

# CAFOD NATIVITY PLAY 2023

## A Knock at the Door!

Or, the inhospitable inn keepers  
and a baby born to welcome us home.

You can do this play with a lot of people or just a few; with full costumes, modern clothes like business jackets for the innkeepers; or just with crowns, and haloes and wings for the angels.

### YOU WILL NEED:

- A door frame, with or without the door to open – but you can make it an imaginary door!
- At least five actors
- A star - silver foil and cardboard work well (and can be recycled!) – and someone to hold it up!
- A baby doll, or a real baby (ask the baby's parents about her/his performance readiness)
- A manger – but this is optional
- Costumes! Whether traditional or modern e.g. suits for the innkeepers:
- Crowns or similar and three gifts for Magis – boxes, jars or vases
- Haloes e.g. tinsel and wings for the narrator angels

### GET PERFORMANCE READY!

- Work out where your stage is and where everyone can get ready, and come on and off stage.
- If you're having a door, put it in the middle of the stage at a slight angle, opening out from Stage Right to Stage Left.
- Ask people for a suggested donation for their ticket – you can do this on the door or beforehand online with a platform like EventBrite or JustGiving, or [cafod.org.uk/celebration](https://cafod.org.uk/celebration)
- You can sell refreshments or even Christmas baking and crafts. Find our top tips at [cafod.org.uk/advent](https://cafod.org.uk/advent)
- Remember to tell people that their donations will help families who have fled violence and need shelter, sustenance, and peace and hope this Christmas.
- Make sure people can donate as they leave using contactless, QR codes or cash giving envelopes to help families needing shelter this Christmas. Order free at [shop.cafod.org.uk](https://shop.cafod.org.uk) and [cafod.org.uk/contactless](https://cafod.org.uk/contactless).

### CAST

Some parts have lots of speaking, some not much, and some are in-between.

#### OPTION ONE: A SKELETAL CAST...

You can put on this play with five people if they play several parts:

1. One Narrator Angel reading all the narrators' words
2. Mary
3. Joseph
4. Donkey (you could drop this part if you don't have enough people)
5. Inn keepers 1-5 could be the same person – maybe with various hats, wigs, etc.



### OPTION TWO: FULL HOUSE CAST!

1. Narrator Angels 1 and 2
2. Mary
3. Joseph
5. Donkey
6. Inn keepers 1, 2 (Steve), 3, 4 and 5
8. Shepherds
9. Magi x3
10. Star, or someone holding up a star (could be first Magi)

#### Optional extra speaking parts:

Guests at each innkeeper's inn – these can share each inn keeper's lines if you divide them up.

#### Non-speaking parts:

Camels, sheep, townspeople and angels - as many as you like. You could also add cows and livestock in the stable.

## THE NATIVITY PLAY SCRIPT

### KICK OFF YOUR PLAY!

Welcome everyone to the Nativity play:

- Thank them for coming, and remind them how they can donate to CAFOD's Advent appeal, and that their support will make a huge difference to families in need this Christmas.
- Remember to tell them where refreshments, loos and fire exits are. Ask everyone to turn off their phones.
- Now, without further ado, the play can begin!

You might want to open with a song: 'Come and join the celebration', 'Angels we have heard on High', 'Like a Candle Flame' or 'Come and sing the Christmas Story' for example.

*Narrator Angels 1 and 2 are already on the stage.*

Narrator 1: Hello!

Narrator 2: Hello everyone!

Narrator 1: Happy Advent!

Narrator 2: A blessed and peaceful Advent to you all, is what s/he means...!

Narrator 1: Yes, yes, blessed and peaceful! We're so excited to be here with you all!

Narrator 2: Yes because we've got the most wonderful story to share with you, a story all about doors (*points to the door in the middle of the stage, if you have one*).

Narrator 1: (*interrupting*) ...because, we've come here from a very special place you see! (*points to halo. Points to Narrator 2's halo. They both point to their wings, turn around to show the audience their wings, point to each other's wings*)



Narrator 2: Yes, that's right. We've come here from the realms of glory

Narrator 1: ...That's heaven.

