

The Light Shines in the Darkness

a pantomime by J.M.D. Myers

The “what” of the Christmas story is new to some audiences, but the “why” of it is even more important. This script seeks to make that “why” clear to audiences of diverse backgrounds and worldviews.

This play was written to facilitate multilingual performances. The script is made entirely out of Scripture, making it possible to read or record each line directly from the Bible rather than translating dialogue. The original production was performed in four languages simultaneously by speaking each verse four times, once in each of the selected languages, before moving on to the next verse.

An accompaniment music track, timed for the use of four languages, is available. Pre-recorded dialogue is also available in English and several other languages. We are also happy to help you facilitate the recording and timing of different languages with this music track. Please contact us at playtime.jesterandbard.com to inquire.

The cast size is flexible in this show. Originally it was performed with six actors: one each for Mary and Joseph (who double as “everyman” characters in the prologue and epilogue), one Angel/Innkeeper/Sheep, two Innkeepers/Sheep/Shepherds/Magi (who double as “everyman” characters as well), and one Jesus. For church audiences, it may be possible to combine the roles of Jesus and the Angel; for unchurched audiences this will likely create confusion. Jesus and the Angel are the only actors who should not double as “everyman” characters.

May God bless you in your use of this show!

Prologue

Movement	Scripture
People dressed in black (or black pants white shirt) enter stage, intrigued by the light	Gen 1:3 [And] God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.
People become uncomfortable with light, try to block their sight; they find red scarves to block light	John 3:19b [This is the verdict:] Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.
People turn sharply away from light/audience They realize others have scarves and try to take them Fights break out	Psalm 14:3 All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
People pause in their fights to look up pleadingly to God	Psalm 94:3 How long, Lord, will the wicked, how long will the wicked be jubilant?
Fights escalate with scratching, punching A stick is used to hit, is stolen, becomes a crutch Between skirmishes individuals look to the light Fighters become tired but do not stop	Ezekiel 18:23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?
Fighters try to bind up their wounds with their scarves	Psalm 38:22 Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior.
They look up sharply as if seeing or hearing something far off & react differently (some reach out to it, some become more self-protective, etc.) At end of narration, they exit and put robes on over their neutral base (and over any “bandages”)	Psalm 40:7 Then I said, “Here I am, I have come — it is written about me in the scroll.

Nativity

Movement	Scripture
Mary enters, sweeping (with stick from earlier) Gabriel enters; Mary startles She tries to shield self with broom, then listens	Luke 1:28 (<i>*quotation only</i>) [The angel went to her and said,] “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”
Mary bows to the ground The angel raises her to her feet	Luke 1:30-31 (<i>*quotation only</i>) [But the angel said to her] Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.
Mary puts her hands to her face, the angel calms her	Luke 1:34 (<i>*quotation only</i>) “How will this be,” [Mary asked the angel,] “since I am a virgin?”
The angel directs her attention up to where the light was before Mary almost cringes/shields herself from the light She realizes what she’s doing and reconsiders her reaction. The angel redirects her attention to the light. Mary gradually, through her fear, realizes the beauty of the light and eventually reaches out towards it.	Luke 1:35 (<i>*quotation only</i>) [The angel answered,] “The Holy Spirit will come on 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.
Mary nods, angel leaves	Luke 1:38 (<i>*quotation only</i>) “I am the Lord’s servant,” [Mary answered.] “May your word to me be fulfilled.” [Then the angel left her.]
Mary goes to Joseph; Joseph reacts in shock She tries to take his hands; he pulls hands away They turn away from each other, Mary crying Joseph sinks down to think and falls asleep	<i>music</i>
Angel enters and stands behind Joseph Joseph wakes up	Matthew 1:20-21 (<i>*quotation only</i>) [But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,]“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.”
Joseph goes to Mary, takes her hands They “journey” to Bethlehem (use stick as staff)	Luke 2:1&3 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ... And everyone went to their own town to register.

Movement	Scripture
One by one, people open their doors Each sends Joseph and Mary away	* <i>in each language, they say something along the lines of “no room, go away!”</i>
Mary and Joseph are surrounded by sheep They pet one and shrug at each other Mary turns away from the audience Joseph puts a hand on her shoulder Sheep baa; Joseph keeps turning to shush them Joseph holds up stick to represent edge of manger Mary places “baby” in it; sheep eat from it	Luke 2:6-7 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.
Two of the sheep transition into being shepherds Mary and Joseph freeze or exit Third sheep becomes angel Shepherds react similarly to people in beginning (trying to shield selves/escape, tripping over ea/o)	Luke 2:8-9 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
The angel tries to reassure them. The angel directs their attention out over the town.	Luke 2:10-11 (<i>*quote only</i>) [But the angel said to them,] “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”
Shepherds react as if seeing more angels above and around them. Optional: the angel dances with joy. The shepherds, through their fear, begin to enjoy celebration Angel exits; the shepherds watch the whole group go The shepherds look at one another and rush off to manger They kneel and hug a surprised Joseph	Luke 2:13-14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God [and saying,] “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” [music here]
Shepherds leave, discussing	Luke 2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.
Magi come through audience, looking for Jesus	Matthew 2:2 (<i>*quote only</i>) [and asked] “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”
They see and point to “star” They kneel by Mary and Joseph Mary and Joseph are surprised and troubled They look more closely at who Jesus is	Matthew 2:10-11 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. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Epilogue

Movement	Scripture
Mary, Joseph, and wise men take off robes and stare as adult Jesus comes up, takes rolled up robe that has been used as the “baby” and puts it on	Psalm 24:8a (<i>if possible to split; if not use v10</i>) Who is this king of glory?
Each shields face from him as with light at beginning, and pushes him away as they pushed each other before. (The stick that was a manger is now a crutch again.)	Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
Jesus slowly and gently heals their wounds, putting their bandages on himself, and taking the crutch so that the man can stand upright	Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
They all watch as he places the stick across his shoulders and carries their wounds and sins away. They draw near, surrounding him to watch as he collapses (he will remove bandages while blocked from view)	Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
He stands, all back up	John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it
People kneel He raises them to their feet and leads them out.	Psalm 24:10 Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty— he is the King of glory.