Squeeze You*
20 *Inn" sign is hung above the door.)*

21

22

23 SCENE 6

24 O Little Town of Bethlehem

25

26 *(In Bethlehem, MICHAEL and ARIEL are scrambling with a*
27 *few last-minute changes. SERAPHIEL is walking through the*
28 *town, making final check list notations on his clipboard.)*

29 **MICHAEL:** *(Looking at clipboard)* OK, got it. City of David,
30 which is Bethlehem — check. Lowly entrance into the
31 world, check. Well, it should happen tonight.

32 **ARIEL:** *(Running up, out of breath)* Michael! *(Bends over with*
33 *hands on knees, panting.)* Michael!

34 **MICHAEL:** Ariel? What are you doing here?

35 **ARIEL:** *(Hands still on knees)* I've just come from talking to

- 1 Seraphiel. There's a problem.
2 MICHAEL: A problem? What is it?
3 ARIEL: You know — when something doesn't go quite right.
4 MICHAEL: No. I mean, what is the problem?
5 ARIEL: Well, it seems the arrangements you've made for the
6 birth aren't quite right.
7 MICHAEL: What? How could that be? I think I've covered
8 everything.
9 ARIEL: Not the way it's supposed to be.
10 MICHAEL: But what could be missing? I had to get them to
11 Bethlehem at the time she was due, so I arranged the
12 census. I arranged for donkey transportation, complete
13 with parking at the worst little inn in town. They always
14 have rooms ...
15 ARIEL: That's just it. Seraphiel says the inn doesn't say
16 "despised and rejected" enough to him.
17 MICHAEL: Are you kidding me? Have you seen the place? It's
18 called the "Squeeze You Inn." It's only six shekels a night!
19 How much more despised and rejected can you get?
20 ARIEL: Actually, Seraphiel wants to make sure there are *no*
21 hotel rooms available.
22 MICHAEL: No rooms? How in the world is that going to
23 work? Where will she have the baby — in the street?
24 ARIEL: Actually, in the stable behind the street.
25 MICHAEL: Whoa. For the birth of God incarnate, the plan is
26 to have him born between a cow and a sheep?
27 ARIEL: Actually, that's what he described. Right down to
28 laying him in the manger.
29 MICHAEL: It just seems wrong. *(Pause)* Well, OK. Who am I to
30 argue? I'll make the arrangements.
31 ARIEL: Great. In the meantime, I'll be waiting for you out in
32 the field south of town.
33 MICHAEL: Oh, right! For the great announcement! I'll see you
34 there! *(ARIEL exits.)* Great. How am I going to manage
35 this? I know they have plenty of rooms ... *(Thinks.)* I

1 know! I could buy all the rooms for tonight myself! If
 2 only I had some shekels ... *(Just then, a bag with coins*
 3 *thrown from Off-stage flies across the stage, landing at his*
 4 *feet.) Thanks! (Off-stage, a deep voice replies, "You're*
 5 *welcome." MICHAEL crosses to the Inn door and knocks.)*

6 INNKEEPER: Yes?

7 MICHAEL: Yes, I'm sorry to trouble you, but you wouldn't
 8 happen to have any rooms, would you?

9 INNKEEPER: Are you serious? *(Pause)* Of course we've got
 10 rooms! We've always got rooms!

11 MICHAEL: Yes, but — with the census in town and all, I just
 12 figured you'd be out by now.

13 INNKEEPER: You'd think so, wouldn't ya? Seems word gets
 14 around pretty quickly these days — we don't have a
 15 great reputation here at the Squeeze You Inn.

