

Section 7: Religious and Moral Plays

Part 1: Plays based on New Testament Stories

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Disclaimer: Lazy Bee Scripts is a publishing house, not a theological institution. Some of the plays may take approaches that do not agree with your interpretation of scripture!

The quoted run-times are a guideline only; so much depends on an individual production.

A 21st Century Nativity

Author Peter van der Sluijs

Roles Minimum Male roles = 4. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 11. Minimum total without doubling = 11. No chorus.

Runtime Around 7 minutes.

Music The producer's copy of the script suggests six carols to be interspersed between the scenes. (These would increase the run time to up to 30 minutes.) Lazy Bee Scripts does not supply any sheet music with this script.

Style Short nativity play (though considerably longer if the suggested carols are sung), with optional traditional nativity tableau. Six scenes, but minimal set requirements.

Outline What would the story of the birth of Jesus be like if it were to happen now?

An Inn Keeper's Tale

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 3. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 5. Minimum total without doubling = 7. No chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Modern version of a medieval mystery play. Single, minimal set, basic props.

Outline An Innkeeper relates the strange events surrounding a local crucifixion. Various members of the Easter Story drop in to give their view of the events.

Anna of Nazareth

Author Sue Gordon

Roles Minimum Male roles = 3. Minimum Female roles = 8. Minimum total with doubling = 14. Minimum total without doubling = 30. Chorus.

Runtime Around 50 minutes.

Music Piano and vocal score for 16 songs supplied with the producer's copy of the script.

Style One-act musical for performance by teenagers, young adults or a mixture of adults and teenagers. No specific set requirements.

Outline Christmas musical telling the story of Mary from her betrothal to Joseph up to the birth of Jesus (roughly Matthew 1, 18-25, Luke 1, 26-38 and Luke 2, 1-7). Told from the point of view of a teenage girl, Anna, a jealous friend of Mary. It brings out the difficulty of Mary's situation within her community, but the resolution is joyous and uplifting.

Plus The following additional items are available (at extra cost) to go with this script: ** A 'backing track CD' with arrangements of all the songs from the show

Caiaphas

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 3. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 7. Minimum total without doubling = 7. No chorus.

Runtime Around 35 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act play which can be produced with minimal staging (so could easily be done within a church).

Outline The events of the last few days of Holy Week are shown from the viewpoint of High Priest Caiaphas and his family.

Dog in the Manger

Author Raymond Blakesley

Roles Minimum Male roles = 1. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 12. Minimum total without doubling = 19. Chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Simple Nativity play for young children, told from the point of view of the animals! (No set or prop requirements.)

Outline A dog, a camel a donkey and a star are all complaining about their lot in life, but they have important roles to play in Bethlehem.

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God's Messenger Department

Author Bill Siviter

Roles Minimum Male roles = 1. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 16. Minimum total without doubling = 19. No chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Irreverent approach to the nativity (the story is all there, but the perspective is unorthodox!). Likely to appeal to older children rather than the youngest element normally associated with such plays.

Outline The Archangels are all relaxing in their common room when they get a call from the Boss... There are messages to be delivered, to Joseph, Mary and the three kings. Not to mention the shepherds in the fields too - Gabriel has to put down his Nintendo and get busy!

Joseph's Dream

Author Hilary Mackelden

Roles Minimum Male roles = 1. Minimum Female roles = 0. Minimum total with doubling = 2. Minimum total without doubling = 2. No chorus.

Runtime Around 3 minutes.

Music None.

Style Short sketch intended for church groups.

Outline Joseph receives a visit from an angel. (Matthew , 18-25)

Light of the World

Author Hilary Mackelden

Roles Minimum Male roles = 0. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 6. Minimum total without doubling = 6. No chorus.

Runtime Around 3 minutes.

Music None.

Style Short sketch intended for church groups.

Outline What happened in the Inn the day after Jesus was born.

