

# "Can You Believe It?!"

*Nativity Play by Fr Dan Kovalak, 1997*

The program includes two narrators (N1 & N2), a group of small children and the following characters; Adam, Eve, Anna, Elizabeth, Gabriel, Mary and Joseph.

The scene is a family room where the narrators are story-tellers surrounded by the small children sitting on the floor. As the story unfolds, the characters "come alive" off to one side.

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N1 (gathering the children together): Who's ready for a story?

Ch: We are!

N1: Then let's sit down and listen carefully. Because THIS story is the greatest story of all time.

In the beginning, God made everything out of nothing: the sun and the moon, the sea and the land, the plants and the animals. And, like everything God makes, it was all very good. In fact, He figured it was too good to keep all to Himself. So to share everything He created, He made man -- and He made him to look a lot like Himself. He named the man Adam. But Adam was lonely. So God decided to make him a friend. He called the friend Eve. She was a woman.

(spotlight to Adam and Eve)

Adam: I'm bored Eve. There's nothing to do in this place.

Eve: Hey, I've got an idea. Let's give all the animals new names. Who ever heard of a mouse anyway? It sounds like something to use with a computer.

Adam: Now just wait a minute, Eve. God said I could name everything and that's what I did. That's a mouse and that's that!

Eve: (taking an apple) Just look at the size of this grapefruit, Adam.

Adam: That's not a grapefruit. It's an apple. An apple! Now get away from it. God said we could eat anything we want to here except that.

Eve: Ah, come on Adam. This grapefruit looks delicious. Take a bite!

Adam: It's an apple! ... But it does look pretty good. Better than all those nuts and berries we've been eating. Let me have it. (takes bite)

(Thunder effect)

Eve: Oops. My bad! He's mad! Better put it back.

Adam: Too late. I swallowed it. No, it's caught in my throat -- (pointing to throat) right here!! Now we're in trouble.

Eve: (as if hearing a voice) What? I don't think I heard you right! Did you say "get out!" But all we did was try the grape ... apple.

Adam: We're sunk. He caught us. Bet He never lets us back into this place again. (leaving) At least I'll take my mouse.

Eve: All because of this stupid grapefruit! We'll be eating nuts and berries forever!

N1: So Adam and Eve had to leave Paradise -- that beautiful garden that God made for them. And all because they did just one thing wrong. Can you believe it?

Ch: Can you believe it? Adam and Eve couldn't. (looking at each other) Can you?

N2: Adam and Eve had a lot of children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. God loved them all. He blessed them and protected them. As a loving Father, He gave them some simple rules to follow -- ten of them to be exact. And all the while, for hundreds of years, He was getting a plan ready that would show He loved all of His children.

That's right! Even though His children sometimes didn't listen to Him, even though they sometimes forgot about Him and did whatever they wanted, and because He wanted them to know He loved them anyway, He had a plan.

God was going to become just like His children. And His plan began with a woman named Anna.

(spotlight to Anna)

Anna: I'm so old. My husband Joachim and I had been praying to God for a baby for so long but no luck. We thought that maybe God was angry with us or something. But then one day I went for a check-up. My arthritis was bothering me and I could hardly walk. Well, do you know what he said? "Anna," he said, "you're going to have a baby!" "No way!" I said. "You're kidding, right?" "No," the doctor said, "there's no question about it. You and Joachim are going to finally be parents!"

I was so surprised and happy I didn't know what to do. Of course, I started making all sorts of preparations. We would have to get a bigger house, buy new furniture, open a bank account and ... then, all of a sudden, I had a vision. An angel appeared to me. I can't remember exactly what he said but it was something like "your child will play a special part in God's plan. That's why you're having one even though you're so old."

Naturally, I was surprised. Imagine, an angel calling me old! But I was! So I had to believe him. And do you know what? When that baby was finally born, she was the most beautiful baby I have ever seen -- everybody said so. Joachim and I called her "Mary". And her favorite color was blue!

N2: That's what happened. God had a plan. So it didn't matter that Anna was old. God can do anything. He blessed Joachim and Anna with a baby named Mary. Can you believe it?

Ch: Can you believe it? Anna couldn't! (looking at each other) Can you?

N2: Yes, God works in some really neat ways. If He has something special that needs to be done, He always finds the right people to do it.

Another person God needed to do something special was named Elizabeth. She was young compared to Anna. She was also sad because she didn't have any children. But God would change that.

(spotlight to Elizabeth)

Elizabeth: My husband Zacharias is a priest over at the Temple. There's always something going on over there. I hardly see him anymore. He's always praying, talking to people about God, cleaning up around the Temple, giving tours, rolling out dough for whatever, and putting the coffee on for visitors. But I'll never forget the night he came home and couldn't talk. It was like a cat had his tongue. It was the worst case of laryngitis I ever saw.

Since he wasn't able to talk, he wrote things on a little chalkboard. And he wrote that he had a vision from God Who said he wouldn't be able to talk until his son was born. "His son!" I thought to myself. "That means I'm going to have a baby!" And sure enough, that's what happened.

I was so excited. I could hardly wait for my baby to be born. I thought we'd call him little Zach after his dad. And let me tell you, the way he did summersaults in my belly, that little guy would be as busy as his father -- and much more athletic. One day when my cousin Mary visited, that baby must have done a cartwheel in my stomach. The funny thing is, the day he was born, his father was able to speak again! It was like a miracle. And the first words he said were "the baby's name is John."

"John?" I thought. "Why John?" But who's to argue. Zacharias said that this was God's idea. It didn't matter to me what his name was. I was just so happy to have a baby -- a son named John. And he would grow up to tell everyone that God was coming. Pretty special, huh?

