

The Story of Jesus' Birth

by C. Haughee; © Intermountainministry.org 2012

Approx. 25 minutes, music from "God's Kids Worship: White" which presents each song in split-trax for practice and performance. See <http://www.godskidsworship.com/p-308-gods-kids-worship-white-christmas-classic-stereo-cd-new-edition.aspx>

Cast:

Narrator

Luke / Lucy (depending on gender of kid doing it!)

Mary

Elizabeth

Joseph

Gabriel (the Archangel)

Angel 1 (appears to Joseph)

Innkeeper

Angel 2 (appears to Shepherds)

Shepherd 1

Shepherd 2

Sheep (*no lines*)

Children's Chorus

everyone!

Narrator: Long before the different letters and writings were bound together to make our Bible, the message of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection were going out. As we gather tonight, we pretend to listen in on one young friend sharing the story she has been told about Jesus' birth with a friend of his many miles away...

Lucy: [found sitting at his desk writing his letter to Theo]: "To my good friend, Theo... you have asked about the birth of Jesus and what it means for all of us. I will do my best to tell you all I have heard from many eyewitnesses. Truly, Jesus is God himself, and comes to make good on all God's promises to us. Because you are my friend, I hope you see that what I am about to tell you is true and that it is very good news!"¹

¹ Luke 1:1-4

Children’s chorus: [stands to sing]

SONG 1: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL, VERSES 1-3²

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels

chorus: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

2. Sing Choirs of angels, sing in exultation, O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above; Glory to God, all glory in the highest... [chorus]

3. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing... [chorus]

Children’s chorus: [sit in front pews]

Gabriel and Mary move into position

Lucy: [continues to write] “You must imagine that though my telling of this story must begin and end, that this story of Jesus is without a start or a finish. This is because he truly is God, and just as the words I write exist in my mind before I put them down on this page, so Jesus existed before he became God’s Word to us in this world. I must start somewhere, so let me tell you of this special family Jesus would be born into...”

“In Nazareth, there lived a girl named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, and she lived a pure and virtuous life. One night God sent the angel Gabriel to speak with her...”

Gabriel: “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

² The lyrics here are from a previous version of the God’s Kids Worship CD: Green. The “remixes” on their new “White” CD may have slightly different lyrics. Of course, you may choose to have an organist or pianist play the hymns from a songbook or hymnal, too. I happen to like to upbeat version of the songs, and found the children I have worked with get much more into the music and singing as a result of the new renditions!

Mary: [Confused and disturbed] “What is happening; what could this mean?”

Gabriel: “Don’t be frightened, Mary, for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Mary: “But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin.”

Gabriel: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she’s already in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

Mary: “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true.”

Gabriel: [leaves]

Mary makes like she is packing some clothes, etc. and Elizabeth (pregnant) comes into position

Lucy: [continuing with her writing] “A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth’s child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary,

Elizabeth: “You are blessed by God above all other women, and your child is blessed. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! When you came in and greeted me, my baby jumped for joy the instant I

heard your voice! You are blessed, because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.”³

Lucy: [writing] To this Mary responded with joy, saying...”

Mary: “Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and now generation after generation will call me blessed. For he, the Mighty One, is holy, and he has done great things for me and for his people... He has not forgotten his promise to be merciful. For he promised our ancestors—Abraham and his children—to be merciful to them forever.”⁴

Lucy: [writing] Mary then stayed with Elizabeth for about 3 months before returning home. During this time, Mary’s husband to be, Joseph, had a good deal to think about.

Mary and Elizabeth move out of the way, Joseph comes into position and the angel get ready to make its appearance...

Joseph: It breaks my heart that Mary has become pregnant, and it looks as though we will not be married after all. I know Mary is a good woman, but it is so difficult to understand all that is happening. Perhaps I can just break the engagement quietly, and save her the disgrace of making this everyone else’s business as well. [Joseph lays down to sleep]

Angel 1: [appearing to Joseph in a dream, ‘whispers’ into Joseph’s ear while he sleeps] “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. She has done nothing inappropriate. She will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” **[angel leaves]**

³ Luke 1:26-38,39-45

⁴ Luke 1:46-55

Joseph: [waking up] “What a dream I have just had... I know the Lord was speaking to me! I will do what the Lord commands me, even if it is too much for me to understand now. I do love Mary, and I will make her my wife!”

