

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Hannah

Richard

Jenny

Paul

John

Alice

Light 1 - 8

Shepherds 1 - 3

Traveller 1 - 4

Mary

Joseph

Innkeeper 1

Innkeeper 2

Cracker 1 - 4

King 1 - 3

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Production Notes

Happy Birthday Jesus is intended to engage the children in all aspects of the show and cover many aspects of the curriculum. This could involve art, singing, dancing, etc. The show starts with the children making a birthday card. The scene can be anywhere: in a classroom, in a bedroom, at the kitchen table, on the lounge floor, it doesn't matter. For simplicity, it probably is best for it to represent taking place in school, thus minimising the scenery required to that which is readily available. This play can be performed anywhere; in class, in the hall, on a stage, even outdoors. It is designed to be flexible to suit all needs. Centre stage is a large frame that represents a giant version of a birthday card. It is made from white card and folded like a birthday card would be. As the play progresses, the children will be placing items on this with sticky tape or blue tac, so that the audience can see them. Several children are either lying face down on the floor working with bits of paper and card etc, or could be sitting at a table doing the same. To one side of the stage, is the nativity scene, with a crib, manger etc. If possible it should be unlit until the appropriate moment in the show. If this is not possible, then possibly a screen could be set in front to represent one of the inn doors. This would then be removed when required to reveal the nativity.

During Song One, the children add pre-prepared shapes to represent the donkey, Wisemen, Shepherds etc. Similarly, during Song Two, they either draw a large Christmas tree and fix it to the card or use a pre-prepared cut-out and affix it. This theme, of the children drawing various characters etc onto the card will keep the children occupied and create a visual connection between the creation of the card and the action on the stage area.

When the Kings (Wisemen) enter, they take presents to the crib and offer them. This could be done silently, with the crib song (backing track only) playing or you could add simple additional lines for each King ie King 1: I bring Gold; King 2: I bring Frankincense and King 3: I bring Myrrh.

At the end of the show, 18 children need to each have a piece of A4, or bigger, paper with a letter drawn on to make the phrase "HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS". The children need not enter in the correct order, but could come on randomly and one other child could indicate they have spelt in wrongly and the children could shuffle around to read the phrase correctly. Each letter could be in a different colour and could be drawn in class before hand with festive or religious symbolism added.

The aim is to be colourful and bright but keeping the staging as simple as possible. The Fairy Lights for example could have battery operated Christmas

lights added to their costumes; the trees could be holding baubles and have earrings made of Christmas baubles etc. Costuming should be simple using readily available items such as tea-towels, shawls etc for the historic characters and normal school uniform or everyday clothes for the children making the card.

List of Properties

Large frame and card – Start of show, on stage

Bits of card, paper, glue, crayons, pencils etc for children to work with making the card.

Cut out of a Christmas tree to stick on the card

Small lamb – Shepherd 3.

Manger on stage

Small presents and jokes on paper – Christmas Crackers carry

Gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh – Kings

Individual letters spelling HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

Scene One

(The show starts with the children making a birthday card. The scene can be anywhere: in a classroom, in a bedroom, at the kitchen table, on the lounge floor, it doesn't matter. Centre stage is a large frame that represents a giant version of the birthday card. It is made from white card and folded like a card would be. As the play progresses, the children will be placing items on this with sticky tape or blue tac, so that the audience can see them. Several children are either lying face down on the floor working with bits of paper and card etc, or could be sitting at a table doing the same.)

Hannah: How do you spell Birthday?

Richard: B-E-R-F-D-A-Y, I think.

Jenny: No it isn't. It's got a "th" in it

(John and Alice enter and see the other children working.)

John: What are you doing?

Hannah: Making a birthday card.

Richard: Well we would if we could spell birthday.

Alice: Whose birthday is it?

Jenny: Jesus's.

Paul: That's why we have a Christmas holiday - 'cos it's His birthday.

John: How old is he?

Richard: Two thousand years.

John: **(Wide eyed)** Wow! My dad's thirty six and I thought he was old.

Jenny: My grandad's fifty four. I thought that he was ancient.

Hannah: Jesus was born two thousand years ago and we're making a card for His birthday.