Narrator 2: To wing our flight o'er all the earth

Narrator 1: *(points to the ground)* That's here!

Narrator 2: We who sang creation's story

Narrator 1: *(points to self)* That was us!

Narrator 2: Now proclaim Messiah's birth!

Narrator 1: *(breaks into singing)* Glor-or-or-or-or-or-or-or-or-or-ia!

Narrator 2: But we'd better get on, because you lot all live in temporal not eternal time.

Narrator 1: Yes, well. The reason we're here, is because of Christmas.

Narrator 2: *(nodding)* Yep. God came to be with you all.

Narrator 1: *(with wild arm gestures)* to burst in and break through and open up the way!

Narrator 2: And he came as a tiny baby, not as a grand or powerful person, not in a palace or a castle, but somewhere humble, somewhere ordinary.

Narrator 1: He made himself small and vulnerable, although he was all-powerful, and so he needed shelter, and welcome.

Narrator 2: And so our story today is about doors. About how Jesus needed someone to open a door and welcome him in.

Narrator 1: And you can open a door today too. To Jesus, and to those who most need shelter, and welcome.

*PAUSE*

But we'll get to that.

*(they both move towards the door. If it's an imaginary door, narrator one gestures to it to show the audience they need to picture a door here).*

Narrator 1: Here's our first friendly-looking door. *(gestures)*. A door you might knock on and find it opens to you.

Narrator 2: A door where you might find room at the inn.

Narrator 2: *(aside, slightly pedantically)* Which, technically, in the context of the time, actually meant a house had room on the ground floor where the livestock...

Narrator 1: *(interrupting, impatiently)* Yes, alright, thank you, History Angel.



Narrator 2: *(smiling angelically)* You are welcome!

Narrator 1: So here's our first inn keep. He lives in Bethlehem. He has an inn.

Narrator 2: And we find him in a busy – really quite a peak – season.

Narrator 1: And he's got a lot of guests, a lot of people to fit in.

Narrator 2: And then comes a couple

Narrator 1: Maybe you'll recognise them....

*ENTER Mary Joseph and Donkey Stage Right*

Narrator 2: This one is Joseph

Narrator 1: Leading the donkey

Narrator 2: This one is Mary

Narrator 1: Pregnant with a baby

Both narrators: And the baby's about to be born.

*ENTER Inn Keeper 1 Stage Left, and stops before the door in the middle of the stage.*

Inn keeper 1: But the town's really busy

Mary: We know, we can see.

Inn keeper 1: And the inn's really heaving

Joseph: I'm sure it must be

Inn keeper 1: And I'm run off my feet

Mary: Yeah, you look really beat.

*PAUSE. Inn keeper looks taken aback. Mary puts a hand over her mouth, thinking she's said the wrong thing.*

Mary: I just mean, you must have had a hard day.

Inn keeper 1: Well, it's been a busy week

Mary: Yeah, we can understand that

Joseph: But if you had just a tiny bit of room?

Inn keeper 1: It's a squeeze

Mary: We'd be happy with anything



Inn keeper 1: I'm sure, but I've already got guests with a baby, you see  
And she's keeping us all awake.  
All night.  
Every night.  
I mean, wow. That baby's got lungs.  
And all the kids running around.  
And the livestock.  
The dogs.  
The cats.  
The noise.  
It's endless.  
One day, I think they'll invent some small sort of plugs you can put in your ears, to block out loud noises, and actually get some sleep....

*Mary and Joseph look blankly at him.*

But listen, I know you're in need

Why don't you try that next inn up the way?

Mary (disappointed): Ok.

*EXIT INN KEEPER 1 Stage Left.*

Joseph: Come on, not far now.

Narrator 2: So they carried on round

Narrator 1: Through the streets of the town

Narrator 2: To the door of an inn that belonged to Old Steve.

*Joseph knocks, a good few assertive knocks*

Joseph: Hello? Hello? We're looking for Steve?

