TONIGHT, WE'LL IMPROVISE

The Play

written by
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THEME & SOURCE

The Joy of Christmas

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."
Luke 2:10

SYNOPSIS

A short, flexible, Christmas celebration featuring most any size cast of all ages and skill levels.

CAST

NARRATOR(S) May be one student, or divided as needed. This draft divides NARRATOR into 15 parts. Directors may combine as needed. Narration may be memorized, or readers theatre style with scripts on music stands.

NON-SPEAKING NATIVITY CHARACTERS Any number to meet your needs. JOSEPH, MARY, ANGELS, SHEPHERDS, LAMBS. You may add WISEMEN, ANIMALS, etc. MANGER may be students or stools.

SET

Table with advent candles. Optionally, audience may have personal candles to light during song.

COSTUMES

Not required. Narrator could wear a long overcoat with a cap in pocket for JOSEPH, and a long scarf for MARY. NATIVITY CHARACTERS might wear street clothes, or headdress only. Younger characters entering later might be fully costumed for audience surprise.

NOTES
NATIVITY CHARACTERS may be chosen from students onstage, audience, or enter from wings or back of house. With advance notice (or not) a Teacher/Principal/Coach might be chosen from the audience. Director's call.

The rhythm and rhyme scheme of the poem is loose and conversational. **It should NOT sound sing-song, like "Mary Had a Little Lamb."**

There should be pauses, as needed, to arrange the characters. It's intended that the audience will smile, even laugh, with delight to see the Nativity emerge.

NARRATOR 1 X to table.

NARRATOR 1
Well, it's time to light this final flame.
"The light of men," we'll call it.
And then together, we'll name Light's name:
Jesus, Lord of All.

NARRATOR 2 X to table, sees no lighter.

NARRATOR 2
It seems there's nothing here for lighting.
That's a surprise.
Ah well, we'll do the best we can.
Tonight, we'll improvise.

NARRATOR 3
But, first, of course, there's a story to be told.
I suspect you've heard it once or twice before:
A man. His wife. Their newborn boy.
Some angels, and shepherds at a stable door.

NARRATOR 4 XC, sees no manger scene.

NARRATOR 4
Ah...there is no manger here, I see.
That's a surprise.
Oh well...we'll do the best we can.
Tonight we'll improvise.

NARRATOR 5 grabs STUDENT/ADULT to be CAESAR AUGUSTUS.

NARRATOR 5
First: this Emperor, Caesar A., decides to count the heads.
A massive census mounted.
And everyone must travel back
to his birthplace in order to be counted.

NARRATOR 6 grabs STUDENT to be JOSEPH, guides him DS, placing a hat on JOSEPH'S head.

NARRATOR 6
Now...Joseph, a fellow born in Bethlehem,
goes back there to do his patriotic duty.

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NARRATOR 6 grabs STUDENT to be MARY, moves her next to Joseph, placing a scarf on Mary's head.

He's traveling with his wife, named Mary,
who is "great with child" and just a little...moody.

NARRATOR 7
(casual, contemporary)
As well she should be! See, nine months prior an intimidating angel had visited the girl and told her, straight out, that she was pregnant with the Savior of the World.

NARRATOR 7 rolls overcoat or outerwear into ball and places it on MARY'S stomach to "make a baby."

You get the idea.

NARRATOR 7 guides MARY and JOSEPH to "Bethlehem."

She'd pondered this unnerving news
as the baby grew inside her.
But now, it's time.
Here's Bethlehem and they can find no shelter.

NARRATOR 8 looks around the stage to find the makings of a manger scene. Seeing none, NARRATOR directs a few STUDENTS to drop to crawling position, side by side, to make a manger.

NARRATOR 8
A dirty cattle stall, with manger,
appears before their eyes.
The baby's born and wrapped in rags.
Tonight, we'll improvise.

NARRATOR 9 takes "bundled baby" from MARY and cradles him.

NARRATOR 9
And here he is, this fragile God Made Flesh.
This spotless Lamb for slaughter,
helpless, in the squalor, rest.
(to MARY)
Rest. One day he'll save our sons, our daughters.
But, not yet.

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NARRATOR 10
First, heavenly fireworks start.
Strange celebration fills the night.
For all creation's groaned and waited long
for "God with us," for faith made sight.

NARRATOR 11 recruits ANGELS, escorts them DS.

NARRATOR 11
Now, unleashed, creation stirs.
Angel armies, wild worship bring.
Always heard in heaven, now heard on earth,
they passionately sing,

NARRATOR 12 recruits STUDENTS for SHEPHERDS, adding them to the scene.

NARRATOR 12
"Hosanna, in the highest!"
Mysterious praises fill the skies.
And as shepherds watch in wonder,
the *angels* start to improvise.

NARRATOR 13 recruits STUDENTS for LAMBS, adding them to the scene.

NARRATOR 13
They sing more than they know, the angels.
More than they understand.
But at their word, the shepherds go.
They find the child.
They know about the birth of lambs.

NARRATOR 14
They know, these faithful herders,
that a perfect lamb brings freedom.
So they spread the word about this child,
for they had heard and seen him.

NARRATOR 15 X to Advent Candle Table as Nativity Tableau settles.

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NARRATOR 15

This word has spread throughout the ages,
down to this very day.
When we gather to adore him,

NARRATOR finds lighter.

we gather here to say...
We believe this child's Messiah.

NARRATOR lights candle.

Lamb of God and Light of man.
We believe he's come to rescue us,
to be *our* perfect Lamb.

NARRATOR(S) XDS, inviting audience.

NARRATOR(S)

So come, all of you faithful.
Come joyful, weary, wise.
We'll join the angels in the song.
Tonight, we'll improvise.

NARRATORS invite audience to join as ALL sing a cappella.
Audience may light and pass flame of personal candle.

OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM.
OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM,
OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD.

OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM.
OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM,
OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD.

Group carol singing may continue. Director may choose to feature particular students singing or leading songs and carols.

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