

Christmas Hope
by Julie Snyder and Bill Wood

CAST:

Mom

Son

Daughter

Mary

Joseph

Angel

Isaiah

Baby Jesus (doll in manger)

Dad

Shepherds/Angels (anyone not in scene, especially smaller children)

Staging:

Area 1: Home. Living room setting with Christmas tree and table for Manger Scene.

Stage right. Small chair, end table with Christmas tablecloth, Christmas tree, boxes of ornaments/nativity scene.

Area 2: Stage left. Various scenes.

Scene 1: Home

Scene 2: Manger scene

Scene 3: Desert for Isaiah

Scene 4: Home

Lighting: Independent lighting for Area 1 and Area 2. Fade out Home when Area 2 is active.

Act I

Scene I

(Living room with Mom alone. Christmas music playing on boombox.
Cellphone rings, boombox is silenced.)

Mom: Yes, the kids are all here. We're just now getting ready to decorate the tree . . .

Yes . . . oh, no . . . OK, I understand. Call when you can.

(Sound of door opening offstage and the kids coming)

(Son and Daughter enter taking coats off and throwing the coats on corner of couch.)

Son: Is Dad home yet from his business trip? We can't decorate the tree without Dad!

Mom: I have bad news. He just called from the airport. They are fogged in and nothing is landing or taking off.

Son: Aw, Mom.

Daughter: Aw, Mom. Well, I guess we better start without him.

Daughter: Fine. But now let's get down to serious business. Did you know that Becky is getting a new iPhone for Christmas? Why can't I get an iPhone?

Son: Yeah, so you could talk and text all the time, like anyone wants to hear from you!

Mom: Be nice. Remember Christmas is just around the corner. And I'm sorry, but I just don't think you really need an iPhone. Now, will you two please help me finish decorating the tree?

Son: Yes Mom (sarcastically)

Daughter: Fine! (sarcastically)

(All start decorating.)

Mom: My favorite decoration.....

Son: What? The statues and barn? (Turning to look at Mom)

Daughter: It's called the nativity scene, dummy.

Mom: Let me tell you a story. We'll finish the tree later, come sit and listen. Do this for me.

(Kids take a seat on the couch semi-paying attention; Mom places a red cloth across the table and picks up the figures of Mary and Joseph)

Mom: There once was a young lady named Mary who was very excited to be getting married to a nice man named Joseph. Mary was visited by an angel who told her she would have a baby — the son of God, Jesus. Mary was worried about what Joseph would say, but God had that taken care of. (Home lights fade, Area 2 lights up.)

Scene 2:

(Mary kneels in prayer)

Mary: God, you have told me that I will carry Your child. I don't understand this, but I am willing to do Your will. But God, I don't know what to do. Joseph is going to be so upset. (Mary drops her head)

(Joseph sits on side of his bed)

Joseph: God, I thought Mary was a follower of You. I thought she was special, but she is pregnant now. Where was I mistaken? (Joseph lies down to sleep.)

(Angel appears, Joseph remains asleep)

Angel: 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 sits up as the angel disappears. Looks around and then lays back down) (Lights fade, bring up Home lights.)

Scene 3:

Daughter: So, God sent an angel to Joseph to let him know that Mary was telling the truth?

Mom: Exactly. Joseph had gotten so upset that he was not going to take Mary as his wife until the angel spoke to him. When he woke up, he knew that Mary was telling the truth. He knew that Mary was to be his wife.

Son: So did they not have a hospital to have the baby at? Or even a house?

Mom: (Finishes setting up nativity set) Joseph had a home and worked as a carpenter. But, they had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in a census. And that time happened to be right at the time that Mary was about to have the baby, the child of God. Because many people had to travel to Bethlehem at that time, when they arrived, there was no guest room for them to stay in. But they were allowed to take shelter in a barn. That's why the manger scene is so special. That's where the son of God was born.

Scene 4

Away in a Manger (lights out on living room; lights up on manger scene); congregation sings "Away in a Manger."

Act II

Scene 1

Daughter: Mom, the story of Jesus' birth is a sweet story, but why do we still celebrate it all these years later? That happened, like, a long time ago. Now Christmas is just about the gifts and stocking stuffers, at least that's what the TV commercials say.

Mom: Kids, Christmas is special because the birth of Jesus shows us how much God loves us. Without Jesus, we could never do enough or be good enough to go to heaven. Before Jesus was born, the Jewish people tried to earn God's forgiveness by following a strict set of rules and by sacrificing animals. But these were just symbols of what God would do later by sending Jesus to earth. God's people knew that someday a Messiah was coming because it was predicted in the Scriptures, many years before His birth.

(lights fade)

Congregation sings: "O Come, O Come Immanuel." Lights up on Isaiah.

Scene 2: (Isaiah in a robe, reads from scroll)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (PAUSE)

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (PAUSE)

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;

the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Scene 3:

Son: That is pretty cool! It all happened just like the prophet described it!

Daughter: DUH! If God predicted it then of course it would come true.

Mom: Now, let me finish telling you about the birth so you will remember why it is so important to not let the true message of Christmas get lost in all the other hoopla on TV and in the stores. God loves us and wants us to love Him and be with Him. But because of our sin, there is no way we can go to heaven or even have a life of peace on our own. So, God made a way for us. He sent His son to earth in the form of a human to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus lived like a man so we can relate to Him and learn from His example. As an adult, He took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross. When He did this, He fulfilled the promise God had made so many years earlier.

Daughter: That's kinda grim, Mom.

Mom: I understand why you feel that way. But today we can get excited about the baby in the manger because he grows into the man, the Son of God, who saves us from our sins.

(Offstage, car door slams)

Son (interrupting): Is that somebody in the driveway?

Mom (not noticing door sound): See, that is why Christmas is special. When God came to earth as a baby, hope became a reality for us. Christmas is about God's love, hope, and the peace that comes from knowing Jesus.

Enter Dad.

Dad: That's right. We all have the peace that comes from knowing Jesus.

Son, Daughter, Mom: DAD!

Mom: I thought the airport was all fogged in.

Dad: It was. But as I sat there thinking how sad it was not to be with you, I felt God touch me. He told me it was going to be all right. That wherever I was – in an airport or at home with you – I was never out of His love.

Mom: But the fog!

Dad: And then, all of a sudden the fog lifted. We boarded the plane and took off. You know it doesn't take very long once you actually get flying.

Mom: We're so glad you're home!

Dad: Even joyful?

Mom: Even joyful! Let's not just say it, let's sing it.

Lights up on entire cast, which leads congregation in singing "Joy to the World."