Three Nativity Plays for Christmas

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

As “The Reluctant Shepherd,” ten-year-old Toby invents numerous excuses to keep from participating in the live nativity at his church. Later, standing on the cold hillside under the sparkling stars, Toby and the other shepherds bring the true meaning of Christmas to life for passing motorists. A well used crèche helps bring calm to the chaos as two exuberant children decorate for Christmas without adult supervision. The nativity figures, though scratched and broken, can be used, “One More Time,” as a busy working mother and her two quarrelsome children retell the story of Jesus’ birth. In “A Homemade Christmas Eve,” a recovering cancer patient tries to organize her large, unruly family into a live nativity. Battling her uncertain health and a disagreeable daughter-in-law, Eileen persists in creating a memorable evening in the barn for all involved. Three delightful plays with heartwarming messages for that most wonderful time of the year. Can be produced separately or as an evening of entertainment.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE RELUCTANT SHEPHERD
MOTHER: Toby's mother.
TOBY: A boy about 9 or 10.
SHEPHERD 1: Older youth or adult.
SHEPHERD 2: About 12 or 13.
SHEPHERD 3: Older youth or adult.
SHEPHERD: Older youth or adult.
ANGELS: Any number.

ONE MORE TIME
Mother
Chuck-a boy about 12 or 13
Karen-a girl about 8 or 9

A HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS EVE
Eileen-woman about 55
Kristen-woman about 25
Donna-woman about 35
Carol-woman about 35
Amy-girl about 7 or 8
Stephanie-girl about 10 or 12
Jeremy-boy about 10 or 12
Kyle-boy about 7 or 8
Tom-man about 25
Mike-man about 30-35
Ron-man about 25 or 30
David-man about 30-35

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE RELUCTANT SHEPHERD

Costumes; Contemporary dress for Mother and Toby. Traditional costumes for shepherds and angels.
Properties: plate of cookies, magazine for Toby, Christmas cards, pen, thermometer.
Setting: Scene 1-family room decorated for Christmas. Scenes 2 and 3-no special setting except several chairs arranged around room.
Lighting: In Scene 2, spotlight center stage.
Playing Time: 10-15 minutes.

Costumes: Contemporary dress.
Properties: Nativity set, boxes, assorted Christmas decorations, tissue paper, glue.
Lighting: Spotlight on finished nativity.
Playing Time: 10-15 minutes.

COSTUMES: Contemporary dress, traditional biblical costumes in Scene 6.
PROPERTIES: 2 telephones, easy chair, magazine, 2 end tables, 2 lamps, large bowl, spoon, small bookcase, large table and chairs, books, manger, doll, 3 gifts for kings, lighted star.
SETTINGS: Scenes 1, 2, 4, & 5: left-easy chair, end table with lamp, bookcase behind chair. right-large table or counter, chairs and telephone.
Scene 3: Small tables on right and left with lamps and telephones.
Scene 6: Interior of barn, manger
LIGHTING: Scene 6: spotlight shepherds, spotlight kings.
SOUND EFFECTS: telephone ringing, Scene 4-knocking
PLAYING TIME: 15-20 minutes.

THE RELUCTANT SHEPHERD

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Family room decorated for the Christmas season.)

TOBY: Aw Mom, do I really have to be a shepherd in that dumb thing at church tonight? *(Looks up from magazine.)*
MOTHER: *(Looks up from small table where she is addressing Christmas cards.)* Toby, being a part of the live nativity is not dumb.
TOBY: But Mom, it's outside and it'll be cold. *(Shivers.)*
MOTHER: Stop thinking about yourself. You'll be playing an important part in bringing the story of Christ's birth to hundreds of people.
TOBY: Yeah, sure. All those people driving by in their nice warm cars while I'm standing out there freezing my….
MOTHER: That's enough, Toby, just be sure to wear several layers of clothes. That will keep you warm. *(Looks back down at the cards.)* and wear your insulated boots, too.
TOBY: Aw, Mom, who ever heard of a shepherd wearing insulated boots!
MOTHER: It will be dark, Toby, and no one will notice. Now go find your boots. I have a few more cookies to put in the oven. *(SHE exits.)*
TOBY: Whose dumb idea was this anyway--creating the Christmas story outside so some stupid people can drive by and stare at us. Maybe if I can convince Mom that I don't feel good she won't make me go.

(TOBY goes to closet, throws boots and coat into his chair. MOTHER enters holding a small plate of cookies.)

MOTHER: Toby would you like to have a freshly, baked cookie. They're your favorite--peanut butter.

TOBY: I don't think so, Mom. *(Holds stomach.)* I feel a little hot and sick at my stomach right now.
MOTHER: *(Feeling TOBY'S head.)* Don't tell me you're coming down with something. There has been a lot of flu going around. Sit down and I'll get the thermometer.

(SHE exits. TOBY sits down heavily on a nearby chair. He hangs his head down even when his mother re-enters.)

MOTHER: *(Continued.)* Here we go. Let's just check your temperature to make sure. *(She shakes thermometer.)* Open wide. *(She puts the thermometer in Toby's mouth and keeps an eye on her watch.)* Okay, time's up. Let's see what we've got here. *(Looks at thermometer.)* Just what I thought--normal. *(Suspiciously.)* What are you trying to pull, Toby?
TOBY: Nothing Mom, honest. I really do feel kind of funny.
MOTHER: You've been worrying so much it has probably upset you stomach a little. *(Sternly.)* Don't forget, people are counting on you to show up.
TOBY: *(Whines.)* But Mom, I'm the only kid who's going to be a shepherd. I won't have anybody to talk to.
MOTHER: This isn't a party, Toby. You and the other shepherds will be standing on the hill behind the church with the sheep. The shepherds play a significant part in the Christmas story. Now get your coat on while I wrap up the cookies.

(SHE exits. TOBY is putting on his boots, coat and gloves in slow motion. He still isn't finished when she re-enters with the cookies.)

MOTHER: Did you go to the bathroom? *(Puts down cookies and puts on her own coat.)*
TOBY: Yes, Mom. *(A smile crosses his face.)* Mom, what if I have to go to the bathroom while I'm outside. We'll be there 'three hours.'
MOTHER: You take turns coming inside to get warmed up and go to the bathroom. That's why I'm taking cookies.

End of Freeview

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