Alice: Can we help?

Richard: Yes.

John: What are you going to put on the card?

Hannah: Christmas things of course.

Alice: Come on then.

Song One – Happy Birthday Jesus
Children on set

Make a card for Jesus' birthday
Make the card from me and from you
Sing a song for Jesus' birthday
Sing a song and make a card too

'Cos it's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday to you
It's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday Jesu.

On the card for Jesus' birthday
We'll draw a donkey on a dusty road
On the card for Jesus' birthday
Mary, Joseph on a dusty road.

'Cos it's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday to you
It's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday Jesu.

Wise men trav'ling, shepherds are watching
They all see a twin-kl-ing star.
On the road to Bethlehem's stable
Bringing gifts, they travel afar-

'Cos it's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday to you
It's your birthday, happy birthday
Happy birthday Jesu.
Happy birthday Jesu.
Happy birthday Jesu.

John: What shall we put on the card?
Alice: How about Happy Birthday?
Richard: No, let's do some pictures first.
Hannah: I like doing pictures. Let's draw a christmas tree.
John: Why a Christmas tree?
The others: 'Cos it's Christmas! **(Together)**

John: I know that, but why have we got to draw a tree.
Jenny: Well, the stable was made from wood.
Paul: And wood comes from trees.
Hannah: And the manger was made from wood.
John: What's a manger?
Richard: The crib that they put the baby in.
John: Come on, then let's draw a tree.

(They draw and then fix a large Christmas tree onto the card. Then they sing song two.)

Song Two - Christmas Trees
All children on set

Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
To put your presents around
We're Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
Our branches reach down to the ground.

Cover us in twinkling lights
Baubles shining bright
An angel placed upon my brow
Ev'ryone knows it's Christmas now.

We're Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
Our branches reach down to the ground
Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
To put your presents around
We're Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
With branches spiky and brown.

Cover us in twinkling lights
Baubles shining bright
An angel placed upon my brow
Ev'ryone knows it's Christmas now.

We're Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
Our branches reach down to the ground
Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
We grow so tall from the ground
We're Christmas trees, we're Christmas trees
For you to put your presents around.
For you to put your presents around.
For you to put your presents around.

Hannah: That looks good, doesn't it?

Richard: Ace! What shall we put on the card, now?

John: If we've got a Christmas tree we should have some lights on it.

Jenny: We call them fairy lights at home.

Hannah: We put them round the window and on the tree.

Paul: They look like stars twinkling in the sky.

Alice: There were lots of stars in the sky when Jesus was born.

Richard: Yes. A star guided the wisemen to the stable, didn't it?

Hannah: And a star shone over the stable so that the shepherds could find their way.

Richard: Let's draw some stars then.

Alice: Let's pretend they're fairy lights.

(Music to song three starts as the fairy lights enter. These dancers could be dressed to look like miniature Christmas lights or stars and hold hands for the dance routine, like a string of lights. They dance for a short routine then all sing the song.)

Song Three – Starlight Fairy lights

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Twinkling in the cold night air
To guide you on your way.

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Twinkle, twinkle little star
To guide you on your way.

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Calling you to follow me
We'll guide you on your way.
Guide you on your way.
Guide you on your way.

Light 1: Twinkle, twinkle, little star

Light 2: Way up in the sky tonight

Light 3: Twinkle, twinkle, little star

Light 4: Shining with your light so bright.
Light 5: Twinkle, twinkle, pretty star
Light 6: Guide shepherds on their way
Light 7: Twinkle, twinkle, pretty star
Light 8: Above the place where Jesus lay.
Light 1: My name is Orion.
Light 2: And I am Virgo
Light 3 & 4: We are the Gemini twins.
Light 5: We light up the sky at night.
Light 6: We guide people on their journeys.
Light 7: We turn night into day.
Light 8: I don't like being a star.
Light 1: Pardon?
Light 2: What do you mean, you don't like being a star?
Light 8: I'm afraid of the dark!

Song Four - Starlight Reprise
Fairy lights

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Twinkling in the cold night air
To guide you on your way.

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Twinkle, twinkle little star
To guide you on your way.

