

## The Promise of Christmas

**M.C.** (after his pre-show announces the song title and the entire audience [performers too]sing)

### **(#1) OH COME ALL YE FAITHFUL**

*(The FAMILY then takes over. [MOTHER, FATHER, OLDEST DAUGHTER, OLDEST SON, MIDDLE DAUGHTER, YOUNGEST SON, YOUNGEST DAUGHTER.] They are seated on and around a couch and a chair or two (borrowed from the foyer). Nothing needs to be memorized. We are in a Family Home Evening about the Savior and His birth. All are reading their share of the lessons that are to be presented. On the other side of the stage, or presentation area, is a backlit screen of muslin large enough to accommodate the family as it moves into place behind it at specified times through the presentation. The singing can be done near the Tableau Screen, or in front of it. Any instruments like Guitar, Flute or Violin that serve as accompaniment with the Piano can be located near the Piano.)*

**MOTHER:** (offers the opening prayer.)

**FATHER:** Thank you, (name of mother) for that prayer. The Apostle John began his record of Christ's life with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of man." (PAUSE) King David told us: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (PAUSE) Joseph Smith gave us this revelation: "Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation -- the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men."

**MOTHER:** Light is a cousin to Promise. As promise is fulfilled, light is given to men.

**Y SON:** Do you mean like glowing light?

**MOTHER:** Yes, and the Light of Truth and knowledge. It is a feeling, a whisper in your ear, a touch in your heart.

**M DAUGHTER:** Isn't a promise also a covenant?

**MOTHER:** Yes. Every covenant has promises in it. We are all part of a covenant. That covenant leads us to the Light and the Glory and the Promise of Jesus Christ.

**O DAUGHTER:** I learned a lot about Promise as I studied the scriptures and wrote this poem. The scriptures filled my soul, even for those few moments, with a Light and a Love for my Savior. I dedicate this poem to the birth of my Lord.

*(Recites a poem as if it were something she had written and prepared)*

**(#2) The Promise.**

IN A TOWN CALLED BETHLEHEM A NEW BORN BABY CRIES.  
THE SLEEPY SILENCE BROKEN, A NEW STAR FILLS THE SKIES.  
SHEPHERDS ON A HILLSIDE, TENDING TO THEIR SHEEP,  
LOOK UP TO SEE AN ANGEL WHILE THEIR WATCH THEY KEEP.  
WHO IS THIS LITTLE STRANGER THAT IN A MANGER LAY,  
AS ANGELS SING HIS GLORY WITH A STAR AS BRIGHT AS DAY?  
A STAR THAT KINGS WILL FOLLOW AS THEY TRAVEL FAR  
TO WORSHIP IN HIS PRESENCE, BRINGING PRECIOUS GIFTS FROM AFAR.

HE IS GOD'S SON SENT DOWN TO EARTH TO SHOW US ALL THE WAY:  
THAT PROMISE OF REDEMPTION FROM OUR SAVIOR, LORD AND KING.

*(Then she goes behind the screen to put on a simple Angel's robe and sit on a high stool)*

**MOTHER:** Light also came to Mary, mother of the Savior, as it did to the man who was to be her husband, Joseph, the man who covenanted to raise the Son of God on earth. Being the earthly Mother and Father of the Savior of the World seems about as awesome a task as ... well, being the Heavenly Father and Mother of the future Savior of the World and all his brothers and sisters.

**FATHER:** From the foundation of the world these two special spirits were foreordained to teach and love the child Jesus -- and he was theirs to teach and love, through the father's toil and tutelage and the mother's love and lineage. But even more than that, Jesus didn't belong only to them; while he was also ours, he belonged to God.

*(Man and Woman sing:)*

(#3) **BE IT UNTO US** by Lindy Kerby (available free at <http://www.kerbymusic.org/music/be-it-unto-us>)

**FATHER:** Far away, on another continent prophecies and promises were also being made.

**O SON:** Samuel the Lamanite, a great Book of Mormon prophet, stood on a wall and taught the people what was going to happen. His prophecy was a Promise. "Behold I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name. And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it were day. Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also of its setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born. And behold there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you." Later, on that night of no darkness, the Lord of Earth and Sky spoke to Nephi, the son of Nephi. "Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold the time is at hand, and on this night the sign shall be given, and on the morrow come I into the world ... I come unto my own to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world..."

**Y DAUGHTER:** Do you mean that if I would have been ready for bed, there would have been no bedtime?

*(O SON turns to MOTHER)*

**MOTHER:** Not exactly. But I am sure that many of the people who witnessed the lack of darkness had a difficult time getting to sleep.

**M DAUGHTER:** I don't think I could have slept.

**Y SON:** Me neither.

**FATHER:** You're probably all right. Who could have slept?

**Y SON:** You could have. You can sleep through anything.

*(ALL the CHILDREN laugh and giggle, as does FATHER)*

**FATHER:** You're probably right about that, too. Shall we finish the part of the lesson your brother has prepared?

*(The CHILDREN nod and focus on O SON)*

**O SON:** It all happened just like Samuel said; just like the Lord spoke to Nephi and Nephi wrote it and declared it and the people repented and rejoiced. That is how the people of the Book of Mormon witnessed

the birth of the Savior. But the people of the land around Jerusalem, in the old world, also had been given prophecy. Micah, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel -- and others -- holy prophets all, testified of him before his birth. Luke later wrote that all those prophecies were fulfilled at the birth of Jesus Christ. But first he wrote of the night of the birth itself. "And lo, an angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And who received this prophecy of wonder? Humble shepherds who, along with a few people, a few animals and the Angels with the Host of Heaven, were to witness the birth of the Shepherd of us all.

