

Advent B Pageant

SCRIPT



BEHOLD THE
SIGNS



BEHOLD THE
SON





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BEHOLD THE SIGNS

BEHOLD THE SON

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and the Faith Inkubators Writing
Guild

*An Interactive, Advent Pageant For Small Groups
and the Whole Church Based on Gospel themes from the
Revised Common Lectionary, Series B*

This program is designed in four parts, one for each of the Sundays in Advent. It uses the texts from the Revised Common Lectionary, Series B. The script below may be performed on an afternoon or evening as a complete Advent Program to tie the preaching texts, humorous skits, an interactive small group time and our favorite carols together in a single production. If you'd rather break the pageant into four pieces, the individual skits may be performed in worship week by week to accent the Gospels. Except for two original tunes provided, "Be Ready" and "This Is the One," all other music referenced is public domain and can be found in most hymnals. Feel free to replace the suggested hymns with your own personal favorites.)

Characters: Host, Heckler Puppet, various cast members for each of the four skits.

Costumes & Props: These can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. Use your imagination and make the audience use theirs.

Program Handout: Audience members each receive the two-sided 8 1/2 x 11 hand-out with the order of service printed. Hymns may be chosen to fill the slots and either projected or hymn books may be used.

Prelude

Five minutes before show time “Oh, Come, Oh Come Emmanuel”

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” by Charles Wesley

“Angels From The Realms of Glory” by James Montgomery play softly

Introduction

(At the stroke of the hour, lights dim. Cast members stage a countdown— “10, 9, 8...”)

ENTIRE CAST: Live from *(your town)* it's “Behold the Signs, Behold the Son!” And here's our host for the night, *(name of host)*!

(Cast applauds, hoots and shouts wildly. Spot hits Host at a microphone)

HOST: Good evening! Welcome to the *(your church)* production of “Behold the Signs, Behold the Son!”—an experiential celebration of the season of Advent and the coming of the Christ child!

(Cast applauds, hoots and shouts wildly.)

HOST: This production may be unlike any other Christmas program you've experienced. Our show is comprised of four acts exploring the four Sunday themes of Advent. First, there will be a skit and some other arts presented by our groups from Sunday School. After these acts, there will be a time where you, the audience, can help us finish the theme together. We'll be raising the lights and inviting you to get into small groups to discuss and answer a few questions on the newsprint provided.

(Large Heckler Puppet wearing a Santa cap pops up from behind the pulpit or set)

HECKLER PUPPET: Raising the lights? *(Yawning)* How am I supposed to sleep if you're raising the lights? And getting into groups? I came here to be anonymous. I don't want to talk to nobody.

HOST: Uh, excuse me. We're having a little Christmas program here, and you are interrupting.

HECKLER PUPPET: Interrupting? You're the one who's interrupting. You're interrupting my sleep.

(Looking around) Where am I?

HOST: Uh, you're in church.

HECKLER PUPPET: Church?

HOST: Church. And you're not supposed to sleep in church.

HECKLER PUPPET: Ha! That's about the only place I can sleep these days. *(Looking out into crowd)* Who are they?

HOST: Who are who?

HECKLER PUPPET: *(Looking at crowd)* Them! Those people. Who are they, and what are they doing in my bedroom?

HOST: Oh. Those folks are our audience.

HECKLER PUPPET: Audience?

HOST: They are the people who came to see the program.

HECKLER PUPPET: Program? Who'd be dumb enough to be in a program? Don't they have anything better to do than sit around church all day? This is the Christmas season! Who ever heard of going to church during Christmas?

HOST: Well, most of them have friends and family in the show. That's why they came.

HECKLER PUPPET: Show? What show?

HOST: We're having a Christmas program. An Advent program. And these fine folks all want to prepare for Christmas in a proper way.

HECKLER PUPPET: Then they should be out shopping! That's how you prepare for Christmas.

HOST: You're such a skeptic! These people want to prepare their hearts for the season.

HECKLER PUPPET: Shopping! Flashing' the cash. Maxing out the cards! That's what Christmas is all about!

HOST: They want to prepare their homes.

HECKLER PUPPET: And planning parties! That's what Christmas is for. Conspicuous consumption!

HOST: Parties? *(Eyebrow raises)* Oh, you want a party? We just happen to be planning one right now.

HECKLER PUPPET: You are?

HOST: Yeah. You should come. We're preparing for the greatest party of all!

HECKLER PUPPET: Now you're talking! Who's going to be there?

HOST: We've got some special guests on the way.

HECKLER PUPPET: Anyone I've heard of?

HOST: Oh, yeah. I think so.

HECKLER PUPPET: Anyone famous?

HOST: Famous? Let's just say we've got some real stars coming, if you know what I mean. *(Winking at the crowd as a large Christmas star rises in the air on fishing line above Heckler Puppet)* Real stars.

HECKLER PUPPET: Big stars?

HOST: The biggest!

HECKLER PUPPET: Who else is going to be there?

HOST: I heard we've got some real angels coming, too.

HECKLER PUPPET: Angels? Ho ho ho. Bring 'em on.