Lucy: [writing] But before the wedding could take place, the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. Naturally, he took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was almost ready to give birth. Arriving late, they had some trouble finding a place to stay when they got to Bethlehem.

Children’s Chorus comes into place...

SONG #2: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, VERSES 1, 3, & 4

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

3. How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin, Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

Children’s Chorus sits down and Joseph, Mary, and the Innkeeper take their places...

Joseph: Perhaps this inn will have a room for us? If not, I am not sure what we will do... we've tried everywhere else!

Mary: Just ask, Joseph, and I am sure God will provide!

Joseph: [knocking on the door] Hello, is anyone still awake?

Inn-keeper: [a little annoyed] What can I do for you? It is quite late you know!

Joseph: Yes, I know it is late, and I am sorry... we need a place to stay. As you can see, my wife is very pregnant, and we are both worn out by our long travels. Please tell us you have a room.

Inn-keeper: Well, yes, I see why it might have taken you longer to get here than the rest, and I wish I could do something for you...

Mary: [interrupting] Please, sir, have you no place for us? We are not proud... just simple servants of the Lord. Anything out of the cold and weather would suit us nicely...

Joseph: [his arm around Mary] Yes, please, anything you could do for us...

Lucy: [writing] And, after some hesitation, the Inn-keeper led them back behind the inn to a place where he kept all his animals, as well as those of the other travelers. And, it was a good thing he didn't hesitate too long, because that very night Mary gave birth! She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, where the animals of other travelers had fed earlier.

Children's Choir stands to sing...

SONG 3: AWAY IN A MANGER, VERSES 1-3

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus! I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

Children's Choir sits, Shepherds stay in position with sheep

Lucy: And, so, at last our savior had come to us... born in the midst of cattle and pack animals, with the smell and comfort of these beasts who looked with interest at the new visitors in their midst. And, while this was happening, another part of the story was unfolding...

Shepherd 1: Just look at Bethlehem... I have never seen it this full, not for feast or festivals, and certainly not when we take our lambs to market!

Shepherd 2: 88, 89, ...90, yep... there all here! Now, let's get some rest!
[Shepherds lay down with their sheep]

Lucy: You see, some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Nothing they had experienced before could have prepared them for what was about to happen next!

Angel: [appears in front of the Shepherds and blows a trumpet or some such thing to wake up the sleeping shepherds... which scares them, and especially frightens them when they see the angel] "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize

him: You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!”

Lucy: [writing excitedly] Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors.” And, just as quickly as the angels had come, they disappeared again... leaving the shepherds amazed and anxious to see their promised Messiah!

Shepherd 1: “Come on, let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Shepherd 2: “Yes, what are we waiting for! Let’s go!”

Lucy: “They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. In days to come, the shepherds would tell everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. After spending some time with Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.”⁵

Children Choir stands to sing...

SONG 4: SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT, VERSES 1-3

1. Silent night, Holy night, all is calm, all is bright. Round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

⁵ Luke 2:8-20

2. Silent Night, Holy Night, shepherds quake at the sight. Glories Stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia. Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ the Savior is born!

3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

Lucy: And so the greatest event in all of history started in the little town of Bethlehem in the midst of barnyard animals, and was spread by simple shepherds. In coming months, little Jesus would be visited by wise men from eastern lands who had come to find the new King of the Jews. This so upset the present king, Herod, that he had all the baby boys in Bethlehem killed. Jesus, our Prince of peace, came into our violent and confused world. He came to show us the way to live and be at peace with God. This is the good news... no the greatest news! And my hope is you will receive it as I have.

SONG FINALE: JOY TO THE WORLD, VERSES 1, 2, INTERLUDE, AND 4

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, and Heav'n and nature sing, and Heav'n and nature sing, and Heav'n, heav'n and nature sing!

2. Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy; Repeat the sounding joy; Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy!

Joy to the world, Joy to the world... Let earth receive her King! Joy to the world, Joy to the world... Let heaven and nature sing!

3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love!