16 MICHAEL: Yes, well, your prices are certainly reasonable.

17 INNKEEPER: And worth every penny. Can I get you a room?

18 MICHAEL: Actually, I'll need multiple rooms.

19 INNKEEPER: Really? How many would that be?

20 MICHAEL: How many do you have?

21 INNKEEPER: Oh, come now! I asked you first!

22 MICHAEL: I'll need as many as you have.

23 INNKEEPER: But what if I told you I had one hundred and
 24 six rooms?

25 MICHAEL: You couldn't possibly have one hundred and six
 26 rooms.

27 INNKEEPER: But if I did, you couldn't *need* one hundred and
 28 six rooms, now could you?

29 MICHAEL: I might surprise you.

30 INNKEEPER: Well, I haven't got that many rooms.

31 MICHAEL: Exactly how many rooms *do* you have that are
 32 available?

33 INNKEEPER: Well, let's see — I've got four upstairs and three
 34 downstairs. Let me see how many are available. *(Takes out*
 35 *his registration log on a clipboard.) Looks like ... seven.*

- 1 MICHAEL: You mean there's nobody staying here tonight?
2 INNKEEPER: Well, *I'm* staying here. Does that count?
3 MICHAEL: No. Look, I'll take all seven.
4 INNKEEPER: Really? Wow! This will be the first time I've
5 been sold out since ... *(Pause, thinking)* well, since I
6 opened this place eight years ago.
7 MICHAEL: Shocking, really. Here you go — forty-two
8 shekels.
9 INNKEEPER: Wow. Well, help yourself to the place —
10 *(Looking around for the other occupants)* Will you be
11 expecting others, or do you want me to give you a wake-
12 up call every hour so you can change rooms?
13 MICHAEL: Uh ... no. The others will be joining me later.
14 INNKEEPER: Will there be multiple people in the rooms?
15 MICHAEL: Oh, there's a whole multitude, you might say. But
16 don't worry — there will be plenty of room.
17 INNKEEPER: Thanks again. The front desk is always open
18 if you need anything.
19 MICHAEL: Thank you — I'll keep that in mind. Good
20 evening. *(He exits as MARY and JOSEPH approach.)*
21 INNKEEPER: Well, it's like Grand Central Station out here —
22 more visitors!
23 JOSEPH: Please, sir. Are you the owner of this inn?
24 INNKEEPER: Why, yes I am!
25 JOSEPH: We are in need of a room, and all of the other inns
26 are completely full. We heard from the locals that you
27 *always* have rooms. Is this true?
28 INNKEEPER: Unfortunately, it is true.
29 MARY: Oh, thank goodness!
30 INNKEEPER: That is, most of the time. But I just rented out
31 the last rooms of the night, I'm afraid!
32 JOSEPH: Oh, no! But my wife here is heavy with child. We've
33 got to find a place for her to lie down for the night!
34 INNKEEPER: I'm so sorry, but we're full. *(Thinking out loud)*
35 Wow, that sounds really odd! No vacancy. Huh!

1 **JOSEPH:** Don't you have *any* room left?

2 **INNKEEPER:** I'm afraid not. (*Again, to himself*) That just
3 sounds so strange!

4 **JOSEPH:** Please, sir — you were our final hope ...

5 **INNKEEPER:** Wow. That's pressure. I tell you what — I don't
6 have any rooms left, but if you'd like, I have a stable out
7 back — you're welcome to use that tonight if you can't
8 find anything else.

9 **MARY:** We'll take it!

10 **JOSEPH:** I'm afraid we're out of options. You've got a deal.

11 **INNKEEPER:** Now *that* sounds more familiar. Come on, I'll
12 show you out back.

13 **MARY:** Thank you, sir. Thank you. (*They all exit as lights go
14 down. A ladder draped with a cloth is placed at one side of
15 the stage.*)

16

17

18 **SCENE 7**

19 **While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night**

20

21 (*The setting is a field outside Bethlehem. All ANGELS are
22 On-stage. They are gathering to approach the SHEPHERDS
23 about Jesus' birth. The SHEPHERDS are beside the ladder at
24 the side of the stage.*)

25 **MICHAEL:** All right, people! Are we all here?

26 **ARIEL:** All present and accounted for, sir.

27 **MICHAEL:** Very well. Thank you, Ariel. All right. Now, we've
28 been waiting for this night for a very long time. I know
29 that some of the things leading up to this may seem a bit
30 unorthodox, but it's all a part of the plan. Now, we're
31 here to announce the birth of Christ, so we want to
32 make sure we make an impact. Got it?

33 **RAPHAEL and ARIEL:** Got it! You bet!

34 **MICHAEL:** All right. Now, here's the plan. Raphael, you'll be
35 the one to actually start us off.

