

This script could be adapted for use in a classroom drama or worship setting.

"Readers Theater" is a presentation concept that typically means, "sitting and reading, not moving around a stage." Characters are in costume and in character, however.

JESUS' BIRTH A READERS' THEATER SCRIPT

**By Amy Crane
Printed from Rotation.org**

Adapted from Matthew 1-2 and Luke 2:1-7, NRSV

READERS

Angel
Chief Priest
Herod
Joseph
Mary
Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Prophet
Wise Men

NARRATOR 1: My name is _____. I will be one of the Narrators.

NARRATOR 2: My name is _____. I will be one of the Narrators.

JOSEPH: My name is _____. I am Joseph.

MARY: My name is _____. I am Mary.

ANGEL: My name is _____. I am the Angel.

PROPHET: My name is _____. I will be sharing with you the words of the Prophets.

WISE MEN: My name is _____. I am one of the Wise Men.

HEROD: My name is _____. I am King Herod.

CHIEF PRIEST: My name is _____. I am the Chief Priest.

NARRATOR 1: Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

MARY: Joseph, we need to talk.

JOSEPH: Yes, sweetheart.

MARY: This is hard to explain, and will be difficult for you to understand, but I need to tell you something.

JOSEPH: Yes, yes, I'm listening.

MARY: An angel visited me, and told me that I have found favor with God. He told me I would conceive and bear a son, and name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

JOSEPH: I don't understand! How can this be?

MARY: Well, as the angel Gabriel told me, nothing will be impossible with God.

JOSEPH: I need some time to think about this. I'll see you later.

NARRATOR 2: Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose Mary to public disgrace, planned to end their engagement quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

JOSEPH: [Make snoring noise.]

ANGEL: Joseph, listen to me.

JOSEPH: Huhhh?

ANGEL: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

NARRATOR 1: All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah.

PROPHET: Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him 'Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us' (Isaiah 7:14).

NARRATOR 2: When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the Angel of the Lord commanded him.

JOSEPH: Wow! What an amazing dream. But was it a dream? I think it was the Angel of the Lord. And I think Mary was telling me the truth. I need to go talk to her right away.

JOSEPH: Mary! Mary!

MARY: Yes, Joseph?

JOSEPH: I need to tell you something.

MARY: Yes, I'm listening.

JOSEPH: I had a dream. But I'm not sure it was a dream. An Angel visited me last night. And I believe everything you told me. I will marry you. And we will name our son Jesus.

NARRATOR 1: So Joseph married Mary as originally planned. Time passed. The special baby grew inside her.

NARRATOR 2: One day a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All were to go to their own towns to be registered.

JOSEPH: Mary, I need to tell you something.

MARY: Yes, dear. I'm listening.

JOSEPH: Mary, my family is from Bethlehem. Remember, I am a member of the tribe of Judah. I am descended from King David.

MARY: Yes. I know that.

JOSEPH: Well, the Emperor is taking that census. And we need to travel to my family's hometown to be counted.

MARY: All the way to Bethlehem? Must we go now? Can't we wait until after the baby is born.

JOSEPH: No, dear, I'm sorry. But we'll take our time. You may ride the donkey.

MARY: May it be as you have said.

NARRATOR 1: So Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house of David. He went with Mary, who was expecting a child.

MARY: Joseph, I am so tired. Are we there yet?

JOSEPH: Yes, dear. I see the city walls ahead. I hope we can find a place to stay. There are so many travelers on the road, I am afraid all the inns may be full.

NARRATOR 2: While they were there, the time came for her to have her baby.

NARRATOR 1: She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

NARRATOR 2: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, the capital city.

WISE MAN: We would like to see King Herod.

KING HEROD: Yes, Your Majesties, what do you wish?

WISE MAN: Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him our respects.

NARRATOR 1: When King Herod heard this, he was frightened

HEROD: I want to see all the chief priests and scribes right away!

CHIEF PRIEST: You summoned us, Your Highness?

HEROD: Tell me what you know. Where will the Messiah be born?

CHIEF PRIEST: In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

PROPHET: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel (Micah 5:2).

HEROD: Wise Men! I have news for you!

WISE MAN: Yes, Your Highness? What did you find out?

HEROD: Bethlehem. The Prophet Micah had said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And, tell me, when exactly did the star appear?

WISE MAN: Over a year ago. That is when we started our journey.

HEROD: Go and search for the child. And please, when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him my respects.

NARRATOR 2: The wise men set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother and Joseph his father; and they knelt down. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

NARRATOR 1: Now after the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.

JOSEPH: [Make snoring noise.]

ANGEL: Joseph, get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.

JOSEPH: Mary, Mary!

MARY: [Make snoring noise.]

JOSEPH: Mary, wake up!

MARY: What is it?

JOSEPH: Mary, I need to tell you something.

MARY: I'm listening.

JOSEPH: An Angel of the Lord visited my dream again. We must pack up and leave for Egypt right away. King Herod wants to kill Jesus!

MARY: Oh no! Let's leave now.

NARRATOR 2: Then Joseph took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt. They remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet.

PROPHET: Out of Egypt I have called my son (Hosea 11:1).

NARRATOR 1: When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, based on the time that he had learned from the wise men. This fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah.

PROPHET: A voice was heard, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because her children are no more (Jeremiah 31:15).

NARRATOR 2: Time passed. After Herod died, an Angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

JOSEPH: [Make snoring noise.]

ANGEL: Joseph! Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.

JOSEPH: That's wonderful! Mary, Mary!

MARY: [Make snoring noise.]

JOSEPH: Mary, wake up!

MARY: What is it?

JOSEPH: Mary, I need to tell you something.

MARY: I'm listening.

JOSEPH: An Angel of the Lord visited my dream again. We can pack up and leave Egypt. King Herod is dead!

MARY: Hooray! We can go home?

JOSEPH: Yes. We are finally taking Jesus home.

NARRATOR 1: Then Joseph took the child and his wife, and went to the land of Israel. After being warned in another dream, Joseph took his family to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled.

PROPHET: He will be called a Nazarene (Isaiah 11:1).

NARRATOR 2: And there Jesus lived with Joseph and Mary; and he grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.