

# **The Bethlehem Star**

Infant Script  
by  
Dave Corbett

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**CAST LIST**

***N.B. In the following list, the bracketed number shows the number of spoken lines each role has.***

***An asterisk (\*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.***

Narrator	(5)	Angels	(0)
Scene Announcer	(6)		
		* King 1	(4)
Editor	(11)	* King 2	(4)
Reporter 1	(10)	* King 3	(3)
Reporter 2	(8)		
Reporter 3	(11)	Shepherd 1	(4)
Reporter 4	(8)	Shepherd 2	(1)
Reporter 5	(3)	Shepherd 3	(1)
		Shepherd 4	(1)
Joseph	(7)	Shepherd 5	(1)
Mary	(10)	Shepherd 6	(1)
		Lady	(1)
Stallholder 1	(2)	Man	(1)
Stallholder 2	(2)		
Stallholder 3	(2)	* Innkeeper	(2)
Stallholder 4	(2)	Innkeeper's Wife	(2)
Stallholder 5	(2)		
Stallholder 6	(3)	Donkey	(0)
Sergeant	(9)	Camel 1	(0)
Soldier 1	(1)	Camel 2	(0)
Soldiers	(0)	Camel 3	(0)

***N.B. Soldiers sing as a group***

***Have as many Soldiers as you like, but there need to be a few as they sing Track 3 by themselves. The Angels, on the other hand, don't have any lines.***

**SPEAKING ROLES BY NUMBER OF LINES**

***N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many spoken lines each role has. An asterisk (\*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.***

Editor .....	11
Reporter 3.....	11
Mary.....	10
Reporter 1.....	10
Sergeant.....	9
Reporter 2.....	8
Reporter 4.....	8
Joseph .....	7
Scene Announcer .....	6
Narrator .....	5
* King 1 .....	4
* King 2 .....	4
Shepherd 1 .....	4
* King 3 .....	3
Reporter 5.....	3
Stallholder 6.....	3
* Innkeeper .....	2
Innkeeper's Wife .....	2
Stallholder 1.....	2
Stallholder 2.....	2
Stallholder 3.....	2
Stallholder 4.....	2
Stallholder 5.....	2
Lady.....	1
Man .....	1
Shepherd 2 .....	1
Shepherd 3 .....	1
Shepherd 4 .....	1
Shepherd 5 .....	1
Shepherd 6 .....	1
Soldier 1 .....	1

**SUGGESTED CAST LIST FOR 34 ACTORS**

***N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many spoken lines each role has. An asterisk (\*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.***

Editor .....	11
Reporter 3.....	11
Mary.....	10
Reporter 1.....	10
Sergeant..... also plays Man .....	10
Reporter 4..... also covers first two of Reporter 5's lines.....	10
Reporter 2..... also covers the last of Reporter 5's lines .....	9
Joseph .....	7
Scene Announcer .....	6
Narrator .....	5
Shepherd 1 .....	5
* King 1 .....	4
* King 2 .....	4
* King 3 .....	3
Stallholder 6.....	3
Shepherd 2 .....	3
* Innkeeper .....	2
Innkeeper's Wife .....	2
Stallholder 1.....	2
Stallholder 2.....	2
Stallholder 3.....	2
Stallholder 4.....	2
Stallholder 5.....	2
Shepherd 3 .....	2
Soldier 1 .....	1

***Non speaking roles: Five Soldiers (who sing as a group), one Donkey, and three Angels.***

***Note: No camels are required for this cast size.***

**LIST OF CHARACTERS IN EACH SCENE****Scene One**

Editor  
 Narrator  
 Reporter 1  
 Reporter 2  
 Reporter 3  
 Reporter 4  
 Reporter 5