- 1 **RAPHAEL:** You mean on the song? Because I'm just a tad bit
2 tone deaf.
- 3 **ARIEL:** Really? I never noticed!
- 4 **RAPHAEL:** Yep. I usually lip synch.
- 5 **ARIEL:** Ohhhh!
- 6 **MICHAEL:** Not on the song. I want you to make the
7 announcement we talked about earlier, remember?
- 8 **RAPHAEL:** Oh, right!
- 9 **ZURIEL:** So we're heading back into town?
- 10 **MICHAEL:** No.
- 11 **GABRIEL:** So where are we making the announcement?
- 12 **MICHAEL:** Right over there.
- 13 **ARIEL:** Over there by those shepherds?
- 14 **MICHAEL:** No, over there *to* those shepherds..
- 15 **ZURIEL:** But I don't understand. Where are the Sanhedrin?
16 Where are the Pharisees? The Sadducees?
- 17 **MICHAEL:** Probably sleeping.
- 18 **ARIEL:** Shouldn't we wake them up for this?
- 19 **MICHAEL:** Look. Seraphiel said this was going to be
20 different.
- 21 **RAPHAEL:** But I thought we were announcing the birth of
22 Christ to the world!
- 23 **MICHAEL:** We are.
- 24 **RAPHAEL:** But there's no one over there to hear it except for
25 those shepherds!
- 26 **MICHAEL:** And they are the ones God wants to be the first
27 to see him. Common man. Every man.
- 28 **GABRIEL:** Oh! I get it. Jesus is coming *to* the common man
29 because he's coming *for* the common man.
- 30 **MICHAEL:** You got it. Now as I was saying, Raphael is going
31 over to make the announcement we practiced, and then
32 we'll go over and join him when it's time.
- 33 **RAPHAEL:** Sounds fine, but when you guys join me, I'm lip-
34 synching.
- 35 **MICHAEL:** That's fine. You ready?

- 1 **RAPHAEL:** Wish me luck.
- 2 **MICHAEL:** OK. Good luck. (*RAPHAEL crosses over to the*
3 *SHEPHERDS on a raised platform of some kind.*)
- 4 **SHEPHERD 1:** Zeke, something's bothering me.
- 5 **SHEPHERD 2:** What's that, Malachi?
- 6 **SHEPHERD 1:** Well, did you remember to latch that gate
7 after I told you to back at the ranch?
- 8 **SHEPHERD 2:** (*Pause*) I think so.
- 9 **SHEPHERD 1:** You *think* so? Why don't you *know* so?
- 10 **SHEPHERD 2:** Well, I remember shutting it. I just can't
11 remember if I latched it particularly ...
- 12 **SHEPHERD 1:** But you know that we left those two new
13 mamas back home with their lambs. What happens if
14 they get out?
- 15 **SHEPHERD 2:** Well, I reckon I'd have to go out and find 'em
16 is all. (*Pause*) I'm sure I latched it.
- 17 **SHEPHERD 1:** Oh, you're *sure*. Is that as sure as you were
18 last time when I asked you if you made sure to douse
19 the cook fire we had going? It took me three weeks to
20 build that shelter back up.
- 21 **SHEPHERD 2:** I'm sure it's fine.
- 22 **SHEPHERD 1:** And what happens if you're wrong? What
23 happens if the ewes escape?
- 24 **SHEPHERD 2:** Then I guess ... ewes gonna have to get some
25 more! (*Obnoxious laugh*) Get it? Ewes gonna have to get
26 some more!
- 27 **SHEPHERD 1:** Oh, you're a really funny guy, all right.
- 28 **SHEPHERD 2:** (*Laughing*) Ewes gonna have to get some
29 more. That *is* funny.
- 30 **SHEPHERD 1:** Oh, get over yourself. Say, what time is it,
31 anyway?
- 32 **SHEPHERD 2:** I'd say around ten o'clock or so. You reckon
33 we should be getting ... (*Pause, noticing the light from the*
34 *ANGEL approaching*) What on earth is that?
- 35 **SHEPHERD 1:** Oh, I'm not falling for that. I look back over



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