

NEW STAR

OLD: Welcome, New Star! You're looking nice and bright this evening.

NEW: Thank you, Old Star. I've been working on my *shiny-ness!*

OLD: Good job! And THIS is a great night for us all to look our best.

NEW: Why is that?

OLD: Because it's Christmas!

NEW: (*excited*) Yeah! (*now wondering*) Uh... What's Christmas?

OLD: You don't know about Christmas? Oh, that's right. You're a brand new star! This is your very first Christmas!

NEW: Yes! Is it your first Christmas, too?

OLD: (*laughing*) Oh, no! I've seen over 2000 of them.

NEW: Wow! 2000! ... Is that a lot?

OLD: Well, yes, it is. In fact, I am old enough to tell you about the very First Christmas! And I can explain why we still celebrate it, even after all these years.

NEW: Oh, please do. I want to hear all about it.

OLD: Okay! To start with we have to go back before the first Christmas and visit a little place called Nazareth.

NEW: Is Nazareth a place in the sky? You know... Up in Space?

OLD: No, it's a place down on the Earth; on that little bitty planet right down there. (*Points.*)

NEW: You mean the one over there by Jupiter? (*Points wrong way.*)

OLD: No... the one a little further to the right. (*Points further right.*)

NEW: Do you mean Pluto? I didn't think it was still a planet!

OLD: No...Not Pluto! To the Right! (*Correcting him*) Your other Right!

NEW: You mean the little blue and green one? There between Mars and Venus?

OLD: EXACTLY! And look! Right over there... That is the town of Nazareth!

[MARY ENTERS and moves to LEFT near piano mike.]

NEW: Who's the pretty lady?

OLD: That's Mary. She is a Virgin, and she is pledged to be married to a man named Joseph.

[JOSEPH ENTERS and moves to CENTER. JOSEPH appears to be working with some wood (hammering, sawing, etc.)]

OLD: Joseph is a carpenter. He is also a righteous man.

NEW: What's he doing?

OLD: Building something. Carpenters are always building something.

NEW: I hope it's a cradle. {GABRIEL ENTERS to go to MARY}

OLD: I think you're getting ahead of our story.

NEW: Who is that other guy? He's all shiny – like us.

OLD: That's Gabriel. He's an angel. He has come to talk to Mary.

Let's listen. *[GABRIEL speaks to MARY.]*

GABRIEL: Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.

[MARY looks a little nervous.]

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and He will be called the Son of the Most High.

MARY: How will this be, since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.

MARY: I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.

[GABRIEL EXITS near the piano]

[During next few lines, MARY "packs up" her things and travels to the Christmas tree and back to the piano side]

NEW: What did all that mean?

OLD: The angel told Mary that she is going to have a baby, who will be the Son of God.

NEW: And what did Mary say?

[ELIZABETH ENTERS and stands at mike near piano. JOSEPH stays at CENTRE STAGE.]

OLD: She said "Yes."

NEW: *(relieved)* Oh, good. Now what? I like Mary. She seems really nice.

OLD: Oh, she is. *(continuing)* After the angel left her, Mary hurried to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. [MARY ARRIVES near piano and says into her mike]

MARY: *(calling out to her)* Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH: *(calling out in response)* Mary!

[ELIZABETH and MARY embrace and begin speaking to each other silently.]

OLD: When Mary arrived, she found out that things were just like the angel had told her.

NEW: Mary seems really happy to see Elizabeth! And just think, Elizabeth was going to have a baby in her old age. It WAS a miracle!

OLD: Yes! And Mary wasn't the only one who was happy. Elizabeth was happy too! Listen to what she said to Mary!

ELIZABETH: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored , that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

MARY: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

[MARY and ELIZABETH say their good-byes and ELIZABETH EXITS.]

[MARY travels back to the tree and returns to piano side at STAGE LEFT and stands quietly.]

OLD: Mary stayed with Elizabeth for a long visit and then returned home to Nazareth. But by now it was more obvious that she was going to have a baby.

NEW: Uh, oh. What did Joseph say?

OLD: Well, Joseph knew the baby wasn't his. But, since Joseph was a righteous man, he decided to put Mary away privately.

[JOSEPH lies down as if going to sleep.]

OLD: But after he had considered these things, God sent an angel to speak to him in a dream.

[GABRIEL ENTERS and kneels on one knee to speak to JOSEPH.]

GABRIEL: Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.

OLD: All of this was done in fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Oh, and the name “Immanuel” means “God with us.”

NEW: Wow! That’s a great name! What did Joseph do when he woke up?

[JOSEPH wakes, goes to MARY, and puts his arm around her. They prepare to pack for their trip.]

OLD: He did just what the angel had told him to do.

