

MRS HIGGINS comes on to the stage. She is the children's teacher and also the director of the presentation.

Mrs Higgins Well, children. I have to say that I think you look marvellous. Our costume team have done a wonderful job. I think that the Nativity presentation this year could be the best ever! We've now got our final dress rehearsal and, to encourage you a little, I want to show you our programme. Here it is. Do you like it, or could you suggest an improvement?

She holds up the programme.

Innkeeper It's a little boring, Mrs Higgins. It's just writing. There are no pictures.

Mrs Higgins My thoughts entirely. Well, this afternoon I shall be watching you all carefully to see whose performance stands out. Then the character of that child will be used as the picture for the front cover.

Shepherd 1 What about a shepherd?

Shepherd 2 Or a sheep?

Wise Man 1 How about a king's crown?

Mrs Higgins We shall see! I shall be watching to discover who really shines!

Star That's easy, then – it's got to be a star!

Joseph *(to the STAR)* Oh, very funny!

Mrs Higgins Right, everyone. Let's get started!

The characters move to the sides of the stage. A stool is placed in the centre of the stage and Mary sits on it, stirring a spoon around a bowl, as if preparing food.

Narrator Mary was a young girl who lived in Nazareth with her parents. She was soon to be married to a man called Joseph, but one day she had a visitor who changed her life for ever.

The ANGEL GABRIEL appears. MARY is surprised and drops her bowl and spoon.

Mary Oh, who are you? You startled me!

Angel Gabriel Don't be afraid, Mary. I have a very important message from God. He has a special job for you. You are to be the mother of God's Son. You will have a baby and you will call him Jesus. He will bring light to the world and will show people how to live good lives.

Mary But I'm afraid!