HOST: Yup. You might want to stick around.

HECKLER PUPPET: All right. I'll stick around for the first act. But if it gets boring, I'm snoring. Got it?

HOST: Got it.

HECKLER PUPPET: Good.

(Music for "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel" begins)

HECKLER PUPPET: What's that?

HOST: That's the music.

HECKLER PUPPET: Could have fooled me.

HOST: Come on. Let's sing. *(Motioning to audience)* The show's about to start.

Part I

HYMN "OH, COME, OH, COME, EMMANUEL" vs. 1-2

(Cast, set, and art for "Can't You Read The Signs" process in. A banner reading "Behold the Signs" is raised above the stage. All other props and art for small group presentations of Part I are also brought in at this time and set in place around the stage area. Host and Heckler Puppet step out of sight.)

SKIT I: Can't You Read The Signs? (BASED ON MARK 13:24-37)

(Note: This sketch is designed for an group of 6-12 persons or puppets. Don't be afraid to give major lines to smaller persons. Villager and Crier may be distributed among fewer actors to fit your group.)

CHARACTERS: 5 Wild-eyed, Messy-haired Criers, 5 Villagers, 1 Two-person Camel

PROPS: Well, buckets, rope, trumpet, 5 signs reading "The end is near!" "Yom Yahweh" "Get Ready!" etc.

SETTING: Villagers are drawing water from a well. Camel is drinking from a bucket with rear end facing the crowd. Criers enter with signs.

CRIS: *(Chanting or singing as they enter)* Signs, signs, everywhere the signs... do this, don't do that, can't you read the signs...

VILLAGER 1: Excuse us. Excuse us.

CRIS: The signs! The signs! Everywhere the si-yai-yai- yians!

VILLAGER 1: Excuse us. What are you talking about?

CRIS 1: The signs! They are all around!

VILLAGER 2: All around what?

CRIS 2: All around us.

(Villagers look up at the Criers' signs.)

VILLAGER 3: Those signs?

CRIS 3: Not these signs! The other signs.

(Villagers look around.)

VILLAGER 4: We don't see any signs.

CRIS 4: *(Slapping Camel's behind)* The end is near!

(Villagers stare at the camel's behind)

VILLAGER 5: *(Looking at Criers, then back to camel's behind)* The end? Yes. It is. But what's that got to do with anything?

CRIS 5: Can't you read the signs?

(Villagers all stare at Criers, then back to camel's behind, looking up and down, shaking their heads.)

VILLAGER 1: I can't.

VILLAGER 2: Me neither.

VILLAGER 3-5: They must be in a different language.

CRIER 1: The signs are all around us! (Long pause) You don't have the slightest idea what I'm talking about, do you?

VILLAGERS: (*Freeze in thought for a long pause, then unfreeze*) Nope.

CRIER 1: The end is near! The moon is going to turn to blood! The sky will be darkened! And then it's going to come! Get ready!

CRIERS: Get ready!

VILLAGERS: What's going to come?

CRIER 2: The stars will fall from heaven and the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then will appear the sign! Get ready!

CRIERS: Get ready!

VILLAGERS: What sign?

CRIER 3: They will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

VILLAGERS: The Son of what?

CRIER 4: And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call (*blow trumpet*) and they will gather his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. And then it will come!

VILLAGERS: What will come?

CRIER 5: (*Lifting up the "Yom Yahweh" sign*) Yom Yahweh!

CRIERS: Yom Yahweh!

VILLAGERS: Yom what way?

CRIERS: Yom Yahweh!

CRIER 1: It's the day of the Lord!

CRIERS: The day of the Lord!

VILLAGERS: The day of the Lord?

CRIERS: The day of the Lord!

CRIER 1: The great and powerful, awesome day of the Lord!

CRIER 2: It'll come like a thief in the night!

CRIER 3: It'll come when you least expect it!

CRIER 4: But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels.

CRIER 5: Not even the Son!

CRIER 1: Only the Father.

CRIERS: And he's not talking.

VILLAGER 1: Where did you hear all of that?

CRIER 2: It's in the Bible.

CRIS: Mark 13:24-37! Mark 13:24-37!

(Lights flicker and dim. All characters freeze in place. Crier 1 reads from pulpit.)

GOSPEL READING: Mark 13:24-37

CRIS 1: And that's the Gospel truth! The Good News!

VILLAGERS: That's the Good News?

VILLAGER 1: If that's the Good News, I'd hate to hear the bad news.

VILLAGER 2: It sounds scary to me!

VILLAGER 3: Me, too.

VILLAGER 4: Me, three.

VILLAGER 5: How can that be good news?

CRIS 1: Huh? It's Good News because it says that Jesus is coming!

CRIS 2: Jesus is coming to claim his own!

CRIS 3: And you belong to Jesus, right?

VILLAGERS: Right... Yeah... etc.

CRIS 4: So, he's going to gather you to be with God.

VILLAGER 1: But the whole world will pass away. That's scary.

