

Gabriel's Best Job Ever

Silvia Purdie

Written for a community Christmas Eve service

The purpose is to involve children, with no rehearsal, in creating a nativity scene, and to state the deep meanings of Christ's birth in accessible language.

Set-Up: Children are invited to come to the front during the singing of a carol, where they are given simple costumes: a girl and boy for Mary and Joseph, and others choose to be animals, angels, shepherds or kings.

A manger and chair in the middle. When they come up, the animals sit on the steps in front, the shepherds sit to the left and the Kings stand on the right. Set up a row of chairs behind the manger for the angels to stand on.

Plus a child for the 'Hang on a minute' line near the end.

Start with a drum-roll, and a flash of light (turn out and on house lights?) and the Angel Gabriel bursts onto the stage.

Gabriel

(very grand) BEHOLD! I am the Angel Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, the most high, Lord of Hosts, the eternal one. I have come to bring you good news of great joy which has come into the world!!

(steps forward, more tentative now) Are you impressed yet? Cause, it does sound impressive doesn't it? I practiced that, you know. Important to make a big entrance, I find. Did you like it? Really, I'm just God's messenger, kind of like a postie, I suppose, delivering messages, but it is a fun job.

Can I tell you about my best job ever, can I? can I? ... Well, I'm going to whether you like it or not. But I need help. Have I got help? I need, now, let's see ... I need some animals *(walks around and greets the children)* ... some shepherds, some kings, Mary and Joseph ... and of course some other angels - yes, looking good! just so long as you promise not to look as impressive as me.

RIGHT! Let's go – this is the Angel Gabriel's Best Job Ever!!

The first thing I need is a star. *(a small star goes on the screen)* No, no good. Far too small. This was a really bright star, really, really impressive star *(a bright comet on the screen)*. Much better.

Welcome, star! Come to the manger. Shine the brilliance of God over all the world. Bring with you the vast universe. Gather up all of creation here in this moment.

Great! Now, we need animals. Come on up, animals ... it was their home, after all, the sheep and cows huddled in the warm stable out of the winter cold, with nice hay to eat. And maybe there was a cat, some insects, a bird in the rafters.

Welcome, animals. Come to the manger. Be at home here. Bring with you all created things, everything that has breath, all God's creatures, here to welcome Jesus.

Wonderful, wonderful. Next, in come Mary and Joseph. Oh, aren't they tired after their long trip. Poor Mary, traveling so far at this stage of things – I tell you, that's the last thing you want to do when you're 9 months pregnant, eh, ladies! And poor Joseph. What a way to come back to your home town. No warm welcome from all the uncles and aunts – nobody wanted to know him, not this year. They were too embarrassed about this baby, you know. The best he could find for his beloved Mary was a stable! How appalling!!

So welcome, Mary and Joseph. Come, find rest. Trust in the mysterious goodness of God. Bring with you all who long for a loving home and a welcome.

OK, moving right along. Shepherds come next. Wow! Were they ever surprised when I popped up in the middle of the night on that chilly hillside! The angels and I really rocked their world when we suddenly started singing God's glory, didn't we, girls? Did the trick, though, they came running. Come on, shepherds, hurry up! Come on!

Welcome, shepherds. I love the way you hear God's invitation and get on with it. Bring with you all people of action, everyday people, doing the work of God in the everyday world.

Kings now. Grand, learned men from far away. They studied for years and years, learning, striving for truth, searching many lands on the bumpy backs of camels. Now they are hoping, hoping that maybe this time, maybe now, maybe here, the true King will come.

So welcome, Kings. You made it! Bring your gifts of science and wisdom. Bring the best you have for Jesus. Bring with you all those who long for the truth, all those who hunger in their hearts for God.

And finally, my special friends, the angels. Aren't they lovely!! This is a very rare and special treat for you, tonight, ladies and gentlemen, to actually see angels. Normally they are much more ... well, invisible, actually. Quite shy, really, on the whole, aren't you? We just get on with God's work, spreading God's love in the world in hidden ways.

Welcome, angels. Tell the world about God! Tell of glory and wonder and tender love, especially here, at the manger. Bring with you everything we can't see, everything mysterious, gathered in the power of God.

Right, that's about it, I guess. The best job I ever did. I got them all here, I did – well, God did, I just helped. Thanks for coming. *(starts to show them off the stage)*

Child. Hang on a minute, aren't we missing something?

Gabriel Missing something? *(looks around)* I don't know. We've got the animals and shepherds, Mary and Joseph, the Kings, the angels. What's missing?
(asks the children) Have I forgotten anyone?

Jesus! the baby? Oohh! Oh. I guess I'm not a very good messenger, am I? How could I get all the wrapping right and forget the gift? Of course, the baby. It was just a baby, you know. Just a normal little baby. Just like you were, or you, or you. But, there was something special about this particular baby, of course. Always. Something about him was older than the stars, wiser than the kings. He was Jesus, the very Son of God.

Complete scandal of course. Actually, I really didn't want this job at all. I told God, NO WAY!! You can't do it! You can't send your beloved Son down there with those dirty sheep and ordinary people. They'll just hurt him and ignore him. Don't do it. But did He listen to me? No. **For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life.**

That's it, folks. That's God for you. Jesus was God's best job ever.

Thank you.