NEW: Okay... So, what happened next?

OLD: Next there was a little drama that went on in Rome. Caesar, the Roman ruler, ordered that everyone had to be counted.

NEW: Why would he do that?

OLD: Something about taxes... whatever those are. But, in order to be counted, everyone had to go back to their family’s hometown.

[MARY and JOSEPH ENTER and stand at STAGE LEFT at Nazareth sign.]

NEW: Sort of like a family reunion?

OLD: A little bit... but without the games or the potato salad.

NEW: That's too bad. I love potato salad. Did they have cookies? I love cookies too!

OLD: I don't think so.

NEW: (saddened) Then it really wasn't much like a family reunion at all.

[MARY and JOSEPH leave for Bethlehem. They walk around the pews to the back of the Church and then the front]

OLD: No. In fact, for Mary and Joseph, it was a pretty long and difficult trip; especially since Mary was expecting a baby.

NEW: Where did they have to go?

OLD: They went to a little town called ... Bethlehem.

[“Bethlehem” and a manger are placed in front].

NEW: (Pointing) Do you mean that little, bitty town over there in the middle of nowhere?

OLD: That's the one! It was the birthplace of Joseph's ancestor, King David.

NEW: Wait a minute! Bethlehem... Isn't that the one they sing about?
The one they call "O, little town" of Bethlehem?

OLD: Yes!

NEW: I really like that song. They even sing about how "the silent stars go by..."

OLD: Listen, I think someone's going to sing it now.

HYMN # 165: "O, LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM" (During the singing, manger will be set with baby in it and a cover over it. Chair in place for Mary)

NEW: Wow. They can really sing! But listen, I thought this was a story about the First Christmas. When do we get to the part with the tree and the star?

OLD: There was no tree on the first Christmas, but there WAS a star.

NEW: Where? (*Looking around*)

OLD: We're getting there. First we have to hear more about Mary and Joseph.

NEW: Okay.

[MARY and JOSEPH ENTER and cross to the tree and back to Centre Stage.]

OLD: So, Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted, and Mary went with him.

[MARY and JOSEPH finally arrive at manger and Mary sits.]

NEW: Look! Mary and Joseph have arrived in Bethlehem. I hope they have somewhere nice to stay. Mary looks very tired.

OLD: You are right. But there was no room for them in the inn. So, Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable.

NEW: A stable!? Do you mean like for cows, and horses, and goats, and sheep, and...? [Mary takes the cover off the baby]

OLD: (*Interrupting.*) Yep. Mary and Joseph stayed in a humble stable. There Mary had her baby, and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger.

NEW : Why did they put the baby in a manger?

OLD: It was probably the safest and best place they had for Him. I'm sure that Joseph lined it with fresh, new hay and stood watch over Mary and the baby during the night.

NEW: What did they name the baby?

OLD: They named Him, Jesus, which means "The LORD saves."
And now for the first time up in the sky there was a New Star; announcing the birth of the Messiah.

NEW: Look! I think they're going to sing again!

OLD: They do that a lot at Christmas time... You get used to it.

HYMN # 119 HOPE IS A STAR

[SHEPHERDS ENTER and move to area mike facing piano STAGE LEFT.]

[MARY and JOSEPH are at CENTRE STAGE.]

NEW: Wow! That was a really great song! Just think. A new star in the sky! How wonderful! How glorious! No one on earth could have missed that!

OLD: It's amazing that not only did people miss the Messiah then, but that they still miss Him today. Maybe it's because they are not really looking for the Messiah. But God didn't rely on a single new star to announce the birth of His Son. He also sent an angel to tell a group of shepherds all about it. *(Laughing)* Of course, it really frightened the shepherds to suddenly see an angel.

[GABRIEL ENTERS. GABRIEL faces the SHEPHERDS.]

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

[Other ANGELS cross to SHEPHERDS standing a little behind Gabriel]

OLD: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying...

ANGELS: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

[ALL ANGELS EXIT near piano.]

OLD: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another...

SHEPHERD: Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

[SHEPHERDS go to the tree & back to MARY AND JOSEPH and kneel down.]

OLD: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

[Shepherds looking around and act like they are sharing the good news)

OLD: When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

[SHEPHERDS EXIT rejoicing going through the pews, they sit down at the pews near the piano. MARY and JOSEPH remain at manger.]

HYMN # 147 “ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”

NEW: So, that’s the story of the First Christmas and the Star.

OLD: Yes, but there is more to the story. (*Pointing*) Look — over there in the east.

[THREE WISE MEN ENTER and cross to lectern.]

NEW: Who are those guys?

OLD: They are three wise men. But they can tell us themselves.

[King 1, 2 & 3 together singing]

KING #1: We three kings of Orient are.