Way up in the sky tonight
See our starlight shining bright
Calling you to follow me
We'll guide you on your way.
Guide you on your way.
Guide you on your way.

(After the song the lights exit, except for one who moves about the stage. A group of shepherds enter.)

Shepherd 1: The sky is very bright tonight.

Shepherd 2: It's all these stars.
 Shepherd 3: Look that one is moving. Let's follow it.
 Shepherd 1: It looks like it's shining over Bethlehem.
 Shepherd 2: Let's hurry down there and see why.
 Shepherd 3: What about our sheep?
 Shepherds 1&2: Never mind them! Come on!
 Shepherd 3: I'll bring this young lamb with me. I can't leave him here.

(The three Shepherds exit, Shepherd 3 carrying a small lamb.)

Hannah: I want to draw a donkey.
 John: Why a donkey?
 Jenny: Why not? A donkey carried Mary to Bethlehem.
 Richard: You can't have a donkey on a birthday card.
 Alice: A Christmas card is a sort of birthday card, isn't it?
 Paul: It's a card for Jesus's birthday
 Jenny: You have donkeys on Christmas cards.
 Richard: I suppose so.
 Hannah: A donkey carried Mary all the way to Bethlehem, didn't it?
 John: Why didn't they catch a bus?
 Hannah: Buses hadn't been made then.
 Paul: What did they do then?
 Hannah: They walked.
 Richard: I hate walking. Mum makes me walk to school every morning.
 Jenny: Why did they walk to Bethlehem?
 Alice: They had to do the register.
 Hannah: ***(Busily drawing throughout this conversation)*** Do donkey's ears stick up, or flop down?
 John: Up!
 Richard: ***(At the same time)*** Down!

Hannah: I wish they'd gone by bike, I can draw one of them! ***(She screws up the piece of paper and throws it away)***

(At this moment the lights fade on this scene and come up on a procession, perhaps through the auditorium [hall]. It is a couple of casual groups of weary travellers including a donkey with Mary and Joseph. They are on their way to Bethlehem for the census.)

Traveller 1: Nearly there, now.

Traveller 2: Not far.

Traveller 3: I hope I can get a drink. I'm thirsty.

Traveller 4: It's the dusty road that makes you dry.

Mary: I can't go on, Joseph. I'm really tired.

Joseph: Hold on, Mary. It's not far now.

Mary: I hope so.

***Song Five Travellers' Song
Travellers, Mary & Joseph***

Travellers 1: We have travelled from distant lands
Including Walked so far, we're very tired
Mary & Joseph Across the desert of drifting sands
From miles and miles away
From miles and miles away

Travellers 2: Keep on plodding down the road
Through the day and through the night
Keep on plodding all day long
Bethlehem's in sight.
Bethlehem's in sight.

(Instrumental section during which the children plod around the stage)

Travellers 1: We have travelled from distant lands
Including Walked so far, we're very tired
Mary & Joseph Across the desert of drifting sands
From miles and miles away
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Travellers 2: Keep on plodding down the road
Through the day and through the night
Keep on plodding all day long
Bethlehem's in sight.
Bethlehem's in sight.

(Instrumental section during which the children plod around the stage)

All: Keep on plodding down the road
 Through the day and through the night
 Keep on plodding all day long
 Bethlehem's in sight.
 Bethlehem's in sight.
 Bethlehem's in sight.

(They sing the song as they arrive at the stage. After the song Joseph goes to one side of the stage and knocks on an imaginary door. Enter an Innkeeper.)

Joseph: Have you any room at your inn for us?

Innkeeper 1: I'm sorry, we're full up.

(Joseph crosses the stage and knocks on another imaginary door. Enter another Innkeeper.)

Joseph: Do you have any room at your inn for us?

Innkeeper 2: I'm sorry, I don't. ***(Joseph goes to move away.)*** No, wait! If you don't mind sharing with my ox and my donkey, you can rest in the stable for tonight.

Mary: Oh, yes please! I'm so tired.

Joseph: Are you sure, Mary?

Mary: Yes, Joseph. I couldn't walk another step further.

(The group then move to another part of the stage where a manger has been set. The lights come up on the group of four children.)

