

## Suggestions from the Author

Thank you for ordering a director's packet! This has been years in the making; we are so excited to finally have it available to you! We have poured our hearts into this project and are praying that it is a blessing to many.

We have written this as a full production; we hope that everyone will attempt to do the play. The story is powerful, and the lines are mostly Scripture. Let's begin with these instructions if you choose to use the script in this way. If you are unable to do so, then I will address the script as a reader's theatre also.

### *Full Drama*

Since the majority of the play takes place in Jerusalem outside the Temple, we suggest you make this center stage. It does not need a very large area. We have traveled to many churches in recent days and have yet to find a church stage too small. Use the space you have and be creative!

We have written the stage directions as though the director is in the audience. So as you read, imagine you are looking at the platform. Left stage is the manger scene. Center stage is Jerusalem. Right stage is the hillside. If your platform is small, then the side floor areas will also work.

As I said, you may be as creative and spectacular as you wish. If you do not have the capability of backdrops, then props serve a huge purpose for you. Anna and Simeon need a bench front and center. Mary and Joseph need a manger. The shepherds need only a ground to lie on.

Props throughout (please remember these are only suggestions):

**Scene 1:** baskets of bread, a bird for sacrifice, a string of fish, basket of fruit and vegetables

**Scene 2:** baby Jesus, manger, blankets

**Scene 3:** a shepherd's staff, a baby lamb (stuffed)

**Scene 4:** baby Jesus, manger, blankets, shepherd's staff

**Scene 5:** baby Jesus, a bird for sacrifice

**Scene 6:** baby Jesus, a bird for sacrifice

Costumes are also an important aspect. There are several online sites that can help you easily find what you need if your church does not already have costumes. We will leave this up to your discretion.

You will notice that there are lighting cues throughout the script. We have tried to simplify it by only requiring one spotlight per scene. If your church has the opportunity to rent or own great lighting, then please enhance our simple instructions. Otherwise, you will only need one spotlight to give it the desired effect.

What does the cast include? As directors of several church plays, we understand that this can be difficult. We have narrowed it a little – every cast member must be able to sing! Each member will need to be comfortable singing solos or duets. These include:

**Anna:** an “older” woman (makeup can do wonders) – with an alto vocal range

**Simeon:** an “older” man – with a tenor vocal range

**Mary:** a young woman (an older teenager perhaps) – with an alto vocal range

**Joseph:** a younger man – with a tenor vocal range

**Shepherd 1:** any age – tenor vocal range

**Shepherd 2:** any age – lead vocal range

**Shepherd 3:** any age – baritone vocal range

**Angel:** This person does not have any speaking lines, but will need a costume – with a soprano or tenor vocal range

**Crowd:** We are leaving this to your choice. We imagine that the crowd would be the choir. You could put your choir in full costumes and have them appropriately dressed and placed during each song. Or, choose a few “extras” to make up the crowd and leave your choir in the choir loft.

## *Reader's Theatre*

Doing the script this way eliminates the need for stage setup, costumes, props, crowd scenes, and the cast having to sing. You could always choose your cast members to sing if that works best. Instead of acting each scene, your readers would memorize each line and dramatically interpret it. If you are unsure what this entails, YouTube has several videos of how-to.

## Scene 1

This scene opens center stage in the marketplace and around the Temple in Jerusalem; it's a busy day in town. Cast is seen milling about shopping for food, carrying sacrifices into the Temple, or walking around "window-shopping." Once the music begins, a woman and man eagerly move to front center stage from the left entrance.

### Song – "Sing Joy"

- Crowd joins in on the excitement and sings to the audience. You will need to artfully place cast around center stage.
- Once the song is finished, everyone slowly begins to mingle and resume what they were doing previously. Comments are made throughout the crowd of Jesus' birth, which has now been thirty days ago per Jewish Law. It is easily assumed that the news has traveled from Bethlehem over the small hill and into Jerusalem.

**Underscore 1** – As everyone continues about their business after the song, Anna and Simeon then step to front center stage to begin the scene.

**Simeon** – Did you hear? Do you believe that at long last, the awaited Messiah is come?

**Anna** – I can't believe it! (pause) Oh, how will we know that it is really Immanuel? We have been waiting for so many years.

**Simeon** – I know. More than anything my heart's desire is to see Him and worship Him.

Anna nods her agreement as they walk over to sit in front of the Temple.

**Anna** – You would imagine that Someone with names such as Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, we would have heard by now of His coming. (pause) I wonder how it all happened, how He was announced, where He chose to be born? I wonder how He came?

Anna and Simeon continue their chatter quietly as the light fades on them and comes up on the children's choir, who are standing off to the side of center stage.

This next song is a great outreach option to bring parents and grandparents to see your presentation that might not normally come to church. If your church has a Christian school, you could have one (or more) of your choirs sing this song. If not, even two children or teenagers could sing this as a duet. On the demo, the children singing range from four to thirteen; there are only six of them. As long as you have the capability to mic them accordingly, it will be perfect, and the children's family members will be ecstatic! We're parents as well and thoroughly enjoyed having a couple of our children record the demo. The purpose of this song sets the stage to go back in time and tell the story of "how He came." The words to the song tell exactly that.

**Song – "Rejoice"**