

PLAY IT BY EAR

WORKSHOPS • PERFORMANCES • SCRIPTS

Animal Nativity

The narrators should wear their animal costumes; they will appear first on the screen, telling the story and then as they describe the events, you can cut away to the other characters miming what the narrators are saying while the narrator's vocal carries on over the shot. There are some specific parts but you can have as many shepherds, stars and angels as you want; these roles are great if you have lots of very young children as they can be on the stage without having to learn specific roles.

If you have any of your own Christmas songs, there should be some natural places to slot them in.

Donkey Narrator appears on screen

Donkey: Everyone loves a good story, even us animals. Sometimes people think animals don't like stories, but I always like to tell those people that they have *neigh* idea what they're talking about!

Anyway today, we're going to tell you a very special story. It all started when I was a young donkey. I lived in a town called Nazareth. I was owned by a nice man called Joseph who was engaged to be married to a lovely girl called Mary.

Donkey's voice continues while Mary appears on screen and act out what donkey is saying, soon to be joined by Gabriel who speaks on camera.

Donkey: Now one day Mary was visited by an angel.

Gabriel comes on and talks to Mary

Gabriel: God has chosen you. You will have a baby boy who will be very special. He will be the Son of God and you will call him Jesus.

Mary looks shocked, maybe faints and Gabriel exits,

Donkey: Joseph was very concerned (*Shot of Joseph looking concerned then angel appears and mimes the following*), but an angel visited Joseph in a dream and told him not to worry and to marry Mary. God was in control. Then Mary and Joseph had to go on a big journey to Bethlehem for the census. This was my big moment in the story; it was up to me to carry Mary safely to Jerusalem!

Shot of Donkey carrying Mary away and fades out.

Cow appears on screen

Cow: I'm glad that Donkey *moooooo-ved* out of the way. Now it's my turn to tell my part of the story. You see I lived in a nice quiet stable in Bethlehem (*Shot of cow munching on grass*). One night I was dozing quietly when the innkeeper brought in this young couple. You see Bethlehem was very busy and they hadn't had much luck finding a place to stay.

Shots of Mary and Joseph pretending to knock on the door and Innkeeper 1 appears and shakes his head. Repeat with Innkeeper 2. Finally knock on the door and Innkeeper 3 enters.

Cow: My innkeeper took pity on them and said;

Innkeeper appears on screen

Innkeeper: I haven't got any spare rooms but I do have a stable where the animals stay. It's dry and warm.

Shot of Mary and Joseph coming into the stable and then change to them holding the baby

Cow: Now normally I don't like people sharing my stable, I always think there must be an *udder* place they could stay but poor Mary was about to give birth, so I didn't mind. In fact, later that night, Mary gave birth to Jesus. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger full of hay.

Mary cuddles Jesus and then places him in the manger.

Sheep and shepherds come in, could use shots of lots of children playing sheep and shepherds here.

Sheep: Oh, hello, I get very nervous when I have to speak in front of people. Guess you could say I feel a bit...*sheepish*. Sorry that was a *baaaaa-d* joke. So, whilst Mary was looking after Jesus, I was up on the hill side. I wasn't alone though, there were some strange men called shepherds who like to sit and watch us. I don't know why they like to watch us, but they must really enjoy it because they stay with us all night, every night! Anyway, while they were watching us, a bright light filled the sky.

Enter Stars and Angels, again can use as many children as you want here on different shots.

Sheep: God had sent angels to come and speak to the Shepherds.

Gabriel appears on screen again and speaks

Gabriel: Do not be afraid. We have good news; the Son of God has been born. You will find him in Bethlehem.

(If you have an appropriate Angel song, this would be a good place to sing it.) Angels and stars exit.

Sheep: The shepherds were very excited and ran into Bethlehem to find Jesus. All of us sheep were pretty excited too, so we ran after them!

Shepherds running on spot on screen

Sheep: The shepherds were so happy to find Jesus; they told Mary and Joseph everything that the angels had said to them.

Sheep exits and Camel narrator appears on screen

Camel: Those sheep weren't the only animals to meet Jesus. A couple of us camels got a chance to see him as well. (*shots of camels walking a long way*) We came from the East; carrying some wise men with us (*shots of wise men walking too*). They had spotted a star in the sky and realised that this meant a great ruler had been born. They followed the star to a palace in Jerusalem, the perfect place for a king to be born where they found King Herod and said

Wise-men: We've come to meet the new King!

Camel: There was no new King in the palace and Herod was angry. He was the King!

Shot of angry Herod talking

Herod: There is no king here, but go and find him and, once you have found him, come back here and tell me., then I can go and give him gifts.

Camel: Now I know I'm no wise man, but I got a sense that Herod didn't really want to visit the new-born King. He was up to something (*shot of Herod looking sinister*). The wise guys didn't pick up on this though and just carried on their way. They followed the star to Bethlehem.

Shot of wise men following the star.

Camel: When they found Jesus in his manger they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Mary and Joseph were very proud of Jesus.

As Camel is speaking, Wise-men give their gifts to Jesus

Camel: An angel came and told the wise guys to go home a different route as Herod was up to something, so we headed home a different way.

Camel and Wise men leave. Sheep comes up to lectern

Sheep: The rest of the sheep and I went off round the town baa-ing with excitement, trying to let people know something amazing had happened. Those weird shepherds followed us!

Shepherds leave. Cow comes to lectern

Cow: I sat with the rest of the animals and watched Jesus sleep. Even though we were just animals we knew that Jesus was very special.

Cow leaves.