

The Shepherd's Story: A Children's Play

by Jimmy Dunne

A note from the author...

The Shepherd's Story is a new children's book that tells the emotional story of the night of the nativity—from the Shepherd's point of view.

It's the story of a down-on-his-luck young shepherd boy who finds the purpose and wonder of life by witnessing the birth of a child, Jesus of Nazareth. He sees how one child has the possibility to make an extraordinary difference in the world.

This play can be staged in many, many ways—from using JPGs/PDFs of the beautiful illustrated images from the book as scene backdrops on a large TV monitor—to creating your own versions of creative sets.

The costuming of the children creates memories that last a lifetime.

There are 13 speaking parts; depending on your needs—please shape the story to accommodate your desired cast size.

Please let us know how it worked out—and send lots of pictures! Enjoy!

Jimmy Dunne

CAST

There are 17 speaking parts in this play, but the roles can always be adapted based on the number of participants.

For example, the lines for Sheep 3 and Sheep 4 could be given to Sheep 1 and 2; the lines of Angel 2 and Angel 3 could be given to Angel 1, etc.

The stars in parentheses behind each role indicates how large of a speaking part that character has.

Please create your own story and vision of the play!

Narrator (*****)
Shepherd (*****)
Happy (the Shepherd's loyal dog) (*****)
Mom and Dad (*)
Two Kids (*)
Sheep 1 (*)
Sheep 2 (*)
Sheep 3 (*)
Sheep 4
Angel 1 (*)
Angel 2 (*)
Angel 3 (*)
Mary (****)
Joseph (****)
Donkey (*)
Cow and other animals (optional, non-speaking role)

Based on *The Shepherd's Story* by Jimmy Dunne, available from Loyola Press.

A CHILD NARRATOR walks on the stage –greeting the audience...

NARRATOR

“’Twas the very first Christmas, when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse!” Who knows that story?

Well, here’s *another* Christmas story –that nobody’s told until *now*.

The story of the Shepherd. He’s 16, a great guy... A part of the biggest story in the history of the world.

What’s the deal? He doesn’t even have a *name*! Everybody *else* has a name. It’s time people knew who the Shepherd was...

Well, sit back, imagine 2,000 years ago –on a mountaintop late one night. A very, very special night...

A field in the hills of Judea, very late in the evening.

The SHEPHERD is snoozing against a tree.
His loyal dog, HAPPY, is also napping at his side.

A handful of SHEEP are nearby.

HAPPY

’Twas the very first Christmas, when all through the hills,
The towns of Judea were *perfectly* still.

SHEEP 1

Us sheep were all grazing –with only one care,

SHEEP 2

Hoping the wolves would *never* be there!

A family is asleep in their home...

MOM & DAD

The Judeans were nestled all snug in their beds,

TWO KIDS

while visions of sweet figs danced in our heads!

SHEPHERD

I lay in the grass with my crook in my lap,
and settled my brains for a quick little nap.

The SHEPHERD pets a few of the sheep:
you can tell he's down in the dumps.
HAPPY feels sorry for him.

SHEPHERD

All alone with those sheep, night after night,
I'd get sad when I just couldn't see any light.

A 'shepherd' is not what I thought I would be,
I just couldn't see any future for me.

A sound of beautiful music...

HAPPY

When over the meadow there 'rose such a clatter,

They both hop up.

HAPPY

We sprang from the grass to see what was the matter!

A bright light in the distance; they're excited.

SHEPHERD

Next thing we knew, we saw a bright flash,
so we *bolted* from there in a hundred-yard dash.

The SHEPHERD and HAPPY 'run in place.'
They stop when they see something...
An ANGEL enters with her arms out!

SHEPHERD

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
a beautiful angel saying, "Nothing to fear..."

ANGEL 1

"Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy.
In the City of David, born is a boy."

HAPPY is nervous seeing the ANGELS.
The other ANGELS appear...

SHEPHERD

(to Happy)
Are *you* seeing what *I'm* seeing?

ANGEL 2

The Savior, Messiah, our Lord has been born.
This day will forever be called "Christmas morn!"

ANGEL 3

Go now, don't worry. The sheep aren't in danger.

SHEEP 1

(to the other sheep out of the side of his mouth)
Easy for her to say...

ANGEL 3

Go find the babe sound asleep in a manger.

SHEPHERD

More angels appeared. They sang as a choir.

HAPPY

My pal was embarrassed in dusty attire.

SHEEP 1

All of us lambs —we weren't lively or quick.

SHEEP 2

Our hooves were too tiny.

SHEEP 3

And our wool was too thick.

The SHEPHERD gives his sheep a stern look...

HAPPY

He held up his crook. This wasn't a game.
He whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

SHEPHERD

"Now, Sheep 1! Now Sheep 2, Now Sheep 3 and 4!
Don't move from this hill, or I'm gonna be sore!"

SHEEP 2

(Quietly, to his other sheep pals)
Suddenly a 'star' --and talking like a big shot.

SHEEP 1

(To his sheep pals)

What do think the odds are we'll be here when he gets back?

SHEPHERD

I need to go find this new baby somehow,
I'll dash away, dash away, dash away, now!"

SHEPHERD waves to the sheep.

HAPPY

He waved to his flock, off to B-Town we hiked.
After seeing that angel -you know we were psyched!

SHEEP 3

(to the Shepherd as they're heading off)
Don't call us --we'll call you!

The sheep all have a good laugh...
The SHEPHERD and HAPPY walk more in place.
They're tired...

SHEPHERD

After six miles of walking to reach Bethlehem,
I wondered just how I would ever find them.

HAPPY

And then, in a stable, beneath a thatched roof,
We heard the light clacking of an old donkey's hoof.

MARY, JOSEPH, BABY JESUS (a doll),
a COW and other ANIMALS are revealed
in some way on the stage...

The SHEPHERD and HAPPY look inside...

SHEPHERD

As I peered inside, what did I see?
A mother and child. And a dad smiled at me.

We knew in that moment this child was the one.
The life in the room was as bright as the sun.

JOSEPH

Baby's eyes, how they twinkle! His dimples, how merry!

MARY

That big cow that's watching – a *little* too scary.

JOSEPH

And Mary, dear Mary. Just look at her smile.
Life has no moment as the birth of a child.

SHEPHERD

Two things, I must say, took me most by surprise –
The quiet in the room and the joy in their eyes.

JOSEPH

What I felt on that morning – a vision so wild,

MARY

(as she looks at Joseph)
The deep love that both of us had for our child.

MARY

Our faith gave us hope of what one child could bring –

JOSEPH

The song in that child - no choir could sing.

MARY

How blessed are we all, that one child was born,

JOSEPH

How blessed are we all on this great Christmas morn!

SHEPHERD

(speaks to the audience)
To imagine the good that one child could do –
If you've witnessed a birth, then you've felt it, too.

Today we give thanks for the wonder of life,
to the heart of a husband and the will of a wife.

MARY

To family, sweet family - a most precious word,
to the voice of a child that needs to be heard.

JOSEPH

To the hope that one child, just one child can bring,
to the melody nature continues to sing.

As the SHEPHERD and HAPPY head on their way...

DONKEY

He spoke not a word, but went straight on his way,
To share the great news that he saw on that day.

The SHEPHERD takes a moment, looking up...

SHEPHERD

As I walked back that night, I stared up at the stars
And thought about how --truly blessed we all are.

The SHEPHERD gets on his knees.

The ENTIRE CAST gathers around the SHEPHERD –
looking at the audience.

ENTIRE CAST

He got down on his knees to the wonder of life,
“Merry Christmas to all – and to all a good night!”