

# ANGEL ON A STEPLADDER

*By Alberta Hawse*

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## **STORY**

Donnie, an ingenious young boy, is determined his father is going to develop faith even if he has to impersonate Gabriel. He might have a dirty robe and a crooked halo but somehow he gets his point across. Very skillfully blended into this play is a short, sacred pageant.

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(3 m, 3 w, extras)*

### **IN THE PLAY**

**ROBERT CURTIS:** A typical father about 40 years old. He is a good guy but never became a Christian.

**EVELYN CURTIS:** His wife. A typical Christian mother.

**LINDA CURTIS:** Their 18-20 year old daughter.

**DONNIE CURTIS:** Their 10-12 year old son.

**PASTOR JOHN:** A young assistant minister with a call to home missionary work.

**BETTY:** Linda's girlfriend.

### **IN THE PAGEANT**

**NARRATOR:** A good reader.

**JOSEPH:** Dressed in biblical robe, has black robe.

**MARY:** In biblical clothes.

**ZACHARIAS:** In priestly garments with white or gray beard.

**SIMEON:** An old man in biblical clothes with white or gray beard.

**ANNA:** An old woman in biblical clothes.

**GABRIEL:** The Angel.

**SHEPHERDS:** Two or more. Donnie is one.

*(NOTE: Some parts of this play can be doubled but it will make a smoother performance if all parts are filled. Betty, however, should appear somewhere in the pageant.)*

**PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 15 minutes.

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**SYNOPSIS**

**ACT I:** A few days before Christmas, early evening.

**ACT II:** Biblical pageant. (*No curtain between 4 scenes.*)

**ACT III:** The next day after Act I, early evening.

**SET DESIGN:** Stage setting for modern living room, pictures, candles, plants, etc. Decorated for Christmas. (*With lights on in Act III only.*)

**PROPS:** Stepladder; sewing box and extra pins; box of tinsel; floppy angel costume with halo for Donnie; military-like costume for Gabriel; newspaper; small false beard; an overly long shepherd's robe for Donnie; a few "costumes" hanging on a rack; a folded sash on a table; incense burner; a "wrapped" baby; Bible.

**NOTE:** There should be two exits for the play proper. The left exit leads to the kitchen and other parts of the house. The right exit leads to outside entrance. In the pageant both exits should be used.

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PROLOGUE TO ACT I**

*(DONNIE, wearing a long robe, speaks in front of closed curtain.)*

I'm never going to forget this Christmas. You see, we're just an ordinary family at our house - Mom and Dad and Linda and me. But a couple of days ago Sis was pretty unhappy. She's been dead in love with the young preacher at our church. He's an assistant to old Reverend Martin.

Anyhow, Pastor John said he was going to leave the church after Christmas and start a little mission of his own on the other side of town - that's not a very good section, Dad says.

Dad's a good guy, but to tell the truth we were all pretty worried about him because he just didn't understand about Pastor John's mission. Come right down to it, Dad didn't even understand about Christmas.

But anyhow, here's the way the whole thing started. We were all busy getting ready for the church play. I was in it and Dad was the prompter - that's the fellow who tells you what to say when you forget. Mom and Linda made all the costumes.

Well, this day Linda was fixing the hem in my shepherd's robe so I wouldn't fall flat on my face when I came to see the Baby. I was up on the stepladder ... but wait ... I'll show you ...

*(Slips behind curtain. CURTAIN opens to show DONNIE on stepladder CS, and LINDA pinning up the robe.)*

**ACT I**

*(AT RISE: DONNIE is on stepladder. LINDA is kneeling, pinning up his hem. Bright biblical costumes are scattered about stage. Sewing box is on hassock or chair. Angel costume is in prominent view as well as the lopsided halo. The room should look like any home where Christmas is just around the corner. The time is early evening, before dinner.)*

DONNIE: *(Holds a false beard to his chin as HE speaks.)*  
Linda, is Dad going to wear one of these things for the Christmas play?

LINDA: I think so, Donnie. He's the prompter, but he'll be in costume the same as the other men. If anything happens to Joseph or Simeon, Dad can fill in. I think he knows the Christmas story by heart!

DONNIE: *(Shakes head.)* I don't think you mean by heart. *(LINDA looks up.)* It's more like the way he'll put this on. *(HE tries to make the beard stay on.)*

LINDA: *(Halting HER work.)* Now just what do you mean by that?

DONNIE: Well, Dad's helping to tell the Christmas story all right but he doesn't really believe it. Not here. *(Puts hand on heart.)*

LINDA: Now, Donnie ...

DONNIE: You know he doesn't! My Sunday School teacher said if anyone is a real Christian, his family is the first to know it.

LINDA: Dad would be hurt if he heard you say that.

DONNIE: Oh, Dad's a good guy, Linda - but he's got so much to learn. He doesn't believe like any of the Bible people in the play. Even Joseph believes that Jesus had to come to save him from his sins.

LINDA: *(Thoughtfully.)* I know ...

DONNIE: Zaccheus knew He was going to be the Savior.

LINDA: You mean Zacharias, the priest. Zaccheus climbed the sycamore.

DONNIE: Mary did, too ... believe, I mean.

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LINDA: You must remember, Donnie, that an angel appeared to Joseph and to Zacharias and Mary, too. Maybe they wouldn't have believed if just ordinary people told them something.

DONNIE: I didn't need an angel. It's all there in the Bible. *(Motions to Bible on end table.)* God doesn't lie.

LINDA: Maybe something will happen someday to make Dad see that Jesus came to save him, too.

DONNIE: Wouldn't it be funny if when Gabriel comes on stage to talk to Mary and the others, it wouldn't be someone just dressed up ... but a REAL angel! I'd like to know what Dad would do if he really SAW an angel! *(Fidgets a little and looks up as though seeing an angel HIMSELF.)*

LINDA: I imagine Gabriel's too busy to bother. Now hold still or I'm going to stick you ...

DONNIE: *(Jumps.)* OUCH! What d'ya mean GOING to ... *(HE pretends to be desperately wounded. LINDA helps him down the ladder.)*

LINDA: Softy! You'll have to be a lot tougher than that if you're going to be a missionary like you say. That might have been a poisoned blow dart. *(SHE pretends to blow a dart at DONNIE.)*

DONNIE: *(Grabs shoulder as though wounded.)* Yipes! *(THEY laugh and then DONNIE becomes very serious.)* You could be a missionary right now, Linda, if you'd marry Pastor John and go with him when he starts his mission in that store building.

LINDA: Donnie, I don't want to go into that. I don't think I'd be a very good daughter if I married someone Dad doesn't want me to. If I wait, Dad will change his mind. He just has to. *(LINDA tries to sound sure of herself but falls a little flat.)*

DONNIE: I sure don't see why Dad is so dead set against Pastor John starting that mission.

LINDA: Dad just doesn't understand John's love for the kind of people that seem to need spiritual help the most.

DONNIE: I hope he gets what he wants. And you too. I like him. He's a real preacher, but he's no sourpuss.

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