Nativity - The Christmas Story

Author Geoff Bamber

Roles Minimum Male roles = 5. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 23. Minimum total without doubling = 26. No chorus.

Runtime Around 35 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act play for a class-sized cast, with a good range of speaking parts. No set requirements. A deliberately comic piece but keeping the traditional story in view.

Outline The traditional nativity story takes an inventive comic turn, with lazy shepherds, an unlikely group of visitors with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, and a bit of confusion over what to call the baby... but all the elements of the traditional story come together in the end. After all, this is how it really happened... well, more or less.

Peter's Tale

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 4. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 5. Minimum total without doubling = 7. No chorus.

Runtime Around 25 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act mystery play (in the sense of the medieval religious mystery plays) in modern English. No set requirements, no props.

Outline Peter's perspective of the ministry of Jesus, as he reflects on their time together after Jesus' arrest.

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Pilate's Wife

Author Julia Lee Dean

Roles Minimum Male roles = 4. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 7. Minimum total without doubling = 7. No chorus.

Runtime Around 60 minutes.

Music None.

Style Easter play (from an unusual perspective), of one-act length but structured in three acts. Three locations, which could be formed as one simple composite set.

Outline The story of Easter week told from the point of view of Pontius Pilate's household. (Mary Magdalene is presented as Pilate's mistress, allowing three very different interpretations of the events as they unfold.)

Problem In Judaea

Author Stewart Boston

Roles Minimum Male roles = 7. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 12. Minimum total without doubling = 13. Chorus.

Runtime Around 45 minutes.

Music None.

Style Easter play. Structurally in two acts, but of one act length. Three sets, but designed for minimal staging.

Outline A minimalist retelling of the events surrounding the Crucifixion, told from the point of view of Pilate, the Sanhedrin and Herod.

Rhyming Nativity

Author Richard Coleman

Roles Minimum Male roles = 2. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 8. Minimum total without doubling = 30. No chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Simple nativity play told in rhyme. No specific requirements for set or props.

Outline See the Gospels according to St. Luke and St. Matthew (chapter 2 in each case). Taxation, Bethlehem overcrowded, no room at the inn, baby laid in a manger, shepherds in the fields, wise men bringing gifts. All of that - and a stable of talking animals.

Sign Here, Please

Author Graham Trasler

Roles Minimum Male roles = 6. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 13. Minimum total without doubling = 26. Chorus.

Runtime Around 60 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act play, single (minimal) set, no required props. Not intended to be a musical, but the script has positions for musical interludes.

Outline A series of stories from the Gospel of St John explored through a courtroom drama in which Sabbath observance is tested against other teachings of Jesus.

The Best in the Book

Author Bill Tordoff

Roles Minimum Male roles = 4. Minimum Female roles = 4. Minimum total with doubling = 26. Minimum total without doubling = 29. Chorus.

Runtime Around 40 minutes.

Music The Producer's copy of the script includes sheet music for three original songs. A number of traditional carols are also suggested in the script.

Style Irreverent, humorous nativity play. Simple sets.

Outline A humorous nativity story, with pantomime camels, talkative sheep, Queens as well as kings and lots of angels. The shepherds really don't like their job and spend the cold winter's night in drinking too much! They are very alarmed when angels appear. Meanwhile, one of the kings' camels develops a puncture...

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The Christmas Play

Author Peter Lancaster Walker

Roles Minimum Male roles = 12. Minimum Female roles = 7. Minimum total with doubling = 20. Minimum total without doubling = 20. Chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music Suitable Christmas carols are suggested in the Producer's copy of the script. Lazy Bee Scripts does not supply any sheet music with this script.

Style Fifteen minute play. Simple hospital set, used to frame the nativity play within the play.

Outline Missing the school Nativity play, thanks to a broken toe, Sarah is sulking, but the nurse has an idea. Soon a cast is assembling for the hospital ward Nativity and Sarah gets to sing along after all.