(Music for "Heaven And Earth" by Jon Anderson begins)

CRIS 5: You don't have to be frightened. Jesus is coming but he's coming for you! The whole world will pass away, but Jesus' words will not pass away. They'll last forever, just like all those he takes to heaven with him.

CRIS & VILLAGERS: I feel a song coming on!

SONG: "HEAVEN AND EARTH" (MATTHEW 24:35) BY JON ANDERSON

(Cris 2-5 pick up signs and exit, humming. Villagers 2-5 follow. Camel, Villager 1, and Crier 1 remain.)

CRIS 1: Yup. The signs are pretty clear. (Slapping Camel's behind) The end is near.

VILLAGER 1: *(Scratching head. Looking at Camel's behind.)* Yup.

(Long pause.)

CRIS 1: You don't have the slightest idea what I'm talking about, do you?

VILLAGER 1: *(Long pause)* Nope.

CRIS 1: *(Putting arm over Villager's shoulder and exiting.)* The end is near. And it's a glorious end, indeed. Glorious! Glorious! A glorious end.

CAMEL: *(Looking at its own behind, then up)* Gee, thanks.

HYMN: "OH, COME, OH, COME, EMMANUEL" VS. 3-4

GROUP PRESENTATIONS I

(If you are doing art/creative projects, share them at this time. If not, move ahead to Part II.)

HOST: All right! Our groups have some other things they'd like to show you now. They've done some creative projects on this "Behold the Signs" theme and...

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey!

HOST: They'd like to show you some of their work right now.

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! You said there were going to be stars here!

HOST: Yup! And here are some of them right now!

NOTE: At this time a number of your Groups rise to show off the best of their arts. Play "Heaven And Earth," by Jon Anderson or one of the prelude hymns between each presentation for traveling music. The Host announces each group and leads applause when each presentation is complete.

FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME I

HOST: All right! It's time to Break into small groups of 8-10 to do FAITH5 and our first three questions. You'll be given five minutes to read through three assignments and brainstorm your thoughts on a large piece of newsprint. When the time is up, you'll choose a reader to send to the front to share your insights with the whole group.

HECKLER PUPPET: What if I don't want to be in a small group?

HOST: You don't have to say anything if you don't want to.

HECKLER PUPPET: Good. I don't want to be in a Christmas program. Being in front of people makes me nervous.

HOST: You don't have to be in front, but maybe you'd enjoy being in a small group.

HECKLER PUPPET: I always thought the world would be a fine place if there just weren't any...well, you know...people in it.

HOST: Get into groups. You have five minutes!

Cast members gather your audience into small groups of 8-10 and lead them through FAITH5 (share, read, talk, pray, bless). Then provide each group with poster paper, marking pens, and the following three questions/assignments:

* SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT I

- 1) List or draw as many signs and symbols for Christmas as you can write in one minute.
- 2) Which of these signs relate to Jesus in some way, shape or form? Which do not?
- 3) What can you do this Christmas to show others that you know and celebrate the true reason for the season?

After five minutes, invite a reporter from the groups to tell how their group answered the questions.

Applaud each group after they share their findings.

HOST: That was the first part and our theme, “Behold the Signs!” The message is clear: something “BIG” is soon to happen. Something that will change everything. Let’s give everyone a hand again!
(Heckler Puppet pops up from behind the pulpit or set)

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! What about the stars?

HOST: We move on to the second part of “Behold the Signs!”

HECKLER PUPPET: You said I would see stars!

HOST: I wouldn’t sleep just yet. The stars will be here soon.

HECKLER PUPPET: If I don’t see some stars soon, I’m going back to sleep.

(The line to the star hanging above Heckler Puppet’s head is cut and it falls, hitting him on the head. Sound effects of birds singing are heard.)

HECKLER PUPPET: You know what? I think I’m starting to see the stars.

HOST: Let’s sing “Wake, Awake.”

Part II

HYMN: “WAKE, AWAKE, FOR NIGHT IS FLYING” BY PHILIPP NICOLAI

(Cast, set, and art for “The Wise Men Return” process in. Banner reading “Somewhere In The Middle East” is raised above the stage. All other props and art for small group presentations of Part II are also brought in at this time and set in place around the stage area. Host and Heckler Puppet step out of sight.)

SKIT II: The Wise Men Return (BASED ON MARK 1:1-8)

(Note: This sketch is designed for an group of 6-12 persons or puppets. Don’t be afraid to give major lines to smaller persons. Villager and Crier may be distributed among fewer actors to fit your group.)

CHARACTERS: 3 Wisemen, Runner, Reader, John the Baptist, Crowd

PROPS: Robes, 3 throne-like chairs, globe, telescope, thick glasses, costumes

SETTING: Somewhere in the Middle East

WISEMAN 1: *(Looking into the telescope from throne)* I never saw anything like it before, and I’ve never seen anything like it since.

WISEMAN 2: *(Spinning the globe from throne)* I told you, it was worth the trip.

WISEMAN 3: *(Looking toward crowd with thick glasses)* I never saw anything like it before, and I’ve never seen anything like it since.

WISEMAN 1: *(Looking away from the telescope)* That’s my line.

