

Good News: for a Weary World  
By Rachel Benjamin

What: Despite what the headlines have told us this past year, there is Good News. Christ came to us in the midst of our desperation. He is the hope for our lost and dying world. A weary world can rejoice, because it's Savior, *it's Rescuer*, has come. Theme: Christmas, Hope, Emmanuel, Rescuer, Weary World, Birth of the Messiah

Who: News Desk Anchor, Reporter, Vocalists 1-5 (at least one girl and one boy)

When: 2017

Wear: Scrim, Light, Manger, News Desk, Mic for Reporter, Papers, and Clipboard

How:

Memorization

Although the actors should be very comfortable with their lines, it would make sense for both the Reporter and the Anchor to be reading off sheets of paper. Feel free to allow them to have the scripts on stage with them. The Reporter can use a clipboard.

Cast Size

Ideally, 5 vocalists could portray a manger scene behind a black scrim. HOWEVER, this skit *can* be done with simply one vocalist.

One vocalist: Simply have the one vocalist go behind the scrim and stand behind the manger as he (she) says the verse.

Two Vocalists (male and female): Have the two vocalists go behind the scrim and pose as Mary and Joseph next to the manger, as one of them says the verse.

Three Vocalists: Have the vocalists stand behind the scrim posing as Mary, Joseph, and an Angel. The vocalist posing as the Angel should say the verse.

Four or More Vocalists: Have the vocalists stand behind the scrim in a manger pose. Include Mary, Joseph, an Angel, Shepherds, and Wiseman. The vocalist posing as the Angel should say the verse.

Props

Scrim: The scrim would be ideal, but again not necessary as vocalists could simply pose around a manger.

Box: If your cast includes three or more vocalists, be sure to have a small box behind the scrim for the Angel to stand on.

Staffs and Gifts: If your cast includes four or more vocalists be sure to have a staff for each shepherd and a gift for each Wiseman. These props should NOT be carried as the vocalists enter, but should be easily accessible behind the scrim, so that the actors can quickly grab them and get into their pose.

#### Video

The video element is optional. If your church does not have media capabilities, the script will work without it.

“Snow” – In this script I call for Video ‘snow.’ I am referring to loud, fuzzy black and white specs that cover a TV screen when a station is having trouble coming in clearly.

The scrim could also double as your video screen.

#### Instrumental Music

Again, this element is optional. I think underlining music during the Reporters’ lines can add intensity to the skit, however, it is not absolutely necessary for the skit to work. If you do choose to have instrumental music playing, it can be performed live OR along with the video, if your church has media capabilities.

#### Costumes

I would suggest having the vocalist (s) wear all black, rather than Biblical costumes, because it will add to the element of surprise. We don’t want the audience knowing where the vocalists are going or what they are portraying until the very end of the script.

#### Final Part of the Skit

The final part of the skit is a little tricky.... Hopefully very powerful, but a little tricky.

The ideal timeline is as follows:

- 1) Vocalists sing the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of “O Come O Come Emmanuel” alone as they enter.
- 2) Vocalists sing the first 2 lines of the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse alone as they slowly walk up the aisles.
- 3) \*\*\*\*\* (TRICKY PART) \*\*\*\*\*

Vocalists sing the final 2 lines of the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse.

*At the same time* (as the vocalists are singing the final two lines) the actors say their final lines

*At the same time* (as the vocalists are singing the final two lines AND as the actors are saying their lines) the video portrays it’s final two slides: Peace? / Hope?

- 4) THEN as the actors freeze, the Vocalists sing the refrain (Rejoice, Rejoice...) As the vocalists sing the refrain they should go behind the black scrim and create a manger pose.

Note: The actors should finish their lines just slightly after the vocalists hit the refrain. (Rejoice, Rejoice...) If your cast needs more time, have the actors continue to talk during the refrain and THEN have the vocalists repeat the refrain alone.

The hope is to emphasize the coming of the Messiah, the Good News, amidst the bad news.

This part of the skit will require the most practice.

Stage Directions

USC: Upstage Center

DSR: Downstage Right

DSL: Downstage Left

Why: Luke 2:10 "And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"

Time: 5 minutes

*USC there is a black scrim with a manger behind it.*

*Above the scrim, there is a video screen.*

*Lights up DSR on a News Desk. The Anchor sits behind the desk.*

Anchor: Today's top story: Hundreds still homeless in La Grange, a small town ravaged by Hurricane Harvey. Harvey has caused historic rainfall and floods forcing more than 30,00 people to evacuate their homes. It has damaged more than 200,000 homes and businesses.

*Lights up on Reporter DSL.*

*Video begins to stream images of natural disasters.*

*Soft, slow instrumental music begins.*

Reporter: I'm reporting live here in Santa Rose. This city of 175,000 people in Sonoma County saw widespread destruction as fires ravaged homes and business. It seems that these deadly blazes, breaking out across California are getting worse every year. This year the Sonoma Wildfires have claimed at least 37 lives with roughly 400 more people missing.

Anchor: Hurricane Maria slammed the Caribbean earlier this morning. This category 4 hurricane made landfall in southeast Puerto Rico, devastating the island's transportation, agriculture, communication and energy infrastructure with high winds, 37 inches of rain, flooding and mudslides.

Reporter: Hurricanes, wildfires, droughts, cold snaps: 2017 is on track to be a record-setting year for massive natural disasters in the history of the United States. The question now is, where will the money to pay for all of this devastation come from?

*Video images change to world events.*

*Instrumental music slightly intensifies.*

*Actors say lines at a slightly faster pace.*

Anchor: Breaking News: 22 people killed, including children, and 59 injured by a suspected suicide bomber at a concert hall in Manchester, England, according to U.S. and U.K. authorities.

Reporter: North Korea's deputy U.N. ambassador warned Monday that the situation "has reached the touch-and-go point and a nuclear war may break out any moment." Some speculate that the US is stumbling into a second Cold War.

Anchor: Turkey and US relations are going from bad to much, much worse. A full-blown diplomatic crisis now seems to be facing our two nations.

*Video images increase in speed as they now reflect conflict here in the United States.  
Instrumental music increases in volume and intensity.  
Actors continue to increase the pace of their lines.*

Reporter: Problems aren't just oceans away. Here in the US, trouble seems to be at our doorstep. Fear of Islamists Extremists continue to dominate the minds of New Yorkers today, the anniversary of 9-11.

Reporter: 1 dead as a car hits the crowd after a rally in Charlottesville.

Anchor: Lights are dimmed on the Las Vegas Strip in remembrance tonight.

Reporter: There have been more mass shootings in the US in 2017 than days.

Anchor: 3 Dead 34 injured after a rally yesterday.

Reporter: Late last night there was a fatal Police Shootout in Roswell, New Mexico.

Anchor: The Las Vegas attack is the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history.

Reporter: Distraught people, deadly results.

*Video breaks into 'snow.'  
Video stops.  
Silence.*

*Vocalists enter from behind the audience and slowly move up the aisles with candles in their hands.*

Vocalist 1: (Singing) O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel

Vocalist 1 & 2: (Singing) That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.

Vocalists 1-5: (Singing): Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel shall come to Thee O Israel. O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer, Our spirits by Thine advent here...

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