

Pass the parcel Nativity As Used in 2017

Some of the script we used is from a Tearfund Nativity.

This is the way we did it at Crossway Community Church, Christchurch, but the idea could be adapted to suit another church situation. The idea is for the nativity story to be an impromptu drama. The story is narrated and simple Costumes or props are wrapped up and passed around the congregation while carols are sung and the story unfolds. Anyone left holding a parcel at the end of a song dresses in the costume and joins in the nativity.

The last time we used this nativity, we had a real baby about 3 months old and we used his mother to be Mary. Because Mary was chosen beforehand, we did not pass a parcel around with a Mary costume. The angel Gabriel was also chosen ahead.

Narrator: We are about to enjoy a story that has been told and retold for two thousand years. The nativity reveals something very special about God – that he was prepared to be with us and live among us.

Imagine the stars in the sky, the countless constellations, the sprawling Solar System – and among it a little planet called Earth. God made all of those things and all of the people and inhabitants of our planet. Just over two thousand years ago, when we most needed him, God came down to be with us, to save us and show us how life should be lived.

He could have chosen anywhere to be his home. He could have built a palace for himself. But he didn't. God chose to send his Son to be born amongst the poor, the overlooked and forgotten. This is the story of how God came to be with us. We are going to retell the story a little differently this morning. Although you don't know it yet, many of you will be taking part. As we sing some of the carols in our service, we will be playing a 'pass the parcel' game. That's everyone – not just the children. If you are one of the people left holding a parcel at the end of the song I will tell you what to do next. Our story begins with a young woman in her own home. Her name is Mary. (Enter **Mary**)

There is nothing remarkable about Mary. She was from a town called Nazareth and she was engaged to be married to Joseph. An ordinary girl – but to God she was very important. So important that God sent down an angel from heaven with a message for her.

Enter Angel

Angel : Hello Mary. God is with you. You are very special to him.

Mary acts scared.

Angel: Don't be afraid, Mary. God loves you and wants to use you in a special way. You will give birth to a baby boy and call him Jesus.

Mary: How can this happen? I'm not married yet.

Angel: You will have this baby by the power of the Holy Spirit. He will be God's son. Nothing is impossible with God.

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. Let it happen as you say.

Narrator: Mary trusted God. After the news had had time to sink in, Mary was excited and praised God for blessing her in this way. She sang a song something like this one - and some of those parcels will be coming around as we sing.

Song: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.x2

Circulate parcels 1 & 2 during song (Parcels will contain simple costumes and/or props.) for **1** (Joseph) and **2** (Soldier with scroll and cardboard megaphone)

At the end of the song bring those with Joseph & Soldier parcels forward and dress (quickly).

Narrator: When Mary told Joseph what the angel had revealed to her he was going to break up with Mary, but then an angel visited him in a dream and told him that the baby was from God, so he went ahead and married Mary. A few months later, the Emperor Augustus said he wanted to count every single person in the country.
Have soldier read the scroll to the people if able to read. Give help if needed.

Soldier "Listen up, everyone! The Emperor Augustus says that you are all to go to your place of birth to be counted."

Narrator: Joseph came from a faraway town called Bethlehem so he and Mary had to travel back there for the census. The journey took several days and was difficult for Mary, who was due to give birth. So Mary, we have a donkey here to help you along and while you journey to Bethlehem, we will sing "little donkey" and play pass the parcel again.

Song: Little donkey

Circulate parcels 3,4,5,6, 7. Doors (These parcels contain some doors (around 50x80cm) made from sturdy cardboard - a picture of a door on one side and words on the flip side - "sorry full up" or "No Rooms available" etc.
Call those with parcels forward and have them stand in line holding their door in front of them.

Narrator: When Mary and Joseph reached the town of Bethlehem they went looking for a place to stay.
Have Joseph knock on the doors one by one. Person holding door flips it over to reveal 'no room' - "Full up" sign.

The last door will flip to say "Stable out the back." Have the inn keeper take M&J out the back to the stable.

Narrator: The stable was dirty, smelly and unhygienic – not the sort of place to give birth to a baby. But in the middle of the night, when all was quiet, a midwife was called out to deliver a baby boy.

Midwife brings baby Jesus forward to the stable. *(We used a real baby and the grandmother for the midwife, but a doll could be used.)*

Mary wrapped the baby with what she had and laid him to sleep on fresh straw in the manger. As she looked at him sleeping, she knew that he was a precious gift. Let's sing quietly to our baby Jesus as we pass around more parcels.

Carol: Silent night (2 verses)

Circulate parcels 8-18

Angels x4

Shepherds x4

Sheep x3

At the end of the song, have people with parcels dress quickly and come forward.

Narrator: In some fields nearby, some shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep. It was night time and they were terrified when an angel appeared in front of them.

Angel: Don't be scared fellas. I bring you good news of great joy – in fact it is good news for everyone across the world. Today a saviour has been born in Bethlehem. If you want to take a look, you will find him there sleeping in a stable.

Narrator: The angel was joined by more angels, lighting up the sky and singing praises to God.

Carol: one verse of "Hark the herald angels sing". (No parcels this time)

Narrator: The angels went away and the shepherds wondered what to do next. They wanted to see what had happened in Bethlehem, so they set off to find out if it was all true. Would they find a baby in a stable?

They ran all the way, taking some sheep with them!

Encourage shepherds to run down one aisle around and back up the other.

And so the shepherds found the baby Jesus, just as the angel had said.

Carol: Away in a manger 3 verses

Those who have taken part in the nativity go back to seats with a round of applause.