**Scene Two**

Announcer  
 Donkey  
 Joseph  
 Mary  
 Reporter 1

**Scene Three**

Announcer  
 Reporter 2  
 Sergeant  
 Soldier 1  
 Soldiers  
 Stallholder 1  
 Stallholder 2  
 Stallholder 3  
 Stallholder 4  
 Stallholder 5  
 Stallholder 6

**Scene Four**

Announcer  
 Camels (optional)  
 King 1  
 King 2  
 King 3  
 Reporter 3

**Scene Five**

Angels  
 Announcer  
 Reporter 4  
 Shepherd 1  
 Shepherd 2  
 Shepherd 3  
 Shepherd 4  
 Shepherd 5  
 Shepherd 6

**Scene Six**

Announcer  
 Editor  
 Innkeeper  
 Innkeeper's Wife  
 Joseph  
 King 1  
 King 2  
 King 3  
 Lady  
 Man  
 Mary  
 Narrator  
 Shepherd 1  
 Shepherd 2  
 Shepherd 3  
 Shepherd 4  
 Shepherd 5  
 Shepherd 6  
 Entire Cast for final song

**LIST OF PROPERTIES****Scene One**

Quills and scrolls .....	Scene Prop
Box to stand on.....	Scene Prop
Papyruses (newspapers!).....	Scene Prop
A table or two (optional).....	Scene Prop

**Scene Three**

A table or two (optional).....	Scene Prop
Un sliced bread.....	Stallholder 2
Old style lamps .....	Stallholder 4
Large carafes or demi johns (oil) .....	Stallholder 3
Large bags or satchels .....	Stallholder 6
Rolls of leather looking fabric .....	Stallholder 5
<i>(roll up a piece of sugar paper or use dark backing paper)</i>	

**Scene Four**

Quill and scroll .....	Reporter 3
Gold, frankincense and myrrh.....	Kings

**Scene Five**

Toy lambs (if not using children).....	Shepherds or Scene Prop
Teddy bear .....	Shepherd 6

**Scene Six**

Toy lamb.....	Shepherds
Crib.....	Scene Prop
Gold, frankincense and myrrh.....	Kings

## **HELPFUL HINTS AND TIPS**

Give your children their words to learn first – enlist the help of parents here. Set a date by which they should know them; you cannot hope to rehearse movement or introduce props until words and cues are learned.

If sending home words to learn, send cues (the preceding line or two) as well, so children not only know what to say but when to say it!

Songs are best learned separately (it helps to keep the blood pressure down for all concerned).

Once rehearsing begins on stage, introduce any flats (free standing scenery) as soon as possible, so that children have their positions correct from the start. And don't forget to have one or two rehearsals with props, microphones (and lights if using) before the official dress rehearsal to allow time for children to get used to them.

Finally – this may seem obvious but is often forgotten – don't forget to practise your cast bows (arms across tummies or not?) and the order in which they should lead off stage. All too often a super show ends in foot shuffling embarrassment because no one knows quite what to do when the applause ends.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

### **STAGING**

This show is set in and around Bethlehem. Depending on the facilities available it can be as simple or as complex as you want. Just remember, this is not supposed to be a West End production. All most parents want is to see their child on stage. All most teachers want is to survive unscathed. So feel free to add, subtract or completely change the ideas below. And don't forget to send your comments and pictures to [dave@musicline-ltd.com](mailto:dave@musicline-ltd.com)

#### **Scene One: An Office At The Bethlehem Star Newspapyrus**

It would be very effective if the stage could be set with a box for the Editor to stand on and a couple of small wooden tables. It is easy to imagine a busy newspaper office and the set can obviously be laid out before the show starts; just remember though that if you go overboard you will have trouble clearing it before Scene Two! Give your reporters 21<sup>st</sup> century papers to wave when mentioning their rivals and a quill or two.

#### **Scene Two: A Scoop Missed**

Dead easy.

#### **Scene Three: Keep Your Head Down**

Again, if you can have a couple of tables and props as outlined in the list on stage, this scene really does repay you for the effort. But remember, we are not talking West End production here.

