

# The Pop-Up Nativity: The Greatest Journey



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## Introduction

This Nativity resource is based on *The Greatest Journey* Christmas story booklet and has been made available free for any churches looking for a fun, no-hassle, Bible-based Nativity service this Christmas.

The Nativity story is full of journeys from Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem to the wise men following a star. In this year's Pop-Up Nativity, we're celebrating the greatest journey of all - Jesus arriving from heaven to earth.



## Running order

Throughout the script, there are lots of opportunities for the congregation to participate. They are all optional, but they each add to the fun and allow everyone to have a role in the Nativity.

We've written the Pop-Up Nativity to run as a full church service with carols in-between each scene. But it also works if you perform it straight through. So if you're short of time or have other things to fit into your service then feel free to skip over the interactive parts.

## Plan who does what

Although the Pop-Up Nativity requires minimal time investment there are a few things that are worth doing before hand to ensure that you're fully prepared.

You will need a Narrator; somebody who is a confident, clear reader and is good with audience interaction. Make sure they read through the script beforehand.

You also need to decide whether to split up the sections between different readers, or to keep it all to one narrator. It may also be a good idea to have a couple of people on stage who know the actions and responses to help lead the congregation.

If you are using the accompanying visuals you will need somebody to operate them who also has a script to hand and a chance to have read through beforehand so they know when to change slides.

Finally, you'll need to decide whether you get the whole congregation to say the 'everybody' bits in the script, or keep that to the narrator. You can choose whatever's easiest for you. And if you're feeling really clever, why not add in your own ideas for audience interaction?

## Dressing up

It's great to get your whole congregation to join in, and one way of doing this is by encouraging them to dress up as Nativity characters. So when you're promoting your service, make sure people know to come dressed up.

To fit with this year's journey theme why not encourage people to bring maps, a flask or maybe even a walking stick as well as traditional Nativity dress. You could even offer a prize or two to the best dressed. Make sure you advertise the dress up well in advance so that people are prepared. You could also bring some extra tinsel, tea towels and paper crowns in case a few people forget.

## Visuals

To accompany your Pop-Up Nativity, we've produced matching visuals on PowerPoint with hand-illustrated images from *The Greatest Journey* story booklet. These slides will not only look great but they also have some words on that everyone can read together. You can download it from [biblesociety.org.uk/nativityvisuals17](http://biblesociety.org.uk/nativityvisuals17)

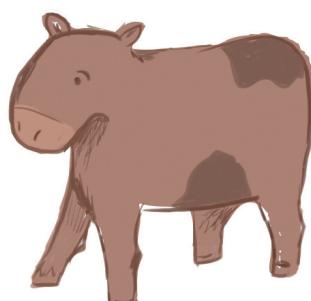
## Booklet

This Pop-Up Nativity is based on our children's story booklet, *The Greatest Journey* which is a perfect Christmas giveaway. You can order one or enough for your whole church from our website. You'll also find a short film based on the booklet there too which is available as a free download.

[biblesociety.org.uk/christmas](http://biblesociety.org.uk/christmas)

## Gifts

*The Greatest Journey* has been funded generously by donations from our supporters. As a charity our work is only possible thanks to the generosity of people like you. If you are planning to hold a collection during your service, we'd love you to consider supporting our work with refugees from Syria and Iraq. Find out more about this appeal at [biblesociety.org.uk/christmasappeal17](http://biblesociety.org.uk/christmasappeal17)



# The Greatest Journey

## Slide 1 Welcome

Narrator/Service leader

Welcome to our service! Today we will be retelling the Christmas story. And there will be a chance for everybody to get involved.

(Add your own welcome)

## Slide 2 Opening prayer

Dear God

We thank you for the chance to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. As we journey through this story, we ask that you show us once again; why this is one of the most important stories we could ever know.

Amen.

## Suggested carol – O come all ye faithful

### Introduction

#### Narrator

Today's Nativity is all about the greatest journey ever. I'll/we'll be retelling the Christmas story and we'll be going on a Christmas journey together. But I will need help from all of you.