*ENTER Inn Keeper 2, Steve, Stage Left. Steve comes to the door, opens it and looks out at Mary and Joseph.*

Steve: Hello there, I'm Stephen

Joseph: Oh, good – we were told



Mary: That you might have a room

Joseph: Or just, any room

Mary: Anywhere we could squeeze

Steve: Oh dear

Narrator 1: Said Old Steve

Steve: Oh I wish I could help you

Narrator 2: And Steve really means that.

Narrator 1: He's got a good heart.

Steve: But I've said yes to everyone, long after we were full  
And now there's no room, I mean no room to breathe!  
We're full to the rafters, we're full to the gills  
And I wish I could help you  
But I've no bed for myself!

Mary (very sadly): No bed for yourself?!

Joseph: Well, thank you for trying

Steve: I tell you what, wherever you find, pop back and tell me and maybe I could come and kip just, in the doorway or something?

Joseph: Oh dear. Well, we'll keep looking.

*EXIT Inn Keeper 2, Steve, Stage Left.*

Narrator 2: So they had to keep going, just dead on their feet

Narrator 1: Just looking for somewhere to shelter and sleep.

*ENTER Inn Keeper 3 Stage Left, wearing a face mask. Mary knocks at the door and Inn Keeper 3 opens and looks out tentatively.*

Mary: Er, hello, we were wondering...?

Inn keeper 3 (*crossly*): Do you have fleas?

Joseph: I'm sorry?

Inn keeper 3: Or COVID? Or any disease?

Mary: Not that we know of.

Joseph: My wife's pregnant, you see

Inn keeper 3: Well, is that contagious?

Mary: Erm, it's more that we need

A room for the night.

Inn keeper 3: No room! Not unless you have papers

To show you're bug free.

Joseph: Sorry, no.

Narrator 1: So they tried the next inn.

*EXIT Inn Keeper 3 Stage Left.*

Narrator 2: Because they didn't lose hope.

Joseph: Even though

Mary's struggling to cope.

Mary: Look, there's a light!

Joseph: Maybe, this time...?

*ENTER INN KEEPER 4 Stage Left. Joseph knocks at the door. Inn keeper 4 opens and jumps out at them. Mary Joseph and Donkey jump back, surprised.*

Inn keeper 4: Hello? Are you guests?

Are you customers? Yes?

Mary: Oh yes! Yes we could be!

We could be your guests!

Inn keeper 4: Fantastic. Eight hundred coins, please.

Joseph: What?

Innkeeper 4: Yes I know, I do know it's rather a lot

But the rents have gone up

With the Romans, you see

And I can't give my guests less than

A five course breakfast for free

Mary: For free?

Inn keeper 4: Well, included.



Joseph: So, paid for?

Inn keeper 4: Well, free after you you've paid.  
And my bed linen has to be Egyptian made.

Mary: Egypt!

Joseph: *(aside to Mary)* Very hot. Wouldn't want to go there in hurry.

Mary: *(back to Inn keeper 4)* But we don't need any of that.

Joseph: No, we just need a small room, a bed

Mary: And we haven't got much cash.

Joseph: Just need a roof overhead.

Mary: I'm having a baby you see.

Inn keeper 4: A baby! That's a whole other customer!  
A whole other guest!

Joseph: Does that mean that you might be about to say – yes?

Innkeeper 4: *a long pause*  
*Really, a very long pause.*  
*Keep pausing...*  
Erm, .....well that would be a lot of mess  
On the Egyptian cotton now wouldn't it?

Mary: *(surprised)* Um, I suppose so, I mean  
We've never had one before.  
A baby.

Joseph: But we'll keep everything clean!

Innkeeper 4: First time parents?! A baby! No cash!  
Oh no  
I'm afraid I just can't.  
The sheets are Egyptian you know.

Narrator 1: And so another door closes.

*EXIT Inn Keeper 4 Stage Left.*

Imagine their hearts

How they sink.

And they look round in the dark at the little town

Where no one can take them in.

*Mary and Joseph look round despondently.*

Mary: I'm so terribly tired. My legs really ache.

Joseph: I know. If only...

Donkey: I am tired too.

Joseph: Probably not as tired as the pregnant lady.

Donkey: Well, I have four legs to be tired on. That's twice as much aching as you have.