WISEMAN 3: *(Looking toward Wiseman 1)* Huh? Who said that?

WISEMAN 1: *(Stepping down from throne)* I did.

WISEMAN 3: Oh, sorry.

WISEMAN 1: *(Looking out into crowd)* How long ago was it, anyway?

WISEMAN 2: *(Spinning the globe)* Oh, I guess it's been thirty years or so. Take away a day or two.

WISEMAN 3: *(Counting fingers)* Thirty years, six months, four days, nine hours, and fifty three minutes. But who's counting?

WISEMAN 1: *(Pointing to heavens)* The star appeared in the sky.

WISEMAN 2: *(Stopping the globe)* We knew a great king had been born.

WISEMAN 3: Technically, it wasn't really a star. It was actually the convergence of three planets. But, who's keeping track?

WISEMAN 1: We gathered our caravan and journeyed across the rocky desert to follow the star in the west.

WISEMAN 3: Uh, east. The star was in the east. Technically.

WISEMAN 2: We gathered our most precious gifts to bring the newborn king. Gold, Frankenstein, mirth.

WISEMAN 3: That would be frankincense and myrrh. Not mirth. Myrrh. It's an expensive ointment.

WISEMAN 1: And we-three kings of Orient-traveled toward the star.

(Music for "We Three Kings Of Orient Are" begins.)

WISEMAN 3: Technically, we aren't kings. More like wealthy astrologers. Scientists, to be exact. Only the wealthy can afford the luxury of studying the stars.

WISEMAN 1: I wonder... What ever happened to the child king, anyway? Did he ascend to a throne? Is he the ruler of the Jews? Or did some cruel fate do him in?

WISEMAN 3: Hey! I've got an idea. Let's journey there again and see what happened to the lad!

WISEMAN 1-2: Naw. Dumb idea.

WISEMAN 1: *(Pausing in thought)* Say! Why don't we journey to that land again and see what has happened to the lad!

WISEMAN 2: Splendid idea! Splendid! Gather your things!

(Wisemen gather up pouches, hold imaginary camel reigns, and begin a journey through the audience)

WISEMAN 3: It was my idea in the first place.

WISEMAN 1-2: We three kings of Orient are...

WISEMAN 3: *(Singling a person from the crowd)* You heard me, didn't you? It was my idea all along.

WISEMAN 1-2: Field and fountain, fjord and mountain following yonder star!

WISEMAN 3: Fjord? Looked more like a Chevy to me. Ha Ha Ha!

(Wiseman 1 and 2 look at 3 with scorn.)

WISEMEN 1-2: Let's all sing!

HYMN: "WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE" VS. 1-2 BY JOHN HENRY HOPKINS, JR.

(Wisemen travel up and down aisles during song. Wiseman 3 stumbles, drops glasses, gropes around for them for a while, finds them, then walks over people, pews, and choirs to catch up to the others.)

WISEMAN 3: Excuse me. Coming through. Wiseman coming through here. Men of wisdom. Hard to find these days. Out of the way.

WISEMAN 1: Ah! At last we have arrived.

WISEMAN 2: Yes, we traveled to this very land, many years ago.

WISEMAN 3: As I recall, we stopped at the palace of the regional governor to pay our respects.

WISEMAN 1: No, first I think we stopped in the palace of the regional governor to pay our respects. His name was Pilate.

WISEMAN 3: Herod. The ruler's name was Herod. You're getting your rulers mixed up.

WISEMAN 1: "Where is he who is born king of the Jews?" we asked.

WISEMAN 2: For we have seen his sign in the west and have come to worship him.

WISEMAN 3: East. *(Pointing)* That would be east.

WISEMAN 1: Herod said he didn't know the whereabouts of the royal child, but if we found him, we were to let him know so he, too, could come and worship.

WISEMAN 3: Yeah. Like that was going to happen!

WISEMAN 2: We came to the place beneath the star where the child lay and found them, Mary, Joseph, and the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

WISEMAN 3: Actually, according to the Biblical account he was out of the manger by then and into a house. And only Mary was present when we got there, but who's paying attention?

WISEMAN 1: We offered our gifts. Gold, frankincense and mirth.

WISEMAN 3: Myrrh! Myrrh!

WISEMAN 2: And we worshiped him—the Christ child. Warned in a dream that Herod wanted to kill the lad, we went home by another way.

WISEMAN 1: Ah, that was so long ago. So long.

WISEMAN 2: Thirty years.

WISEMAN 3: *(Counting fingers)* Thirty years, six months, seven days, four hours, and thirty nine minutes. But who's counting?

WISEMAN 1: I wonder if anyone around here knows what happened to the child?

WISEMAN 3: My guess is that he grew up.

WISEMAN 2: How old would that make him now?

WISEMAN 3: Uh, thirty... I haven't the foggiest.

(Music for "On Jordan's Banks The Baptist Cry" by Charles Coffin begins)

WISEMAN 1: Hark! What is that?

WISEMAN 2: What could it be?

WISEMAN 3: Uh, my guess is that it would be the next song.