When I say each of these words, I need you to join in with an action:

*(Practise saying these words and getting the congregation to learn the actions; these words will be highlighted throughout your script so you can give a pause and some encouragement for the congregation to join in!)*

## Slide 3



<b>Journey:</b>	Marching action and huffing and puffing
<b>Big one:</b>	Stretch your arms out as far as you can
<b>Uh-oh/Oh-no:</b>	Gasp and put your hand over your mouth
<b>Can't:</b>	Wag your finger and shake your head

*(Optional – if you have a screen) There's also some sections in this story where we all need to say the words together. They will come up on the screen, so keep your eyes peeled!*

And if you've come dressed up as a Nativity character today, don't worry, you're going to get your chance to shine and show off your outfit. When we get to your starring point in the story, I'll explain how you can join in.

**Slide 4** Ok, are we ready for our story to begin?

### The Script

**Narrator:** Now, before we do anything else, because we're going on an adventure I need to put on my walking boots.

*(Mime putting on boots)*

Do you want to put your walking boots on too? Go on then.

*(Wait for congregation to mime putting on their boots.)*

In this story, there are four special **journeys** that happened over 2,000 years ago. Mary and Joseph, the wise men and even the shepherds all travelled a long way to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Today, we're going to follow in their footsteps and travel these **journeys** too.

Right let's go...

**Slide 5**

There was a couple called Joseph and Mary.

They went on a **journey**,

All the way to Bethlehem!

**Slide 6** **Everyone:** **We're going on a journey**  
**It's going to be a big one,**

**Narrator:** All the way to Bethlehem  
'Cos Caesar wants to count us.

**Slide 7**

**Uh-oh!** Romans!

Tall, Scary Romans

**Slide 8** **Everyone:** **We can't jump over them,**  
**We can't crawl under them**

**Narrator:** **Oh no!** We'll have to walk between them!  
Stepady-step, walkedy-walk, stepady step

**Slide 9**

They went together on their **journey**,  
Soon they were going to marry.  
And they were going to be a family,  
Because Mary was having a baby!

### Suggested carol – O Little Town of Bethlehem

*Invite the Marys and Josephs to parade around the church during the carol.*

**Slide 10 Narrator:** The time came to have the baby,  
But where could Joseph and Mary stay?

**Slide 11 Everyone:** We're going on a **journey**  
**It's going to be a big one,**

**Slide 12 Narrator:** Got to find a place to stay  
'Cos Mary's having a baby.  
**Uh-oh!** no bed!  
No big, bouncy bed!

**Slide 13 Everyone:** We **can't stay in the hotel**  
**We can't stay in a spare room**

**Narrator:** **Oh no!** We'll have to sleep with animals!  
Ee-aw woof, ee-aw baah! ee-aw neigh  
(invite the congregation to make lots of animal noises)

There was no room for them in the inn.  
So Mary wrapped the baby in strips of cloth.  
And found a manger to lay him in.

### Suggested carol – Away in a manger

*Invite any animals to parade around the church during this carol.*

**Slide 14 Narrator:** An angel appeared to some shepherds.  
It happened in a field nearby.  
The angel told them about the baby.  
So they went to see with their own eyes.

**Slide 15 Everyone:** We're going on a **journey**  
**It's going to be a big one,**

**Slide 16 Narrator:** An angel came to see us  
Told us of a saviour,  
So we're going to welcome him  
We'll find him in a manger.

**Slide 17**                   **Uh-oh!** Sheep poo! Smelly, stinky poo

**Slide 18 Everyone:** We **can't fly over it**  
**We can't tip toe round it**



**Narrator:** **Oh no!** We'll have to tread on it!  
Tread-sqwelch, tread-sqwelch,  
tread-sqwelch

They rushed off to find the baby.  
And everyone was amazed!  
It was just as the angel said.  
And they gave God their praise.

**Suggested carol – While Shepherds watched their flocks by night**  
*Invite the shepherds to parade around the church during this carol.*

**Slide 19 Narrator:** Some wise men had seen a star in the sky  
And knew a king was to be born.  
So they followed the star  
They went to worship and adore.

**Slide 20 Everyone:** **We're going on a journey**  
**It's going to be a big one,**

**Narrator:** Following the shiny star  
To worship the baby King,  
We've got loads of presents  
Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense.

**Slide 21**  
**Uh-oh!** King Herod!  
Mean, nasty King Herod

**Slide 22 Everyone:** **We can't listen to Herod**  
**We can't say where Jesus is.**

**Slide 23 Narrator:** **Oh no!** We'll have to leave another way.  
Humpty-hump, clopaty-clop, humpty-hump.  
(Invite the congregation to join in with humpty-humping and clopaty-clopping!)