N2: Elizabeth was another special person in God's plan. She had a baby that would grow up to be called John the Baptist. He would tell the people that God was coming and that they should get ready. So even though she thought she could never have a baby, she did. Can you believe it?

Ch: Can you believe it? Elizabeth couldn't! (looking at each other) Can you?

N1: Of course, God doesn't always talk to people directly. He has a whole army of angels that do this kind of work for Him. Whenever God has something really important to tell His children, He always sends one of His angels to do the job. I guess the one that had the most work, or could do the job the best, was Archangel Gabriel.

(spotlight to Gabriel)

Gabriel: (looking at "to do" list) Let's see here. Things to do today. Go to supermarket and open doors. Stop child from running into street. Attend Orthodox church for Liturgy.... God, how am I going to get all this stuff done?

(then turning to audience)

Oh, excuse me. I guess you wanted to know what I've done in the past, right? Well, as you can imagine, as one of the head angels around here, The Boss has sent me on some pretty important missions. And He has plans that I don't even know about. He just says "go" and I go. I've been going as long as I can remember.

I was sent to an old woman named Anna and a young woman named Mary; just to tell them they were going to have babies. Anna had a hard time believing me but eventually she did. Mary on the other hand was maybe my best effort to date. When I told her that she was going to have "The Baby of all babies", it was like she just won the lottery or something. She kept singing about how her soul rejoiced in God her Savior.

You know, it actually made me feel a bit jealous. After all, I beat my wings 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Then God blesses this young woman and makes her more honorable and glorious than me! You know, I get no respect in this job. None of us do. Just ask my buddy Michael. We just serve God, day in and day out. But when you think about it, what else is there to do? A couple of the other angels refused to work for God and look where they ended up!

But the Mary visit was tops on my list, even though I couldn't believe what The Boss told me to tell her. "He would be born of her?" Boy, that would take some kind of miracle.

Anyway .... (back to "to do" list) a transport to level seven, prevent tragedy, visit Orthodox church, again! .... you know, those people are pretty faithful, but very demanding!

N1: Gabriel is an archangel sent from heaven to deliver God's messages. His wings must sure be tired with all the work he has to do. And sometimes, he can't even figure out what the messages of God mean that he delivers. He's like a mailman that doesn't see inside the envelopes! When he visited Mary, he couldn't believe the message he was sent to give her. Can you believe it?

Ch: Can you believe it? Gabriel couldn't! (looking to each other) Can you?

N2: Finally, when all the parts of God's plan to show His love were in place, He took action. He didn't want to come into the world as an old man. People wouldn't believe it. And He didn't want to come into the world as some sort of ghost. People wouldn't believe that either. No. His plan was to show He loves every human being from the time they're doing summersaults in their mothers' bellies. God would become a baby. And Mary was His choice to be the perfect mother.

(spotlight to Mary & Joseph ala manger scene)

Mary: (to baby) O my precious Little Jesus. Angels announced Your coming. The heavens pointed the brightest star to You. Shepherds came to praise You. Wise men came to offer You gifts fit for a King. All people of all time rejoice in You.

Joseph: Mary, what are we going to do with all these presents? We could sure use the gold. But what about the frankincense and myrrh? (Pause) Do you think we can get some birth announcements printed in the city?

Mary: (to baby) My little Jesus, because of You, Adam and Eve are free again. Your grandmother Anna is as happy as she can be. Your aunt Elizabeth can hardly wait for you to play with her son John. And Your archangel Gabriel is waiting to deliver more messages... from You.

Joseph: Yo, Mary? Where did we pack the envelopes? We better get a note out to Zacharias and plan the Temple ceremony. Do you think the Temple Auxiliary can host a Coffee Hour?

Mary (to baby): Sweet Jesus, My soul magnifies You and my spirit rejoices in You Who have come to show us God's love. And because of You, all generations will call me blessed!

Joseph: Mary, I just had a dream. And it wasn't a good one. Old nasty King Herod heard that another King was born. And I think he means little Jesus. He's going to be coming after us. We better get out of town. In my dream, I saw pyramids. I better saddle-up the beast. Which way is it to Egypt? That darn Herod!

Mary (to baby): Why are some not glad at Your coming, my Son and Lord? Why does Herod hate you? Why have You come to give Your life for the life of the world? Is this truly the meaning of God's love? I can't believe this miracle of Your coming, my sweet, little Jesus.

*(Singing of Nativity Kondakion: "Today the Virgin gives birth...")*

Adam and Eve: Christ is born. God has opened the gates of Paradise again.

Eve: (holding apple) And look at the size of these grapefruits! The Garden is more beautiful than ever.

Adam: And even my mouse is happy!

Anna: Christ is born. My grandchild has come as God in the flesh to save the whole world! Praise God!

Elizabeth: Christ is born. My husband Zacharias will sure have something to talk about at the Temple now! What great news!

Gabriel: Christ is born. I've been telling you people all along that this was coming. Maybe now you'll believe me!

Joseph: Christ is born. And though Egypt is nice this time of year, I just know that someday soon, we'll be able to come back home. I can hardly wait to buy Him a baseball glove and teach Him my trade.

Mary: Christ is born. My heart ponders the miracle that God, in His love, has performed through me, His humble servant. Glory to Him for all things!

N2: So that's what happened children. That's the greatest story you'll ever hear. It's true. God had a plan. And through all kinds of people, He made it all come together on Christmas. That's what the celebration is all about. It's not just presents and decorations. It's not even just Jesus' birthday. It's a celebration of God's love to all people, of all time, even though they sometimes don't love Him back. God became like us so that we could become like Him. That's the meaning of Christmas. Can you believe it?

Ch: Christ is Born! Can you believe it! (looking at audience) We do!