

To Nativity and Beyond!

The Nativity story is only just the beginning of the story of Jesus' time on earth. What would an extended version look like, acted out by children, that went on to tell the rest of the story and in doing so explain why Jesus came to us at Christmas time? The emphasis of this story is that Jesus is the Saviour who came to save us by giving us a new heart and putting a new spirit in us. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; also 1 John 3:19-24; John 3: 16-18; Living Bible edition has good translation of Romans 5:17 "All who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are "kings of life" because of this one man, Jesus Christ"; and the Christmas story - Matthew 1: 18-24 2:1-12; Luke 1: 26-80 & 2:1-21).

This version was done as a Powerpoint using photos of teddies in the starring roles: Sleepy Bunny, Honey Cat and Humphrey Bear, and a Narrator.

**indicates where Slide will be changed, so slight pause needed*

Narrator: Sleepy Bunny presents*

Narrator: To Nativity and Beyond!*

Narrator: Starring*... Sleepy Bunny*, Honey Cat* and Humphrey Bear!*

Narrator: Honey Cat, Sleepy Bunny and Humphrey Bear sat on the sofa.

Sleepy Bunny: *I think as it's this near Christmas we should put on a nativity play!

Narrator: Said Sleepy Bunny enthusiastically

Honey Cat: *But there aren't enough of us!

Narrator: Piped up Honey Cat. There was a moment's thoughtful pause before Humphrey Bear contributed

Humphrey Bear: *There are if we all do more than one part. We can switch costumes to play different scenes

Honey Cat: *That's a great idea!

Narrator: agreed Honey Cat

Honey Cat: What comes first?

Narrator: he asked

Sleepy Bunny: *An angel appears to Mary. And an angel appears to Joseph.

Narrator: Sleepy Bunny reminded everyone

Honey Cat: *That's me! I'm the angel!

Narrator: bagsied Honey Cat

Sleepy Bunny: I'll be Joseph!

Narrator: offered Sleepy Bunny

Humphrey Bear: I want to be Joseph! I'm not dressing up as a girl!

Narrator: objected Humphrey Bear

Sleepy Bunny: *Ok, I'll be Mary. I'll wear this pretty blue...

Narrator: said Sleepy Bunny, won over by the costume options. So with all that decided the trio prepared the first scene of their nativity play. Honey Cat opened as the angel saying

Honey Cat: *Joseph, Mary is going to have a baby. God is the baby's daddy, and the baby's name is Jesus, which means "the Lord saves". Mary you're going to have a baby. God is the baby's daddy, and the baby's name is Jesus.

Sleepy Bunny: OK (*high pitched, pretending to be a girl*)

Humphrey Bear: OK. What's next?

Honey Cat: *Mary and Joseph have to make their way to Bethlehem. I'll be the donkey!

Narrator: said Honey Cat, getting on all fours.

Narrator: *Humphrey Bear said

Humphrey Bear: Come on Mary we've got to go to Bethlehem because we've got to put our names on a list.

Sleepy Bunny: *Is it a long journey? (*high pitched, pretending to be a girl*)

Narrator: asked Sleepy Bunny in his best girl's voice

Humphrey Bear: *Um... yes

Narrator: said Humphrey Bear uncertainly

Honey Cat: *eyeeore!

Narrator: said Honey Cat the donkey

Sleepy Bunny: *Are we there yet? (*high pitched, pretending to be a girl*)

Narrator: asked Sleepy Bunny's Mary.

Narrator: *Humphrey Bear's Joseph replied

Humphrey Bear: Um... yes. But there isn't any room at the inn, so we have to sleep in the stable.

Humphrey Bear: *Oh look, Baby Jesus has joined us. Hello Baby Jesus! Now what?

Honey Cat: I know! I know! It's me again. I tell the shepherds that Baby Jesus is here now.

Narrator: interjected Honey Cat

Sleepy Bunny: The donkey goes and tells the shepherds??

Narrator: queried a puzzled Sleepy Bunny

Honey Cat: *No, I'm an angel again now! And you need to be the shepherds

Narrator: Honey Cat helpfully explained. It was time for a costume change. Sleepy Bunny and Humphrey Bear set to work cutting up a tea towel, whilst Honey Cat put his halo back on

Honey Cat: *Hello shepherds tending your flocks. Do not be afraid, I bring you good news. Jesus has been born and he is our Saviour and is going to save us. You can go and see him. He is away in a manger in O little town of Bethlehem. I want to be a shepherd now.

Humphrey Bear: *That's not what the angel says!

Narrator: hmphe'd Humphrey Bear

Honey Cat: *No, but it's what I say now I'm done being the angel. We can all be shepherds and go and see Jesus in the manger

Honey Cat: *Hello Jesus. We are all shepherds, especially me, and we've come to say hello and thank you for coming to save us.

Sleepy Bunny: *Wise men!