Hannah: ***(Looking up from the piece of paper in front of her.)***
 That's better, isn't it?

Alice: ***(Looking at what she has drawn)*** That's good, Hannah.
 That looks just like the donkey that carried Mary.

John: Stick it on the card then.

(She does so)

Jenny: That's where baby Jesus was born isn't it?

Richard: Where?

Paul: In a stable, behind the inn.

Richard: What's next?

Jenny: Crackers!

Richard: Same to you!

Jenny: No, Christmas crackers. We've got to have some crackers.
John: Why?
Alice: Crackers have presents inside.
Paul: You always give presents on someone's birthday.
Hannah: The Wisemen took presents to Jesus in the stable.
Richard: And the shepherds gave a lamb as a present.
John: Come on then, let's draw some crackers.

(The christmas crackers enter and carry some little presents. They also have pieces of paper with jokes on them, such as those found in crackers.)

Cracker 1: Why does Father Christmas have a garden?
Cracker 2: I don't know. Why does Father Christmas have a garden?
Cracker 1: Because he likes to hoe, hoe, hoe! ***(The other crackers groan)***
Cracker 3: What did Mother Christmas say to Father Christmas on Christmas Eve?
Cracker 4: I don't know. What did Mother Christmas say to Father Christmas on Christmas Eve?
Cracker 3: You'd better wrap up. It looks like rain dear *(reindeer)*. ***(If the joke is missed, Cracker 3 could make a laboured attempt to explain it with appropriate hand signs for rain falling and deer's antlers)***.

Song Six – Crackers
Christmas crackers

We're crackers, we're mad, we go off with a pop
We're full of daft jokes so the laughing won't stop.
Our gifts are quite useless, and so are our rhymes
But ev'ryone loves us...
Yes ev'ryone loves us...
Ev'ryone loves us - to go BANG!

At Christmas of course, we're a must with your lunch
Just pull on the tab and we'll pack quite a punch
When no-one expects it, we make them all jump
But ev'ryone loves us...
Yes ev'ryone loves us...
Ev'ryone loves us - to go BANG!

When birthdays arrive, and the party's full swing
With jelly, then cake full of candles and things
Mum brings out the crackers, and hands us all round
Cos' ev'ryone loves us
Yes, ev'ryone loves us
Ev'ryone loves us - to go BANG!

Cracker 2: What do you call an elephant wearing pink earmuffs and a dress?

Cracker 1: I don't know. What do you call an elephant that's wearing pink earmuffs and a dress?

Cracker 2: Anything you like 'cos he can't hear you. **(More groans)**

Cracker 4: What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Cracker 3: I don't know. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Cracker 4: Tinsillitis! **(They all laugh)**

(The Crackers giggle as they go off and the kings enter to a royal fanfare.)

King 1: See, the star rests over that stable.

King 2: That must be where the new king has been born.

King 3: Let us take our gifts to him now.

(They present their gifts at the crib and the shepherds enter and also move to the crib. Shepherd 3 presents the baby lamb. All of the children join with the kings and shepherds to sing the next song.)

***Song Seven – Crib Song
Children, Kings & Shepherds***

Christmas time in the stable
See the baby lying there
In a manger for His cradle
Little babe asleep in the hay
Jesus, Lord has been born
Jesus, Lord has been born.

Christmas time in the stable
Ox and donkey by His side
Kings and shepherds kneel by the cradle
Bearing gifts to give to this child
Jesus, Lord has been born
Jesus, Lord has been born.

Christmas time in the stable
Angels sing and church bells ring
Praise and glory, sing hallelujah
Let the whole world hear the glad news
Jesus, Lord has been born
Jesus, Lord has been born.

(After the song, the lights fade on the crib scene and come up on the children making the card.)

Hannah: Did they have a party when Jesus was born?

Richard: I bet they did.

Jenny: We always have a birthday party.

Alice: Shall we have a birthday party to celebrate Jesus' birthday?

John: We always do. It's called Christmas Day.

The Others: Oh, yes!

Jenny: Let's write invitations to everyone in class. They can all come to the party.

Richard: I haven't finished doing this card yet!

Alice: What shall we write on the card?

John: How about Happy Birthday Jesus!