(Crowd enters and motions people to join them in song)

RUNNER: It's John! The Baptist is down by the river! Come and see!

WISEMAN 3: Maybe he could point us toward the child king!

HYMN: "ON JORDAN'S BANKS THE BAPTIST'S CRY" BY CHARLES COFFIN

GOSPEL READING: MARK 1:1-8 *(As reading begins, John appears and baptizes the crowd)*

GROUP PRESENTATIONS II

(If you are doing art/creative projects, share them at this time. If not, move ahead to Part III.)

HOST: John the Baptist was a major sign that God was about to do something big.

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! What happened to the wise guys?

HOST: Our Advent groups have some new projects they'd like to show you at this time.

HECKLER PUPPET: The wise guys. Where did they go?

HOST: They'll be back later. Right now, here are some other projects by our Advent Groups.

At this time, a number of your Groups rise to show off their arts. Play "Heaven And Earth" by Jon Anderson or another carol between each presentation for traveling music. The Host announces each group. When all have finished, cast members gather your audience into small groups of 8-10 and lead them through FAITH5 (share, read, talk, pray, bless). Then provide each group with newsprint, marking pens, and the following three questions/assignments:

FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME II

HOST: All right! It's time to break into small groups of 8-10 again for three new assignments.

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! You said I was going to see the wise guys? I'm not going anywhere until I see the wise guys.

HOST: We'll be serving treats this time as you work together.

HECKLER PUPPET: Treats?

HOST: You'll be asked to brainstorm your answers on a large piece of newsprint again and send a different reporter to the front to share your insights with the whole group at the end of five minutes.

HECKLER PUPPET: You said "treats"?

HOST: Yes, this is half time in our Christmas play. Our cast members will be bringing each small group some goodies along with more newsprint and a new set of questions. Now, you wanted to see the wise men?

HECKLER PUPPET: Forget the wise guys. On with the treats!

Host: Get into your groups. You have five minutes!

Break into small groups of 8-10 to do FAITH5 and a creative arts assignments. Please choose a reporter to send to the front to share your insights at the end.

*** SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT II**

Cast members distribute treats, newsprint, pens, and questions. The questions read:

- 1)** List or draw pictures of some people who have pointed you to Jesus.
- 2)** How did these people point you to him?
- 3)** What can you do this Christmas to help point others to the Lord of Christmas?

After five minutes, invite a reporter from each group to tell how their group answered the questions. Applaud each group after they share their findings.

Part III

Host: We're into the second half of our program and on to our second theme, "Behold the Son." The message from the first half of Advent was clear: something "BIG" is about to happen. The signs all point to it. God had prepared this "something" from the beginning of time. And now it's almost here. We met John the Baptist a while ago. John was the last sign chosen by God to prepare the way. Let's hear a little bit more about him.

HECKLER PUPPET: (Removing and holding his ears) I'm all ears. Ha ha ha ha. (Laughing crazily)

GOSPEL READING: JOHN 1:6-8,19-28

HYMN: "PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY" VS. 1-2 BY FRANS MIKAEL FRANZEN

(Cast, set, and art for "JPD Blue" process in. Banner reading "Behold the Son" is raised above the stage. All other props and art for small group presentations of Part III are also brought in at this time and set in place around the stage area. Host and Heckler Puppet step out of sight.)

SKIT III: JPD Blue (BASED ON JOHN 1:6-8,19-28)

(Note: This sketch is designed for an group of 6-12 persons or puppets. Don't be afraid to give major lines to smaller persons. Villager and Crier may be distributed among fewer actors to fit your group.)

CHARACTERS: John the Baptist, Pharisees 1-5, Line Up Cast 1-4, Baptisee, Jailer

PROPS: Costumes, bright lamp, chair

SETTING: Jerusalem Police Station

PHARISEE 1: OK, bring in the suspects.

(Jailer brings in John the Baptist and the Line Up cast. Lamp is aimed at their faces.)

PHARISEE 2: Do any of these people look familiar to you?

BAPTISEE: No, not yet. But there were so many of them.

PHARISEE 3: Let's try this: Suspects will you please turn to your left. And now, will you please turn to your right. Face forward.

PHARISEE 4: Did that help you at all?

BAPTISEE: A little, but if I could only hear them speak.

PHARISEE 5: Speak? I suppose that might work. Any particular phrase that would jog your memory?

BAPTISEE: The guy kept saying, "Come and be baptized!" And then he would dunk my head in the water.

PHARISEE 1: OK. We need each of you to say the phrase, "Come and be baptized!"

(Members of the Line Up Cast take turns saying the phrase in a boring fashion.)

LINE UP 1: Come and be baptized.

LINE UP 2: Come and be baptized.

LINE UP 3: Come and be baptized.

LINE UP 4: Come and be baptized.

JOHN: *(In dramatic Shakespearean fashion)* Come and be baptized! All of you who want to repent of your sins!

BAPTISEE: That's him!

PHARISEE 2: I knew it! Jailor, take the other four away but bring the Baptist here.