*(The YOUNG MEN sing)*

**(#4) WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT**

*(O SON may even sing the first verse and the Young Men sing the remainder. O SON then joins the tableau as a Shepherd, kneeling)*

**M DAUGHTER:** Angels did not just appear on the night of the Savior's birth. They have spoken for God to people and prophets since Adam and Eve, giving revelation and instruction, and providing one source of the Savior's love to everyone they contacted. It tells us in the D&C that angels are 'round about us.' Moses was visited. Joseph Smith witnessed angels all through his life. Angels have always announced both the great and wonderful things, and the small and special things. They came to Abraham and King Zacheriah; to Samuel, the Lamanite; to two sets of parents: Mary and Joseph, and Elizabeth and Zacharias. That Heavenly Host that witnessed the birth did so to fulfil prophecy and promise. They reaped the reward of their announcements -- their obedience -- by being able to be there -- as another witness and an eternal testimony -- to the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is even thought that some of us, maybe all of us, were a part of that Heavenly Host.

*(The YOUNG WOMEN and M DAUGHTER sing)*

**(#5) HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING**

*(M DAUGHTER then joins the tableau as the second Angel on a high stool)*

**MOTHER:** Promise can be found in the least of us. I have always imagined that a child also saw the birth of the Savior. How could he not have? It happened in what might have been his own back yard.

**Y BOY:** My father was an Innkeeper. He told me that I shouldn't bother the nice people who were spending the night in our stable because we really had no room for them inside. I tried to stay away but there was this really bright light that woke me up when it came in through my window. When I looked out I thought that the stable was on fire -- but how could it have been? -- it was a cave made of rock! I knew rock couldn't burn so I climbed through my window and went out to see. The light, helped by the brightest star I've ever seen, brought me to the stable that I knew was there. But it was different somehow. I saw a baby surrounded by his mother, father and some animals; a group of shepherds were there. Then I saw that the light was coming from -- well, angels. I know. You don't believe me. But it's true! I looked down at the baby in his mother's arms and he was full of light, too. So full it leaked out everywhere and kind of blended in with the light of the Angels. I looked up at that star and I wondered if it was giving the light or if the light was being taken from where we were and sent up to the star -- or both. My father and mother soon joined us. I'm glad because we had to see it. I never want to forget it.

*(A Young Man comes in to sing a solo.)*

**(#6) LET HIM IN** *(by Michael McLean) (from THE FORGOTTEN CAROLS -- you must purchase a copy.*

*Contact Michael at [michael@michaelmcleanmusic.com](mailto:michael@michaelmcleanmusic.com))*

*(Y SON moves behind the screen to stand as the Innkeepers Son, near to the Shepherd)*

**MOTHER:** Every mother, every girl -- perhaps every boy and man, wish they could have been there. And maybe we were in some way or another. We just don't remember it. I know I've dreamed of it -- being the mother of such a son.

**Y DAUGHTER:** I wish I could have been there and remember it. I love the baby Jesus because he was so small and perfect. I wish I could have been there to sing him a lullabye. Maybe Mary did. My mother sang to me. I know just what I would sing to him.

*(Y DAUGHTER joins other PRIMARY children to sing.)*

**(#7) AWAY IN A MANGER**

*(Y DAUGHTER moves behind screen to take her place as an Angel standing next to where Mary will be.)*

**MOTHER:** His life was begun on earth to give eternal promise to us all.

**FATHER:** His Promise is our Promise. What promises have we made to Him?

*(MOTHER & FATHER move behind the screen to take their places as Mary and Joseph, holding a doll for the baby Jesus. The tableau is complete and backlit. But maybe not totally recognizable, yet.)*

*(The Pianist and song leader direct the singing of:)*

**(#8) SILENT NIGHT**

*(As the audience and the cast sing, but not until all is ready, two men come in to remove the screen while two others move the lights to shine up from the floor to backlight and give an aura to the tableau. We see the family in costume as THE NATIVITY. This happens slowly during the song. When the song is done and the tableau is revealed the MC comes forward to hand the mic to the person assigned to give the closing prayer.)*

**THE END**

PROPS NEEDED:

Couch and chairs to seat 7 family members.  
2 end tables with lit lamps on them

muslin screen on a wooden frame big enough to accommodate the Shadow Nativity.  
lights behind the screen, preferably mounted on a piece of wood (not more than three floodlights or spotlights of the garden variety will be necessary) that can be moved from directly behind the tableau to the floor shining up at an angle to halo the Family.  
2 high stool for the angels (oldest daughters)  
low stool for Mary  
a baby doll wrapped up in rags.

**The Tableau**

\*\*\*\*\* (light bar)

ANGEL 1 (on high stool)	ANGEL 2 (on high stool)
JOSEPH / MARY / SMALL ANGEL (kneeling) / (on low stool w/doll) / (hovering over shoulder)	
SHEPHERD (standing)	INNKEEPER'S SON (kneeling)

\*\*\*\*\* (screen)

(There could also be cut out representations of animals behind or to the side of the actors.)

ANGEL 1 -- Oldest daughter  
ANGEL 2 -- Middle Daughter  
JOSEPH -- Father  
MARY -- Mother  
SMALL ANGEL -- Youngest daughter  
SHEPHERD -- Oldest Son  
INNKEEPER'S SON -- Youngest Son

The Home Evening Family can be a make-believe family (made up by a group of performers) or can be one in the ward that closely resembles the make-up of the Home Evening Family. An outside child or two could be added to the real family to fill it out if needed. The parents should be a real Husband and Wife.

The SONGS listed in the script are merely suggestions. Anyone producing this little playlet will need to purchase and/or arrange for the use of whatever songs are NOT in the public domain. Similar songs may be substituted for any title.