Narrator: burst out Sleepy Bunny

Humphrey Bear: Excuse me?

Narrator: said Humphrey Bear

Sleepy Bunny: Wise men! That's what comes next! Wise men come and visit Jesus by following a big star, and they bring him presents.

Narrator: Another scene, meant another costume change. They donned their gold crowns and lined up in size order, with Sleepy Bunny leading the way

Sleepy Bunny: *(sings) We three kings of Orient are, wishing now we'd come in the car...

Sleepy Bunny: *Hello Jesus. I've brought you a present. It's gold. It's shiney.

Honey Cat: Hello Jesus. I've brought you a present too. Mine is frankincense. It smells funny.

Humphrey Bear: And I've bought you myrrh. Which also smells funny. Hope you like it.

Sleepy Bunny: *What happens next?

Narrator: quizzed Sleepy Bunny

Humphrey Bear: Next?

Narrator: questioned Humphrey Bear

Sleepy Bunny: Yes, next. What happens after Mary and Joseph and angels and shepherds and wise men?

Narrator: expanded Sleepy Bunny

Honey Cat: Doesn't the nativity story end with the wise men visiting?

Narrator: suggested Honey Cat

Sleepy Bunny: *Normally the nativity story does because the nativity is the Christmassy bit, but that version of the story leaves Jesus when he's still only a baby! There's lots more to Jesus' story. I say our version should be

Sleepy Bunny: *"To Nativity and Beyond!"

Narrator: clarified Sleepy Bunny, his mind racing ahead

Humphrey Bear: Hmm. Interesting. Let's think, what does happen after the wise men leave? And after the all the presents are opened and the Christmas tree is taken down...

Narrator: said Humphrey Bear thoughtfully, getting on board with the idea of extending the nativity play. Sleepy Bunny looked in his Bible again.

Sleepy Bunny: *Jesus grows up and works as a carpenter for a long time.

Honey Cat: I can do that scene!

Narrator: said Honey Cat, keenly

Honey Cat: *Look! I've got a saw!

Sleepy Bunny: Great! You can be grown-up Jesus!

Narrator: Sleepy Bunny concurred, and went on to the next part of the story

Sleepy Bunny: *After Jesus worked as a carpenter for a long time, he stopped that and started healing lots of sick people

Humphrey Bear: *I don't feel well!

Narrator: Complained Humphrey Bear dramatically, doing an excellent job at pretending to be sick

Honey Cat: Don't worry! I have come to heal you! There you go, you're all better now!

Narrator: said Honey Cat Jesus. Sleepy Bunny read some more and explained

Sleepy Bunny: *And then Jesus tells everyone things are about to change forever because he's come to save them.

Honey Cat: *I have come to save you!

Narrator: declared Honey Cat Jesus

Sleepy Bunny: *People think he means save them from Roman rule, but he doesn't. He means to save everybody from the bad and selfish ways we behave, which hurt people and make us guilty and deserving of punishment.

Humphrey Bear: How does Jesus save us from that?

Narrator: asked Humphrey Bear

Sleepy Bunny: It's to do with Easter and the part in the Jesus story where he dies on a cross

Honey Cat: *That's not very Christmassy

Narrator: said Honey Cat, picturing a cross with tinsel and baubles on it

Sleepy Bunny: *We're not used to telling the whole story, that's all.

Narrator: Reassured Sleepy Bunny

Sleepy Bunny: We're used to picking out the Christmas part and leaving it there, but the nativity is only one chapter of Jesus' story and we're doing

Sleepy Bunny: *"To Nativity and Beyond!"

Honey Cat: *How can we act it out though?

Narrator: Honey Cat asked. Sleepy Bunny wrote quickly on a piece of paper and gave half to Honey Cat

Sleepy Bunny: You be Jesus, and say this

Narrator: And half to Humphrey Bear

Sleepy Bunny: And you be you and say this

Honey Cat: *Hello, I'm grown-up Jesus. I worked as a carpenter, then I healed sick people. Now I have chosen to take the punishment for all the wrong doing that has ever happened and will ever happen. This is because someone has to pay the price when something wrong is done, otherwise it's not fair. I can pay it because I am the Son of God.

Humphrey Bear: *Hello Jesus. I know I've done lots of things wrong. I'm sorry. Thank you Jesus for taking my punishment for me so I don't have to. I'd like to have a new heart like yours now please.

Honey Cat: *I forgive you. Here, have a new heart. It's just like mine. It's full of love and forgiveness and kindness. You are now saved.

Honey Cat: *This is the present I always planned to give you when I came that first Christmas. And it's not just a Christmas present, you can ask for your new heart any time of year. I've got one for everybody. You don't have to earn it. I want to give you your new heart because I love you.

Sleepy Bunny: *And that's what "To Nativity and Beyond!" looks like!

Narrator: Concluded Sleepy Bunny

**Slide – all three wearing red hearts, stood in a row with "The End" written underneath.*

