

NATIVITY  
ASSEMBLY

# IT BEGINS IN BETHLEHEM

Open the Book  
Nativity Assembly



## Storytellers

### needed

**Essential:**

Narrator, Mary, Angel, Joseph, Shepherds, Star Watchers from the East, Herod

## Suggestions for presenting the story

1. This rhyming story is longer than most Open the Book stories as a special one-off for Christmas. You may want to mention this to your school/s. The story can be presented in school, face to face with the children taking part. But if you are recording your assembly together as a team or separately on Zoom, it can also be done quite easily.
2. Because there are five short acts in *It Begins in Bethlehem*, storytellers can easily double up on parts if needed.
  - Act 1: Mary and the Angel
  - Act 2: Joseph and the Angel
  - Act 3: Shepherds and the Angel(s)
  - Act 4: Star Watchers from the East, Herod, Mary, Joseph, Jesus
  - Act 5: Closing summation
3. The narrator is active throughout the story but characters can speak their lines by either memorising them or reading them. As this is a rhyming story, practising the story aloud several times beforehand will help with the rhythm and flow.
4. To include the children, wherever they may be watching this assembly, you can make signs of some of the words in the story to hold up for the children to read out in unison. The narrator can pause in the story and someone can hold up the sign when it is time for the children to say the words shown. You may want to give the children a practice before you begin the story. If you are recording the story, team members off camera can shout the words out like the children will. Some suggestions for words you may want to include are:
  - He's amazing! (pages 5, 6)
  - Bethlehem (pages 11, 12, 14, 17)
  - One hump, two humps (pages 15, 18)

## Questions or other ideas

If you have questions or other ideas on how to present It Begins in Bethlehem, please get in touch. We will add ideas to our Facebook page and our website as they come in.

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[www.openthebook.net](http://www.openthebook.net)

**Merry Christmas! We hope you and the children enjoy this fun Christmas story written by Bob Hartman.**

## Introduction

Today we are going to tell you the Christmas Story – but not in the way you may have heard it before. Today's story is a rhyming story. You know what a rhyme is, right? Like, what rhymes with mat? (*take answers*) What rhymes with book? (*take answers*)

Well, today's story is a nativity **rhyme** for Christmastime. Ahhh, see what I did there? A nativity **rhyme** for Christmastime. It rhymes! (*repeat with the children*)

Now there are a lot of different scenes in this Open the Book story and there are lots of people involved. As you'll see, God involved a lot of people in Jesus coming to earth. As you listen and watch, see if you can keep track of all the people involved in the story.

**LET'S OPEN THE BOOK** and read, *It begins in Bethlehem* – a nativity **rhyme** for ... (*pause for children to complete*) ... **Christmastime**.

## Conclusion

Wow! What a wonderful story! Did you see all of those people that God spoke to through his special messengers – angels – to tell them to get ready for Jesus' coming? (*Ask children to name the people in the story. Maybe have the characters wave if they miss any.*)

The story of Jesus' birth is full of people, ordinary people, who were just going along, living their ordinary lives ... when God asked each of them to do something that was unexpected and difficult. Any one of those people could have said no to God, and not done their part. But they didn't say no. They said yes.

## Quiet moment for reflection

Let's close our eyes and think about a time we were asked to do something that we didn't want to do. Maybe you were asked to help a family member clean up a mess you didn't make; or go visiting with your family when you really wanted to play with your friends; or be kind to someone who didn't have any friends?

## Prayer introduction

Now, I'm going to say a prayer. If you agree with my prayer, you may say 'Amen' at the end. It is a way of saying to God, 'I agree' – that you want my prayer to be your prayer too. But you don't have to pray. If you don't want to, or you don't think you should, it is perfectly acceptable to sit quietly and think about what you have heard.

## Prayer

Dear God, thank you for all the people who said yes to you so that Jesus could come into the world. Help me to say yes to difficult and unexpected things that come along in my life. Help me do the right thing, even if it isn't easy.





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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.

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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.



**Find more resources to help you share the big story this Christmas at [biblesociety.org.uk/christmas](https://biblesociety.org.uk/christmas)**