PHARISEE 3: *(To the Baptisee)* We really appreciate your time today. The jailer, here, will take you down-stairs to fill out some paper work before you leave. And we have a lovely parting gift for you. Thanks again. *(John the Baptist is seated in a chair in front of Pharisees 1-5)*

PHARISEE 4: Would you state your name for the record, please?

JOHN: John the Baptist.

PHARISEE 5: Answer this: Are you or are you not the Christ?

JOHN: No, I'm John the Baptist.

PHARISEE 1: So, you're not the Christ! Who are you then, Elijah?

JOHN: Is this thing on? No, I'm not Elijah. Elijah's dead. Been dead for 800 years. I'm John. John the Baptist.

PHARISEE 2: OK, Mr. Smart Guy! You're not Elijah or the Christ. What are you, some sort of prophet?

JOHN: Do I need an interpreter? I am not Elijah, the Christ or a prophet.

PHARISEE 3: C'mon buddy, you're making us look bad in front of our superiors. We need an answer for the people upstairs. If you had to explain yourself to someone what would you say?

JOHN: *(In dramatic Shakespearean fashion)* I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord."

PHARISEE 4: What's with the voice? It's creepy.

PHARISEE 5: I don't get it?

PHARISEE 1: I don't either. OK master thespian, if you're not the Christ or Elijah, why do you baptize?

JOHN: I only baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you don't know...

PHARISEE 2: I think you're nuts, there is no one among us I don't know.

JOHN: If you let me finish, I'll explain. He who comes after me, His sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie.

PHARISEE 3: I've had enough of this gibberish.

JOHN: Are you going to charge me with anything?

PHARISEE 4: He's not the Christ.

PHARISEE 5: Or Elijah.

PHARISEE 1: And he is goofy.

PHARISEE 2: But that's not a crime.

JOHN: *(Under his breath)* If it were, you'd all be behind bars.

PHARISEE 3: OK, Baptist, you got off lucky this time. But we'll be watching your every move.

(Jailor walks John to the door)

JOHN: *(Smugly)* The citizens of the Jordan area should feel a lot safer knowing you're here.

ALL PHARISEES: *(Ad lib)* Thanks! How nice of you to say. We appreciate it.

HYMN: "THE KING SHALL COME" BY JOHN BROWNLIE

GROUP PRESENTATIONS III

(If you are doing art/creative projects, share them at this time. If not, move ahead to Part III.)

HOST: Our Advent groups have some new projects on the theme "Behold the Son" which they will share at this time.

(Heckler Puppet pops up singing "Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord")

HOST: Where have you been? I haven't seen you for a long time.

HECKLER PUPPET: Huh? Oh. I was looking for some wise men.

HOST: I thought maybe you got bored and went back to sleep.

HECKLER PUPPET: Naw. I was looking for some wise men. Couldn't find any in this church, so I tracked down some wise women.

HOST: Right now, here are our Advent groups.

At this time Groups rise to show off the best of their arts. Play favorite Advent hymns between each presentation. Host announces each group and leads applause. Following this, Host gathers audience into small groups.

FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME III

HOST: All right! You know the routine. It's our last chance. Time to Break into small groups of 8-10 for three assignments. You'll have five minutes to brainstorm your answers and send a third reporter to the front to share your insights.

HECKLER PUPPET: Are we going to sing “Silent Night?” It wouldn’t be a Christmas program without singing “Silent Night!”

HOST: I thought you didn’t like Christmas programs.

HECKLER PUPPET: *(Shouting)* I don’t! *(Under breath)* But... but I might if we sing “Silent Night!”

HOST: We’ll see if we have time. For now, get into your groups. You have five minutes!

Break into small groups to do FAITH5 and a project. Please choose a reporter to send to the front to share your insights at the end.

*** SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT III**

Cast members distribute poster paper, pens, and assignment sheets that read:

- 1)** Draw pictures, words, and symbols that relate to baptism.
- 2)** Who were some of the people who stood up for you at your baptism? How did they help point you to Jesus?
- 3)** What does your baptism have to do with Jesus’ birth?

After five minutes, invite a reporter from each group to tell how their group answered the questions. Applaud each group after they share their findings.

Part IV

HOST: The signs all pointed to something fantastic—the signs in the heavens, the signs at the river Jordan. The prophets of old had predicted a savior, a Messiah, God’s chosen one who would come and rescue the people from their sins. But while everyone was expecting a powerful ruler from David’s line—a miraculous, mighty king—God had other intentions. This king would come at the most unlikely time in the most unlikely way. “Behold the Son!”

HECKLER PUPPET: *(Wearing sun glasses and holding lotion bottle)* I’m ready for the sun. Bring it on!

HYMN: “WHAT CHILD IS THIS” BY WILLIAM DIX

(Cast, set, and art for “Washing Their Socks” process in. Banner reading “Washing Their Socks” is raised above the stage. All other props and art for small group presentations of Part IV are also brought in at this time and set in place. Host and Heckler Puppet step out of sight.)