Use the Soldiers for humour if you like; small children will love to stamp, flex muscles and glare as appropriate.

#### **Scene Four: A Real Scoop**

Dead easy! Don't worry about a star, just have your Kings point off stage.

#### **Scene Five: Scooperdooper**

Again, don't worry about a thing.

#### **Scene Six: Thee Best Inn In Town**

Unless you REALLY want a flat (free standing piece of scenery) brought on by a willing TA or Year 6 for a very brief moment of glory, don't worry about a door for Mary to knock on.

Just get someone to knock on a wood block and Mary to mime.

During the song, "Thee Best Inn", a crib should be brought in to the centre of the stage with a baby (doll) in it.

## **BACKDROPS**

Let's be realistic here. You may have the facilities for changing backdrops, in which case, go to town - a newspaper office for Scene One, a dark night sky with stars and outline of hills in the distance for Scene Five and a stable for the final scene. Scenes Two, Three, Four and Six could be the skyline of a Middle Eastern town: flat roofed houses, palm trees, domed buildings etc.

If this is not practical, then a Middle Eastern skyline is the best all purpose backdrop. (Incidentally, instant scenery is now available with our digital backdrops. **Project It!** provides a different backdrop for EVERY scene change and is supplied in both a PowerPoint presentation and as individual JPG files. See our website for details.)

## **COSTUMES**

All very traditional.

Shepherds and Stall holders can have tea towel head dresses to differentiate them from the reporters.

The Innkeeper and his Wife could wear aprons to make them a little different.

The Soldiers need to look as Roman as possible and will need shields, helmets and swords if possible.

Give your Sergeant something to make him different, or drop the shield in his case.

The Animals can wear colour-appropriate tights and tops and head dresses or masks to show who they are. If budget allows, whole costumes can be purchased online. Camels look cool in fezzes!

We do like to see our Angels in white and tinsel bling!

## **CHOREOGRAPHY**

### **Track 1: Extra, Extra**

Just give a feeling of "busyness".

### **Track 2: Tired and Weary**

A complete contrast: Spotlight is very effective here.

### **Track 3: Roman Soldiers**

Obviously marching is the order of the day here. "That means you" can be directed at the cast or audience or both, with (careful) waving of swords. "Big strong soldiers" should flex their muscles, knee bend etc.

### **Track 4: Sound Silly**

The American country style lends itself to thigh and knee slaps, clapping, linked arm spins etc.

**Track 5: Choir of Angels**

Keep it simple and dramatic with full lighting effects if you can.

**Track 6: Thee Best Inn**

Lots of bop.

**Track 7: At The Manger**

You know the ability of your children. Clapping, arms flung up for the “Hallelujah!”, the “twist”... let your imagination go!

**SCENE ONE: AN OFFICE AT THE BETHLEHEM STAR NEWSPAPYRUS**

**NARRATOR:** Welcome everybody to our Christmas play, The Bethlehem Star. We know what you are thinking, but it has nothing to do with the night sky and a special baby... well, not to start with anyway.

**TRACK 1: EXTRA, EXTRA**

*(The Editor enters early on and during the song Reporters join him in the office. The cast busy themselves around the office getting scrolls, quills etc., perhaps holding up papyruses in the choruses. At the end of the song the Reporters are gathered around facing the Editor.)*

**ALL:** EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT,  
EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL THE NEWS.  
CATCH IT ALL, NEAR OR FAR, HERE IT IS,  
THE BETHLEHEM STAR, BETHLEHEM STAR.

READ ABOUT A SANDSTORM,  
READ ABOUT A MARKET,  
READ ABOUT A HEATWAVE,  
DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE,  
YOU'LL FIND THE NEWS IN THE BETHLEHEM STAR.

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT,  
EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL THE NEWS.  
CATCH IT ALL, NEAR OR FAR, HERE IT IS,  
THE BETHLEHEM STAR, BETHLEHEM STAR.

