

# *Joseph, Son of David*

A Short Christmas Play  
by  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Heckler Woman 1

Heckler Woman 2

Joseph

Mary

Angel

Messenger

Innkeeper

Midwife

Jesus Baby

Jesus Toddler

Jesus Child

Jesus Man

Mage 1

Mage 2

Mage 3

Abraham's Bosom crowd

## PROPS

Signs: 'Nazareth,' 'Bethlehem,' 'Egypt'

Chair, Sheet, Doll, Basket of Bread, Wooden Block for "clopping" sound

## COSTUMES

Era-appropriate for all players

(Action with props to be mimed.)

(HECKLER WOMEN are standing around JOSEPH like flies trying to bite)

1: Joseph! We came the minute we heard the news! Can you believe that girl?

2: Already pregnant! And trying to marry you!

1: Yeah. I hope you'll teach her not to try and trick you!

2: Yeah. There are laws about people like her.

1: Yeah. Like the one about stoning girls pregnant outside of marriage!

2: Are you going to have her stoned, Joseph? Huh?

(JOSEPH turns away, goes into his room and buries his face in his hands. He falls on his knees in grief and prays.)

JOSEPH: My sweet little Mary. Pretty, precious Mary. Of course, I can't marry you now. Whose child are you carrying? Oh, Mary! Who did this to you? And you won't say. Not a word. No accusations, no excuses. You're just calm.

(JOSEPH sobs, then pulls himself together)

What would you have me do, Lord? I know what the Law requires, but how can I have her stoned? I can't. I can't! You must be her judge. Not me. But if I stand up in the synagogue and call off our betrothal, no one will talk to her again. She'll be outcast. No one will provide for her. Or her baby.

(JOSEPH rocks back and forth on his knees)

Somehow, I got to protect her. Even if I can't marry her. She has friends in Jerusalem. Maybe they will help her. Oh, Mary! (grief-stricken)

(JOSEPH stands up suddenly)

That's what I'll do. In the morning, before she goes to the well for water, I'll put her on Sodom and whisk her away to Jerusalem. She has to go. Those women will make her life miserable forever if she stays here. Her life and her baby's.

(ANGEL appears)

ANGEL: Joseph.

JOSEPH: Wow! (Passes out. Falls to the ground. Lies there.)

ANGEL: Joseph, Son of David. Don't be afraid! Marry Mary. The father of her baby is the Holy Spirit himself! Mary will have a son, and YOU, Joseph, will do a father's duty for him. You will name him. Call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

JOSEPH: (waking up) Mary? Mary!

Later:

(MARY is sitting in a chair, sewing.)

MESSENGER: Hear ye! Hear ye!

(JOSEPH walks in. MARY looks up.)

MARY: What is it, husband? What is the announcement?

JOSEPH: Caesar needs more money for his wars.

MARY: Ahh. More taxes.

JOSEPH: Yes, and a census.

MARY: Ahh. Will you have to go to Bethlehem, then?

JOSEPH: Yes, of course. With several thousand other people. And Mary –

MARY: Yes?

JOSEPH: You have to come, too. I can't leave you here this close to your delivery.

Later:

(JOSEPH leading MARY talks to INNKEEPER)

INNKEEPER: Look, I told you. I'm booked for months. I've got people sleeping in The hallway. Best I can do for you is the stable up the hill. Take it or leave it. Either that or you can sleep in the street like everyone else!

Later:

(JOSEPH pacing back and forth in front of a sheet held up by two people.  
Voice from behind sheet)

MIDWIFE: It's a boy!

(JOSEPH smiles, then falls to his knees and praises God.)

Later:

(JOSEPH walks into the room where MARY is burping JESUS BABY.)

JOSEPH: It's time, Mary. Slom is ready, and you have a saddle this time. Is the baby ready?

MARY: We're both ready, thank you.

JOSEPH: I'm as nervous as I was at his circumcision!

MARY: (laughing) No knives this time! (quietly) It's good to fulfill the Law, Joseph. (gestures to the baby) And God's son must be presented in God's Temple.

Later:

(JOSEPH peeking out the window. MARY in chair, JESUS TODDLER standing beside)

JOSEPH: Magi? In Bethlehem? This is just like his Presentation in the Temple, Mary! God informed his people of his coming in advance!

MARY: Many nations are coming into his kingdom, Joseph! Many nations!

JOSEPH: (to MAGI walking in door) You are welcome here, sirs.

MAGI: (cheering, "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" fall to floor, worship JESUS TODDLER)

Later:

(JOSEPH is cleaning up and putting gifts away)

ANGEL: Joseph.

JOSEPH: Wow! (falls to the floor in faint)

ANGEL: Get up! Take the child and his mother and run! Go to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you. The king, Herod, is this minute getting ready to search for the child and kill him. Go!

JOSEPH: (struggling to his feet) Mary! Mary!

(clap-clopping of hooves trotting)

Later:

(JOSEPH digging outside home in Egypt Back to MARY as he works. MARY, nearby, gestures to her basket. JESUS CHILD is beside her.)

MARY: I'm just going up the street to Esther's, Joseph. Her baby got sick this morning, and I know she hasn't had time to bake

JOSEPH: (shovel in hand) It seems like people get sick more often here in Egypt. And Jesus is going with you?

MARY: (smiling) Yes, he's with me.

(JOSEPH turns and smiles at them, then returns to work)

ANGEL: Joseph.

JOSEPH: Wow! (falls over in faint)

ANGEL: Joseph, get up! Take the child and his mother and go back to the land of Israel. The ones who wanted the child's life are dead.

JOSEPH: (waking up) Mary? Mary?

(MARY and JESUS are holding dying JOSEPH. PLAYERS stand in Abraham's Bosom. HECKLER WOMEN act as narrators from Abraham's Bosom.)

1: Tradition tells us that Joseph died before Jesus began his ministry.

2: He lived a life of service to the Trinity, protecting the spouse and unborn baby of the Holy Spirit, acting as foster father in the place of God, the Father, and teaching God the Son, the Word of God Incarnate, to fulfill the Law.

1: When the time came to go to Abraham's Bosom, Joseph was surely cradled in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

(MARY and JESUS MAN let JOSEPH go. He walks to Abraham's Bosom)

ALL: St. Joseph, pray for us!