Narrator 2: *(pointing)* But what's that?

*Mary and Joseph both look Stage Left.*

*ENTER Inn keeper 5 Stage Left, holding a candle or a mobile phone with the torch on.*

Mary: A light!

Joseph: Just – don't get your hopes up too high this time.

*They reach out to knock but Inn keeper 5 gets there before they can knock, opens the door or mimes opening a door and shines the light out towards them, looking to see who's there.*

Inn keeper 5: Who's there? Do you need help?

It's a cold night to be out

And a dark one.

And you look like you've come a long way.

Donkey: We really have.

Inn keeper 5: And you're having a baby! Oh wow! You must be in need of a rest!

*Inn keeper 5 opens the door wide and steps out, holding out a hand to help Mary through the door.*

Mary: Oh, thank you.

Joseph: Actually, what we really need is a little bit of room, to stay in.

Inn keeper 5: Well you must stay here! We're full to the roof – but we'll find you some room.

Mary: Oh! Will you?



Joseph: Really?

Inn keeper 5: Definitely. It may not be much, but what we have, we'll share with you.

Donkey: Do you have any Egyptian cotton?

*Inn keeper 5 opens the door wide and they all go in, innkeeper 5 last.*

Inn keeper 5: Could you put up with being in with the livestock?

Mary: Definitely!

Joseph: You're the first person who's welcomed us in.

Mary: And it's so warm! And hay is always so soft!

Donkey: I mean, it's not Egyptian cotton. But.

Joseph: We'll take it!

Inn keeper 5: Let me get you some blankets. And a hot meal. You get settled in.

*EXIT Innkeeper 5, Stage Left.*

*Cows, sheep and any other livestock characters come on Stage Right and surround Mary and Joseph and the donkey. If you have a manger, the animals can bring it on with them, and the baby Jesus can already be in the manger.*

*Mary picks up the baby.*

Narrator 2: And so the baby was born in the stable, and Mary laid him in a manger, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and they called him Jesus.

*ENTER Innkeeper 5 Stage Left.*

Inn keeper 5: Oh what a beautiful baby! I'm so glad I welcomed you in.

Narrator 1: And we can only hope that feeling stayed!

Narrator 2: What feeling?

Narrator 1: The gladness! The innkeeper feeling glad about welcoming them in!

Narrator 2: Oh yes! Because a lot more people showed up then, didn't they?

Narrator 1: *(proudly)* Yes, we saw to that.

*Narrators 1 and 2 hold up their arms in angelic fashion.*

*ENTER shepherds and sheep Stage Right.*

Shepherds: Is it this way then?

Narrators 1 and 2: *(pointing to Jesus)* YES!



Shepherds: Wow!

Inn keeper 5: Erm, ok, what's all this now?

*ENTER star, Magi and camels Stage Left.*

Magi 1: Is it this way now?

Star: Yes! Right here! The town of Bethlehem! (*points to Jesus*)

Magi 2: Wow! It's really true!

Inn keeper 5: Oh, hello, who are you all then?

Mary: (*tentatively*): erm, Inn keeper, sorry to ask, but you've been so kind, and we met this lovely man called Steve...

*ENTER Steve Stage Right*

Inn keeper 5: Oh Steve! You've not given someone your own bed again have you?

*Steve nods sheepishly*

Narrator 2: Because that's what it's like sometimes when you open a door.

Narrator 1: You might get more than you bargained for.

Narrator 2: But the good thing is, you welcomed someone in who needed that.

Narrator 1: And maybe it was Jesus.

Mary: Please open a door this Advent and give shelter, and hope, and love, to some of the people who need that most in our world this Christmas.

Joseph: It just takes a gift, however big or small, when you leave today.

Innkeeper 5: And that's one of the ways we welcome in God at Advent.

*END*

*Sing Long Ago, Prophets Knew (Who will make him welcome?), Away in a Manger, or O Come all Ye Faithful to finish.*

*Make sure people can donate as they leave using contactless, QR codes or cash giving envelopes to help families with no shelter or safety this Christmas – every gift makes a difference and puts our Advent hope and faith into real, practical action.*