READ ABOUT A DONKEY,  
READ ABOUT A WOLF SCARE,  
READ ABOUT A FIG TREE,  
DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE,  
YOU'LL FIND THE NEWS IN THE BETHLEHEM STAR.

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT,  
EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL THE NEWS.  
CATCH IT ALL, NEAR OR FAR, HERE IT IS,  
THE BETHLEHEM STAR, BETHLEHEM STAR.

READ ABOUT A TEMPLE,  
READ ABOUT A LOST SHEEP,  
READ ABOUT A CENSUS,  
DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU ARE,  
YOU'LL FIND THE NEWS IN THE BETHLEHEM STAR.



**ANNOUNCER:** Scene One: An Office At The Bethlehem Star Newspapyrus.

**EDITOR:** Listen up people, I've gathered you here because things are desperate.

**REPORTER 1:** Oh no, don't say we've run out of figs again!

**EDITOR:** Don't be silly. No, we are no longer the best selling newspaper... sorry... newspapyrus, in town.

**REPORTER 2:** We know. The Desert Sun sells more than us now...

**REPORTER 3:** ...and The Camel Express.

**REPORTER 4:** Even The Daily Veil is doing better than us.

**EDITOR:** We need a scoop.

**REPORTER 5:** Why, have you spilt something?

**REPORTER 1:** No, a scoop... a really good story that nobody else has.

**REPORTER 2:** That's what sells newspapyruses... *(pause, then questioning.)*... newspapyri?

**EDITOR:** Now look, I want you all to get out there and don't come back until you've got a headline.

**REPORTER 3:** But Ed, we had a good one the other day. *(Makes a banner headline with arms.)* "Donkey Hurts Its Hoof".

**REPORTER 4:** ...and there was that other one... "Camel Trains Late Because of Wrong Sand".

**EDITOR:** No, we need something more... arresting.

**REPORTER 5:** Local Police Grab Slippery Olive Oil Gang?

**REPORTER 1:** The headline didn't sell many papyruses... papyri?

**EDITOR:** I'm relying on you reporters. It's scoop or sink.

**REPORTER 5:** I had that trouble with my old boat on the Red Sea the other day.

**EDITOR:** Go get 'em!

*(Editor points offstage: all reporters exit and he follows.)*



**SCENE TWO:****A SCOOP MISSED**

**ANNOUNCER:** Scene Two: A Scoop Missed.

*(Mary, Joseph and the Donkey enter, followed by Reporter 1.)*

**REPORTER 1:** Ah, just the people. Have you got any news you could tell me?

**JOSEPH:** Well, our Donkey hurt its hoof, but it's ok now.

**REPORTER 1:** Done that one.

**JOSEPH:** Well, there are a lot of people on the road going to Bethlehem to be counted.

**REPORTER 1:** Doesn't count. Everybody has that story.

**MARY:** I'm going to have a baby. *(Pats her tummy.)*

**REPORTER 1:** Thought so. Either that or too much bread and figs.

**MARY:** He's going to be born soon.

**REPORTER 1:** Or SHE of course! Not much of a scoop though... babies born all the time... nothing special about yours.

**MARY:** Oh, but there is.

**REPORTER 1:** Sorry dear, got to get on and find some REAL news. Bye. *(He exits.)*

**MARY:** I'm so tired Joseph.

**JOSEPH:** Not much further Mary dear, not much further.



**TRACK 2:****TIRED AND WEARY**

*(During the song Mary, Joseph and the Donkey walk around the stage, exiting at the final instrumental. Stallholders enter and set up a market scene.)*

**ALL:**

WALK LITTLE DONKEY, WALK LITTLE DONKEY,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL THE SUN GOES DOWN.  
RIDE GENTLE MARY, RIDE GENTLE MARY,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL YOU FIND THE TOWN.