The Easter Story

Author Sue Russell

Roles Minimum Male roles = 5. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 25. Minimum total without doubling = 32. Chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Simple version of the Easter story as a play for children. Multiple locations (following the story!) but no specific set requirements.

Outline A classroom/church group rendition of the Easter Story from the arrival in Jerusalem to Mary's encounter with Jesus outside the tomb.

The Gardener's Tale

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 2. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 4. Minimum total without doubling = 7. No chorus.

Runtime Around 25 minutes.

Music None.

Style Modern version of a medieval mystery play. One-act play, eight scenes, but no specific set requirements. A few simple props (including a wheelbarrow).

Outline A gardener from Jerusalem tells her story of Holy Week and the odd bunch of characters she has run into. All of them have tales to tell about 'that Nazarene who's been causing so much trouble.' The story covers the time from Palm Sunday through to the burial of Jesus.

The Innkeeper's Christmas

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 2. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 4. Minimum total without doubling = 6. No chorus.

Runtime Around 20 minutes.

Music None.

Style Modern version of a medieval mystery play. Single, minimal set, basic props.

Outline An Innkeeper tells us of the frantic time he and his staff have had during the Roman Census in Judea.

The Inn Keeper's Chalice

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 4. Minimum Female roles = 2. Minimum total with doubling = 6. Minimum total without doubling = 6. No chorus.

Runtime Around 30 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act Easter play (designed to be staged simply, possibly in a church).

Outline The day after a party books their function room for a Passover feast, an Innkeeper and his wife struggle with the clearing up while being interrupted by various people, most of whom have a connection with a man executed that day...

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The Innkeeper and the Donkey Man

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 5. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 6. Minimum total without doubling = 6. No chorus.

Runtime Around 20 minutes.

Music None.

Style One-act play from a New Testament parable, relying on minimum props and no scenery, so could be performed instead of a sermon or as a precursor to a discussion.

Outline The story of the Good Samaritan told from the point of view of the man who owns the inn where the Samaritan brings the robbery victim.

The Nativity Problem

Author Damian Trasler

Roles Minimum Male roles = 5. Minimum Female roles = 0. Minimum total with doubling = 5. Minimum total without doubling = 5. No chorus.

Runtime Around 15 minutes.

Music None.

Style Fifteen minute play, with a Christian theme. Nominally set in a Church of England school, but no specific set requirements, and minimal simple props.

Outline It's time to start rehearsals for the school Christmas play, but with some understandable reluctance among the all male cast to play angels and virgin mothers, an alternative slant on the story must be found...

The Nativity Story

Author S. J. Edwards

Roles Minimum Male roles = 3. Minimum Female roles = 4. Minimum total with doubling = 22. Minimum total without doubling = 32. No chorus.

Runtime Around 20 minutes.

Music One carol is suggested in the Producer's copy of the script. Others might be added at the discretion of the production team. Lazy Bee Scripts does not supply any sheet music with this script.

Style One act, humorous play suitable for 9-12 year olds. Simple set requirements. It's fun, but still contains all the relevant information and doesn't mock the subject of the story.

Outline The story of the birth of Jesus retold with a light touch of humour, retaining the original story intact.

The Passion

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 5. Minimum Female roles = 3. Minimum total with doubling = 8. Minimum total without doubling = 22. Chorus.

Runtime Around 25 minutes.

Music None.

Style Modern version of a medieval mystery play. Single set (a cart!), basic props.

Outline The betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

The Soldiers' Tale

Author Mike Sparks

Roles Minimum Male roles = 3. Minimum Female roles = 1. Minimum total with doubling = 4. Minimum total without doubling = 6. No chorus.

Runtime Around 20 minutes.

Music None.

Style Modern version of a medieval mystery play. Single, minimal set, basic props.

Outline The events on Calvary discussed from the perspective of bystanders, including the soldiers who administered the crucifixion.