

Street Nativity



This Christmas celebration is designed to involve the whole community, whether village or small town. People of all ages can act out the Christmas story or participate by accompanying the characters to the different places.

Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem would have taken place among noise and bustle. The shops and markets would be open and the craftsmen at work. The Street Nativity should take place on Saturday morning or afternoon when the centre of the community is busy, with people shopping, etc. This should mean that the message of the Church and its important festival is brought out to the people.

The main characters of the story are: Mary, Joseph, donkey, inn keeper, Angel Gabriel, shepherds, wise men.

The story could start at the church or chapel with Mary and Joseph setting off on their journey. If possible, use a donkey which adds excitement and interest for the children. Position the other characters at suitable places on the way, such as:

- the Angel Gabriel on top of a building with a flat roof
- the shepherds in the local park
- the wise men at the opposite corner of the park
- the inn keeper at the local pub

Shopkeepers should also be involved and bystanders follow the characters to the next stage of the story. The story can be expanded or reduced according to how great the community participation is. It is good to start in a simple way and expand further the following year. Prayers can be written to meet the needs of local people. Carols may be sung and the closing blessing was given by a local minister at the pub.

Coffee and mince pies can always be served back at the church or chapel, or else the Nativity can end in the local club or community centre.

Many of the bystanders would not go to church even at Christmas but will receive the message of the birth of Jesus where they are. Children should be able to relate what they see to what they have been told in school, even if they have never been to church themselves.

This is one of the rare occasions when dressing up for an adult Nativity works. The colour and traditional robes add to the drama, particularly if you manage to get a donkey. It's also useful, if the street is crowded, for the actors to be easily recognised.

By the way, do remember to get permission from the Council and police!

Taken from Seasonal Worship from the Countryside