SOON THERE'LL BE REST IN SIGHT,  
SOMEWHERE TO STAY THE NIGHT,  
YOU CAN BE SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

JOSEPH IS WITH YOU, JOSEPH IS WITH YOU,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL THE SUN GOES DOWN.  
JOURNEYING ONWARD, JOURNEYING ONWARD,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL YOU FIND THE TOWN.

SOON THERE'LL BE REST IN SIGHT,  
SOMEWHERE TO STAY THE NIGHT,  
YOU CAN BE SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

CLOSER AND CLOSER, CLOSER AND CLOSER,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL THE SUN GOES DOWN.  
WALK LITTLE DONKEY, RIDE GENTLE MARY,  
TIRED AND WEARY UNTIL YOU FIND THE TOWN.

SOON THERE'LL BE REST IN SIGHT,  
SOMEWHERE TO STAY THE NIGHT,  
YOU CAN BE SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.



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**SCENE THREE:**

**KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN**

**ANNOUNCER:** Scene Three: Keep Your Head Down.

**STALLHOLDER 1: (*Shouting.*)** Olives for your bread, olives for your bread.

**STALLHOLDER 2:** Bread for your olives, bread for your olives.

**STALLHOLDER 3:** Oil for your lamps, oil for your lamps.

**STALLHOLDER 4:** Lamps for your oil, lamps for your oil.

**STALLHOLDER 5:** Leather for your bags, leather for your bags.

**STALLHOLDER 6:** Bags for your olives, bread, oil, lamps and leather. Come and get your bags here.

**STALLHOLDER 1: (*Pointing.*)** Soldiers! Watch out!

**ALL:** (*Shouting.*) Better keep our heads down!



**TRACK 3:****ROMAN SOLDIERS**

*(During the song the Soldiers, with a Sergeant in charge, march, salute... and threaten! At the end of the song the Soldiers stand to attention as Reporter 2 enters.)*

**SOLDIERS:** WE ARE SOLDIERS, ROMAN SOLDIERS,  
BIG, STRONG SOLDIERS, YES SIR!  
WE LIKE ORDER, WE KEEP ORDER,  
SOLDIERS, HERE WE ARE.

IF THERE'S TROUBLE ANYWHERE,  
WE WILL PRETTY SOON BE THERE.

ROMAN SOLDIERS, SEE US MARCHING INTO TOWN.  
WATCH OUT, TAKE CARE, BETTER KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN,  
*(All point in various directions, shouting.)* That means you!

WE ARE SOLDIERS, ROMAN SOLDIERS,  
BIG, STRONG SOLDIERS, YES SIR!  
WE LIKE ORDER, WE KEEP ORDER,  
SOLDIERS, HERE WE ARE.

IF YOU'RE DOING ANY WRONG,  
SOLDIERS SOON WILL BE ALONG.

ROMAN SOLDIERS, SEE US MARCHING INTO TOWN.  
WATCH OUT, TAKE CARE, BETTER KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN,  
*(All point in various directions, shouting.)* That means you!

WE ARE SOLDIERS, ROMAN SOLDIERS,  
BIG, STRONG SOLDIERS, YES SIR!  
WE LIKE ORDER, WE KEEP ORDER,  
SOLDIERS, HERE WE ARE.

IF THERE'S FIGHTING, NEVER FEAR,  
SOLDIERS VERY SOON APPEAR.

ROMAN SOLDIERS, SEE US MARCHING INTO TOWN.  
WATCH OUT, TAKE CARE, BETTER KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN,  
*(All point in various directions, shouting.)* That means you!

**REPORTER 2:** Excuse me Sergeant, have you any news?

**SERGEANT:** What WOULD be good news is if this 'orrible lot could learn to march in time.

**REPORTER 2:** Are all these strangers, in town for the census, behaving themselves?

**SERGEANT:** They better had be... or what, men?

**SOLDIERS:** Or ELSE... Sir.



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