

Alternative Nativity

Length:
Approx 8 mins.

Number of people required:
Min five, max 14

Characters:
Mary Christmas (MC), Chris Mascake (CM), Tim Sull (TS), Innkeeper (IK), Holly Leith (HL), Shepherds (S1), (S2), (S3), Wise men (WM1), (WM2), (WM3), Russell Sprout (RS), Palace official (PO), King Herod (KH).

Brief synopsis:
The format is a news programme with two presenters in the studio who cut to footage from reporters on the ground. It is the day after Jesus' birth. The play could either be entirely prerecorded, a mixture with the studio parts being live, or all performed live.

Opening news music

MC: Good evening and welcome to the Bethlehem Broadcasting Corporation News at Ten. I'm Mary Christmas.

CM: And I'm Chris Mascake. Coming up on tonight's show: record numbers descend on Bethlehem, leaving some weary travellers left out in the cold...

MC: Shepherds tell of unusual sightings in the sky above Bethlehem...

CM: Three mysterious pilgrims from the East join us in the studio to tell us about their journey...

MC: And, there's trouble at the palace. What has upset Herod this time?

CM: Over to Tim Sull, reporting live from Bethlehem.

TS: Good evening. I'm here in Bethlehem, which has been overwhelmed by record numbers of visitors responding to the census called by King Herod. The town is quite literally bursting at the seams and I'm hoping to speak to an innkeeper who has a fascinating story to tell.

Knocks at the door

IK: *(from off stage)* NO ROOM!

TS: *(smiles at camera)* *Knocks again*

IK: *(louder)* NO ROOM!

TS: *(looking worried)* *Knocks again*

IK: *(opens door)* I SAID NO...Oh hello. Can I help you?

TS: Good evening. I'm Tim Sull from BBC news. How have you coped with the record number of visitors to Bethlehem this week?

IK: Well, I've never seen anything like it and my family have been running this inn for generations. I've had to turn loads of people away.

TS: I understand there was a couple you couldn't turn away.

IK: That's right. This man and wife turned up late last night. She was on a donkey that looked almost as exhausted as she did. They'd travelled a long way and she was pregnant, like *really* pregnant. She was about to pop. I couldn't send them away, but I was already full to overflowing, so I suggested they sleep in my stable round the back. And they were so desperate they accepted.

TS: They must have been desperate.

IK: I know. And no sooner had I finished for the night, and was nodding off, when I heard this groaning. Like this: uurrghhhh! It went on for ages. Then everything went quiet and I was just shutting my eyes, then I heard a baby crying! She'd only gone and had the baby. In my stable.

TS: Goodness! Well that's all we have time for. Back to the studio.

MC: Thank you Tim. Well what do you make of that Chris? A baby being born in a smelly stable?

CM: My wife would have been furious if that was her. She was cleaning the house for weeks before our baby was born. There was no dirt anywhere, she'd never have coped with sheep poo. Anyone would've thought she was about to give birth to an environmental health inspector, not a baby!

MC: I think you'll find that's called 'nesting'.

CM: Huh?

MC: Anyway. We're now going live to Holly Leith, who is with some shepherds on the hillside.

HL: Good evening, I'm Holly Leith and I'm here with some shepherds who were

surprised last night by strange happenings. Could you tell us what you saw?

S1: Yeah. Well Baz and Gaz here were fast asleep on the grass, and suddenly I was blinded by this light. I was pretty terrified so I woke the lads up to see if they could see it too, just to check I wasn't going mad!

S2: But it was real. Then we realised the light was actually an angel.

HL: An angel? What was it doing?

S3: Well it started talking to us. He said that a baby had been born in Bethlehem and we should go and find it.

S1: Yeah, then loads of angels appeared and started singing. It was beautiful.

S2: Then when they'd gone we knew we had to go find this baby and see it for ourselves so we rushed off into Bethlehem. We were so excited we didn't even think about our sheep, we just left them!

HL: And did you find the baby?

S3: Oh yes, we found him alright.

S2: It was incredible.

S1: It really was. And I don't even like babies!

HL: It really does sound incredible. Thank you. *To camera.* Back to the studio.

CM: Thank you Holly. It has been a strange couple of days for Bethlehem hasn't it Mary?

MC: It has indeed. And now we're joined in the studio by three men who are in the middle of an extraordinary journey. Could you tell us where you've come from?

WM1: The East.

CM: OK. So where are you going?

WM2: To find a new born king.

MC: And how will you find this king?

WM3: We are following a star.

CM: Following a star? Well, have you tried the palace? If it's a new born king maybe that would be a good place to look?

WM1: We did.

WM2: It wasn't there.

WM3: King Herod knew nothing about it.

WM1: But he said if we find it to go tell him.

WM2: He wants to pay his respects.

MC: And what are these things you have with you?

WM3: Presents.

WM1: For the baby.

MC: Oh lovely. What have you got for him?

WM1: Gold.

WM2: Frankincense

WM3: Myrrhh.

CM: Myrrhh? Isn't that what they use on dead bodies?

WM3: That is correct.

MC: Um, well thank you so much for taking time out from your journey to come and tell us so much (*said sarcastically*) about it. We do hope you find the baby.

CM: They weren't very chatty were they? Now for our final story of the night we go to the palace where Russell Sprout is reporting on a disturbance.

RS: Good evening, I'm Russell Sprout and I'm at the palace with a palace official and, as you can hear, King Herod is not happy.

King Herod is in the background shouting

RS: (*to palace official*) Can you tell us what has upset the King?

PO: Yes. We had three unusual visitors this morning who said they had seen a new star in the sky and they were following it because it was going to lead them to a new king that had just been born. But there has been no baby born here in the palace so the king is furious that there is about to be an attempt to overthrow his kingdom. He told the men that if they found the baby they must come back and tell him where it is.

RS: And what will the king do then?

PO: He told the men he wanted to go and pay his respects to the new baby, but between you and me (*looks round furtively and in a stage whisper*) he will kill it.

RS: (*Gasps loudly*) Um, well, ur, back to the studio.

MC: Oh my goodness! Did you hear that?

CM: I know. That's terrible.

MC: Um, Chris, you don't think it's the same baby that those three strange men were looking for do you?

CM: I think you're right. We must warn them. *Listens to earpiece.* Oh no they've already left the building. Well let's hope that somehow word gets to them in time and they don't go and tell Herod where the baby is.

MC: Oh I do hope so. You know, it's just occurred to me, do you think it's the same baby that the angels told those shepherds about?

CM: I think it could be. Actually, I think it's the baby that was born in that innkeepers stable. I think all our stories tonight have been about the same baby.

MC: Yes, I think you're right. Wow! That must be one special baby, I think we might be hearing a lot more about this baby in the days, weeks, and maybe even years to come.

CM: Well, you've been watching the BBC news at ten, I'm Chris Mascake...

MC: And I'm Mary Christmas.

MC and CM: Goodnight.

MC: I wonder what the baby's name is...

The End