They found him and were filled with joy  
The wise men were so happy!  
So they were careful not to tell King Herod  
And they travelled home a different way.

**Suggested carol – We three kings**  
*Invite the Wise Men to parade around the church during this carol.*



**Slide 24 Narrator:** It's been a long **journey** for Mary and Joseph,  
it's been a long **journey** for the shepherds,  
it's been a long **journey** for the wise men!

**Slide 25 Everyone:** **We've gone on a journey**  
**But we're so glad we did,**

**Slide 26 Narrator:** We met someone special  
But who was it?  
Big brown eyes  
And big cheeks,  
10 tiny toes  
On 2 tiny feet

**Slide 27 Everyone:** **Why it's Jesus!**

**Slide 28 Narrator:** Quick – tell everyone!  
  
Going home another way  
Humpety-hump, clopaty-clop, humpaty-hump.  
  
Back through the sheep poo  
Tread-sqwelch, tread-sqwelch, tread-sqwelch.

**Slide 29**  
Saying 'so long' to the animals  
Ee-aw woof, ee-aw baah! ee-aw neigh.  
  
Mind the Romans  
Stepady-step, walkedy-walk, stepady step  
  
(*Say slower with more emphasis on the words*)  
And finally we're home!

**Slide 30**  
You know,  
Jesus went on a **journey**  
It really was the **BIGGEST one**,  
All the way from Heaven  
'Cos he came to save us,  
He came to live on earth with us  
'Cos he loves us very much.

**Slide 31**  
He came to live on earth with us  
'Cos he loves us very much.

Slide 32

He was a child and had to learn things just as we do,  
only he never did anything wrong!

Slide 33

When he grew up he did amazing things.

He did many miracles and taught the people about God.

Slide 34

He even brought people back from the dead.

Only God can do that!

Slide 35

And then he was put to death on a cross.

He did it because he loved us,  
and to save us from our sins.

Slide 36

But he didn't stay dead.

Now Jesus is alive again!

His story hasn't ended!

Slide 37

Jesus came on a **journey**.

It really is the greatest one!

Slide 38

# THE END



## Extra bits

### Narrator/Service leader

You've now got to the end of the script. You could either end your Nativity service here, or carry on with something else - we've come up with some suggestions to help here:

- A short talk on the meaning of Christmas
- Prayers for people here at home and around the world this Christmastime.
- Share more about the work of Bible Society using the resources on our website or hold a collection for Bible work around the world - check out [biblesociety.org.uk/christmasappeal17](http://biblesociety.org.uk/christmasappeal17).

## Conclusion

### Narrator/Service leader

Thank you everybody for coming to today's service. I really hope you enjoyed following in the footsteps of the greatest journey ever!

*(Space for you to tell people about other Christmas activities you've got going on/other notices...)*

## Closing prayer

Dear God

Thank you that you sent your son on a journey from heaven to earth to show your love for us, so that we could be friends with you. Thank you that his message of hope, joy and peace is for all people.

We pray that you will help people to know your hope, joy and peace this Christmas, particularly those in need.

Amen.

## End

Thank you for taking part in the Pop-Up Nativity 2017!  
We really hope you enjoyed your service.  
Check out more resources for you and  
your church at: [biblesociety.org.uk/resources](http://biblesociety.org.uk/resources)

Or if you'd like more Christmas materials  
check out: [biblesociety.org.uk/christmas](http://biblesociety.org.uk/christmas)



At Bible Society we believe the Bible can be a catalyst for change for good around the world. Working across Africa, China and the Middle East – in places where Christianity is growing fastest – we're translating, distributing and helping people to relate and make sense of the Bible. And we're advocating for its place in society so that its wisdom, inspiration and relevance are not lost.

Here at home, where the Bible is readily available but rarely read, we're introducing a new generation to the life changing stories it contains and helping people engage with it better so that the Bible will continue to shape our communities.

We were founded over 200 years ago by a passionate group of people who believed God's word should be shared across the world, and we've been sustained by the commitment of thousands of supporters – people like you – who've joined our mission to bring the Bible to life.

Everything we do is driven by one conviction: that when people engage with the Bible lives can change, for good. So if the Bible has made a difference to your life, please join with us through prayer and support to bring the Bible to life around the world.

[biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk)