SKIT IV: Washing Their Socks? (BASED ON LUKE 1:26-38)

(Note: This sketch is designed for an group of 6-12 persons or puppets. Don’t be afraid to give major lines to smaller persons. Villager and Crier may be distributed among fewer actors to fit your group.)

CHARACTERS: 5 **Shepherds**, 4 Sheep, Heckler Puppet in Angel Costume, Angel 2, Mary

PROPS: Campfire, Shepherd's staff, costumes for Shepherds, Sheep, Angels, and Mary

SETTING: Shepherds and sheep are warming themselves by the fire

SHEEP: Baaa. Baaa. Baaaaaaa!

SHEPHERD 1: There we was, just a'sitting out in the field, minding our own business.

SHEPHERD 2: There we were, dear.

SHEPHERD 1: That's what I said. There we was. Out with our sheep in the starlight, just a'washing our socks by night.

SHEPHERD 2: We were watching our flocks by night.

SHEPHERD 1: What?

SHEPHERD 2: Watching our flocks by night.

SHEPHERD 1: That's what I said.

SHEPHERD 2: You said we were washing our socks by night.

SHEPHERD 1: Whose story is this anyhow?

SHEPHERD 2: Sorry. Go on.

SHEPHERD 1: *(Clearing throat)* Ahem. And that's when it happened!

SHEPHERDS 3-5: What happened?

SHEPHERD 1: An angel of the Lord appeared!

SHEEP: *(Startled)* Baaaaa!

SHEPHERDS 3-5: Whoa!

SHEPHERDS 1: And the glory of the Lord shone round about us!

SHEEP: *(Startled)* Baaaaaaaaa!

SHEPHERDS 3-5: Awesome!

SHEPHERDS 1: And we was soooooooooore afraid!

SHEEP: *(Bleating, then fainting with feet in air)* Baaaaaaaaa!

SHEPHERD 2: We were.

SHEPHERD 1: What?

SHEPHERD 2: Were. We were soooooooooore afraid.

SHEPHERD 1: That's what I said! We was sore afraid.

SHEPHERDS 3-5: Sore afraid?

SHEPHERDS 2: That means we were really spooked.

SHEPHERD 1: It's my story. Let's sing it!

HYMN: "ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH" VS. 1-3, FRENCH CAROL

SHEPHERD 3: What happened next?

SHEPHERD 4: Yeah, what happened?

SHEPHERD 5: Preach it brother!

SHEPHERD 1: OK. This is the weird part! The angel tells us to...

HECKLER ANGEL: *(A sudden crash is followed by the Heckler Puppet dressed as an Angel rising from behind the pulpit)* Fear not!

SHEPHERDS 3-5: *(Frightened)* Fear not?

(Shepherd 1 stuffs Heckler Angel back behind the pulpit. Sheep huddle behind Shepherds in fear.)

HECKLER ANGEL: Fear not!

SHEPHERD 1: Whose story is this, anyhow?

HECKLER ANGEL: It's my story! I'm the star of this scene. Fear not!

SHEPHERD 1: *(Attempting to stuff Heckler down into the pulpit)* Fear not? First he comes and spooks us. Then he tells us not to be spooked. Crazy angel. Then he says, "I bring you glad news of good tidings!"

HECKLER ANGEL: *(Popping up)* Good news of glad tidings. *(Popping down as Shepherd 1 swings to hit Heckler with his staff. He misses.)*

SHEPHERD 1: Whatever! I bring you good stuff from the Big Guy upstairs.

HECKLER ANGEL: *(Popping up)* God doesn't like to be called the Big Guy upstairs.

SHEPHERD 3: *(Speaking to the Angel)* What does God like to be called?

HECKLER ANGEL: Frequently.

SHEPHERD 1: God likes to be called frequently? I thought God's name was Yahweh?

SHEPHERD 4: *(To Angel)* You know God?

HECKLER ANGEL: Personally.

SHEPHERD 5: Whoa. Can I get your autograph?

SHEPHERD 1: Hey! It's my story!

SHEPHERD 2: Actually, it's God's story but...

(Shepherd 1 snarls and leans in on Shepherd 2 in an intimidating fashion.)

SHEPHERD 2: But you tell it so well!

HECKLER ANGEL: We have to back up a bit. You want to know the whole story?

SHEPHERDS: *(Shouting)* Yeah!

SHEEP: Baaa!

HECKLER ANGEL: OK, let me tell you how it really began.

(Shepherds and Sheep gather toward Heckler Angel)

SHEPHERD 1: Hey! It's my story!

HECKLER ANGEL: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy...

SHEPHERD 2: That's Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. She was Mary's cousin.

SHEPHERD 1: It's my story!

SHEEP: Baaa!

(Lights dim. Heckler Angel reads Luke 1:26-38. Mary and Angel 2 act out the movements of the story as Heckler Angel narrates. If you wish, they may read their own lines. Music for "Here Am I" by Jon Anderson plays in background.)

GOSPEL READING: LUKE 1:26-38

SONG: "HERE AM I" BY JON ANDERSON

SHEPHERD 1: And then nine months and a lot of Christmas shopping later there we was, just a'sitting under the starlight, minding our business, washing our socks by night...

