



The Shepherds Find Peace

Christmas Play

Characters

9 shepherds	Joseph
4 citizens of Bethlehem	Mary
2 manger salespersons	Angel
2 stablekeepers	Heavenly host (any number of small children)

Props

- Appropriate costumes for all characters
- Shepherd's staff
- Manger filled with hay
- Baby doll wrapped in cloth
- Seats for Mary and Joseph
- Sign that reads "Mangers-R-Us"
- Sign that reads "Abel's Stables"

Instructions for the director

This Christmas play may be adapted to fit the needs and number of children in your program. All of the parts (except for Joseph and Mary) may be combined into fewer parts or split into more parts. The gender of the characters does not matter, except for Joseph and Mary. The shepherds and the citizens generally speak in the same order, so the children can better remember when it is their turn to speak. The heavenly host may be played by a group of small children. The angel's lines are a direct quote from Luke 2:10-12 (NIV).

SCENE ONE—The Shepherds' Field

(Manger containing baby doll is stage right, with seats for Mary and Joseph behind it. Shepherds 1-9 enter stage left. Shepherds may remember their cues more easily if they are standing in a rough line, numbers 1-9, from left to right. Shepherd #1 holds out the staff for imaginary sheep to pass under.)

Shepherd #1: 151, 152, 153! Okay, 153 sheep. That's all of them. Time to hit the sack!

Shepherd #2: I've got last watch!

Shepherd #3: No way! You *always* get last watch!

Shepherd #2: Do not!

Shepherd #3: Do too!

Shepherd #4: Knock it off, knock it off! We'll decide by the staff who gets last watch.

(Shepherds gather in semicircle around Shepherd #1, who holds staff from bottom. Other shepherds grab staff, one fist above the other, as if choosing a baseball team captain. Shepherd #5 is last to grab staff, putting his hand on top. Shepherd #5 then takes staff.)

Shepherd #5: All *right!* I won! I get last watch! I choose *them* (*points to or puts hand on Shepherds 4 and 6*) as my partners.

Shepherd #6: And we get to decide who takes the other watches. You three (*points to or puts hand on Shepherds 1, 2, and 3*) take second watch, and you three (*points to or puts hand on Shepherds 7, 8, and 9*) take first watch.

Shepherd #7: (*pointing to Shepherd #8*) I have to take first watch with this thief? He's (or she's) the one who stole my money bag!

Shepherd #8: Did not!

Shepherd #7: Did too!

Shepherd #9: If you ask me, you're *all* a bunch of thieves! No one can trust a shepherd. I'm ashamed to be working as one myself. As soon as I earn enough money to move to Jerusalem, I'm outa here!

Shepherd #1: And good riddance!

Shepherd #2: Hey! Could we have some peace and quiet? I want to get some sleep before my watch!

Shepherd #3: Forget it! There will never be any peace in this bunch of shepherds!

(Shepherd #5 gives staff to Shepherd #9. Shepherds lie down at back of stage and pretend to sleep, except for Shepherds 7, 8, 9, who stand in front of sleeping shepherds, facing the front. Angel enters and stands stage left, facing stage right. The heavenly host enter stage left or right, stand center stage, and face audience. As angel begins to speak, sleeping shepherds awake. All shepherds act afraid.)

Angel: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Heavenly host: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth!

(Angel and heavenly host exit. Shepherds stand staring into space, not knowing what to say. Finally, Shepherd #4 speaks.)

Shepherd #4: Wh-what was that!

Shepherd #5: What do you mean, "What was that?" That was a bunch of angels! A bunch of *angels* spoke to us!

Shepherd #6: But we're still alive! If a bunch of angels appear, aren't they supposed to strike somebody dead or something?

Shepherd #7: Na-a-ah! Didn't you guys listen? They said the Christ has been born, the Savior. Why would they tell us about the Savior, and then strike us dead?

Shepherd #8: Yeah, the Christ will be a king who brings peace, not fighting and killing.

Shepherd #9: What I don't get is the part about the manger. The angel said the baby would be lying in a manger. Why would a king be lying in a dirty manger?

Shepherd #1: I don't know. But I do know something incredible just happened to us! Let's go down to Bethlehem right now!

Shepherd #2: Yeah, yeah, let's go to Bethlehem and see this baby king!

Shepherd #3: But doesn't someone need to stay here with the sheep?

Shepherd #9: I will. You all go to Bethlehem and look for the baby. I'll stay here and guard the sheep.

(Shepherds 1-8 exit stage left; shepherd #9 remains and moves to center stage.)

Shepherd #9: *(shaking head)* Peace on earth. I wonder how a little baby could ever bring peace to anyone, much less a bunch of shepherds like us. *(Exits stage right.)*