KING #2: Bearing gifts we traverse afar.

KING #3: Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder star.

NEW: (*interrupting*) Wait a minute! Wait a minute! What are they saying?

OLD: It's from an old song; about the three wise men. They are saying that they are three kings from the east; and that they have traveled a long way to get here.

NEW: Oh, I get it! And they saw New Star! And they followed it... because they were wise enough to know that it meant the Savior had been born.

OLD: That's right! Listen... I think they are going to sing about it.

HYMN # 173 “WE, THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE” (First four verses)

[HEROD ENTERS and is seated on the chair at STAGE LEFT near piano]

[After the song, THREE KINGS pick up their gifts and walk around to the pews and back to the piano area.]

NEW: Oh, I like the kings. And look! They brought presents! Who are they for?

OLD: The gifts are for the Baby Jesus. They are Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

Gold because Jesus is the King. Frankincense because He is the High Priest. And Myrrh because of His Sacrifice.

NEW: Hey! Where are they going? Bethlehem's over there!
(Calling out to 3 Kings) Hey, Fellas! You are going the wrong way! The baby is over there!

OLD: They are going to Jerusalem, to the palace, to look for the King of the Jews.

NEW: But why? The baby is in Bethlehem. Over there! He was born in a stable!

OLD: They went looking for the baby king in a palace. But they didn't find Him there.

NEW: Who did they find?

OLD: Well, unfortunately, they met an evil man named Herod, who was the local ruler.

[THREE KINGS cross to STAGE LEFT near piano and speak to KING HEROD, who stands.]

KING #1: Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

KING #2: We saw his star in the east.

KING #3: And we have come to worship Him.

[HEROD look worried and whisper back and forth. With the scribe]

OLD: When Herod heard all of this, he was greatly distressed and all of Jerusalem with him. He called in the Jewish chief priests and the teachers of the law and asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

SCRIBE: In Bethlehem in Judea. For this is what the prophet has written...
(as if reading from a scroll) “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Jud-A, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

HEROD: Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find Him, come and tell me, so that I may come and worship Him too.

[HEROD EXITS with scribe, sitting on the pews near the piano]

[THREE KINGS take gifts and cross to the tree and back to MARY and JOSEPH.]

OLD: So the Wise Men went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child

was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

[THREE KINGS present gifts to Baby Jesus to JOSEPH]

OLD: Then they gave him their gifts and went back to their own countries. But having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they went home a different way.

[THREE KINGS EXIT STAGE LEFT, sit in pews.]

[MARY sleeps in chair and JOSEPH lies down as if going to sleep.]

NEW: Why didn't they go back to see Herod?

OLD: Because Herod didn't really want to worship Jesus. He wanted to destroy him!

NEW: That's horrible!

OLD: (*seriously*) Yes, it was.

[GABRIEL ENTERS and crosses to JOSEPH and whispers in Joseph's ear.]

NEW: What happened to Baby Jesus?

OLD: An angel was sent to warn Joseph in a dream to take his family away to Egypt, where they would be safe. They escaped into the night before Herod found them.

[GABRIEL EXITS. JOSEPH wakes up MARY.]

[MARY and JOSEPH gather up the baby and EXIT STAGE RIGHT near tree sit in pews.]

NEW: That's wonderful! Is that the whole story?

OLD: There is a little more... When it was safe to return, the child Jesus and His Family traveled back to Nazareth where he was raised. Jesus was the Son of God and He did all of the things that were prophesied about Him. He lived a perfect life and He died on a cross for all sin, and rose again to live forever. Now He sits at the right hand of God the Father, and one day He will come to judge the world.

NEW: That's amazing! And how do you know all of this?

OLD: Oh, I saw it all, from up here in the sky; for you see, I AM the New Star that appeared that night.

NEW: Really!? You are the New Star? But you are so old.

OLD: So is the story, over 2000 years old... But it is still as true today as it was on that very First Christmas. And that is why we still celebrate Christmas today.

NEW: That's amazing! Thank you for telling me the story. I think I will shine a little brighter now that I know all of this.

OLD: Well, you know what King David said:
The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

NEW: Yeah! Well said!! Hey, is that the same King David?

OLD: Yes. King David, the ancestor of Joseph, the one who was born in Bethlehem, all those years ago.

NEW: Wow , I like that guy. He has a real way with words.

[ALL CAST and/or CHOIR ENTERS and starts getting ready for final song.]

NEW: Okay... So... What now?

OLD: Looks like it's time for another song.

[NEW STAR and OLD STAR start gathering up their things to leave.]

NEW: And cookies? I LOVE cookies.

OLD: Yes, yes... We'll get you some cookies. Come on!