ALL: Watching our flocks by night...

SHEPHERD 1: Yeah, whatever. And we get this "fear not" business from the angel and he says, "Good news of great joy... yada yada yada... unto you is born this day in the city of... city of..." (*looking to Heckler Angel*) city of... (*Stepping out into crowd, sheep follow*) What city was it again? (*Asking children in the audience until he gets an answer*) City of David! Right! City of David! (*Confused, questioning crowd*) And what city is that? (*Asking children again*) Right! The little town of Bethlehem. Anyhoo, unto you is born this day in the city of David—Bethlehem—a...a... (*To audience*) what did they say was born? (*Asking until someone gives the answer*) Yeah, a savior who is Christ the Lord! (*To crowd*) What's a savior Christ the Lord?

SHEPHERD 2: A savior is someone who saves you and Christ is the word for God's special, chosen, anointed one who would save the people from their sins.

SHEPHERD 1: I knew that. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of heavenly ghosts... All Shepherds, Heckler Angel, and Sheep: ...heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

HYMN: "JOY TO THE WORLD" V.1 & 4 BY ISAAC WATTS

HECKLER ANGEL: And when the angels left, the shepherds decided to go down to... to... (*to audience*) to where? Oh yeah, Bethlehem, to see this great thing that had taken place. And there they found them: Mary and Joseph, and the little, bitty baby lying in a manger, just like we said.

HYMN: "AWAY IN THE MANGER" V.1 & 2, AMERICAN CAROL

HECKLER ANGEL: The shepherds told Mary and Joseph all about what had taken place on the hillside with the angels and music. Needless to say, everyone was amazed. And they went back to their flocks praising God and telling everyone they met about what had taken place. So, what do you think? (*To one Sheep*)

SHEEP: Baaaa!

HECKLER ANGEL: What do you think? (*To another Sheep*)

SHEEP: Baaaa!

HECKLER ANGEL: You, too?

SHEEP: Baaaa!

HECKLER ANGEL: You sheep. You're all a bunch of skeptics. (*Exiting*) Come on. Let's go talk to somebody who can understand what we're talking about.

SHEEP: Baaaa!

HYMN: "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN" vs. 1-2

HOST: We're out of time! Let's hear it again for our performers from the cast and crew! (*Applause and "Go Tell It On The Mountain" plays as each Family Steps forward for a bow*)

HOST: Thanks for coming everybody. Merry Christmas to you. (*Heckler Puppet pops up with halo, singing "Go Tell It" dreadfully out of tune.*)

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! Didn't you forget something?

HOST: What are you doing in that Angel costume? I thought you didn't like Christmas programs.

HECKLER PUPPET: Aren't you forgetting something?

HOST: And the costume? How did you get to be an angel?

HECKLER PUPPET: Type cast. I'm just the angelic type.

HOST: An angel is supposed to be holy.

HECKLER PUPPET: Angel is another word for messenger. And that's what I am. (*Shouting*) A messenger from God!

HOST: And what is God wanting us to know?

HECKLER PUPPET: Three things: First, you all can be angels! Everyone who carries the message that Jesus is born out of this room tonight is an angel! (*To crowd*) You're angels!

HOST: Everyone?

HECKLER PUPPET: Even you. And "B", the second message is...(whispering in Host's ear)

HOST: Huh? Oh! The offering? Today's offering will be taken as you leave. We'll invite you up, row by row, to walk by the cradle of the baby Jesus for a look as you go. The offering will go to (name it).

HECKLER PUPPET: What if I don't have any Frankenstein and mirth to offer the baby Jesus?

HOST: Frankincense and myrrh.

HECKLER PUPPET: What?

HOST: Never mind. Don't worry if you don't have an envelope or offering with you. Just write a prayer on one of the envelopes in the pew and leave it in the cradle. (*To Heckler*) What's the third message, Angel?

HECKLER PUPPET: That's easy. Hit it! (*Music for "Silent Night" starts. Lights dim*)

HECKLER PUPPET: We're supposed to hold hands across the aisles and sing "Silent Night" in the candlelight.

HOST: God told you that?

HECKLER PUPPET: That's what the Big Guy said. It's not a Christmas play without "Silent Night."

HOST: You said God doesn't like to be called "the Big Guy."

HECKLER PUPPET: Huh? Oh. Yeah. Come on everybody. Sing!

HYMN: "SILENT NIGHT" BY JOSEPH MOHR

HOST: Thanks for coming everyone! And don't forget the signs.

HECKLER PUPPET: *(Singing terribly out of key)* Signs, signs, everywhere the signs... do this, don't do that, can't you read the signs!"

HOST: How did you ever get cast as an angel?

HECKLER PUPPET: Hey! You're such a skeptic!

ENTIRE CAST: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen! Merry Christmas and good night!

(Cast exits down aisles to shake hands with audience as they depart. Ushers lead people to front to pause before a cradle and leave their offerings.)

Postlude

"Angels From The Realms of Glory" by James Montgomery

BEHOLD THE
SIGNS

BEHOLD THE
SON



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