

The story of the big surprise

On your marks:

Christmas was God's big surprise. Even though there had been tantalising clues all throughout the Old Testament, no one really expected the miracle of 'God-with-us' in the form of a helpless baby. The Christmas story is about God's surprising gift to us: a gift that not only transforms the way we think about ourselves and our future, but also one that gives us a surprising insight into the very nature of the love of God for us.

Get set:

No special props are needed, but there is a suggested sound effect which occurs several times - namely, a sharp intake of breath and the phrase 'It was a big surprise'. Before you start, you might like to rehearse this.

Go!

This retelling of the Christmas story can involve the whole church contributing sound effects and actions.

Story: Long ago the people of God were waiting...

Action: *Looking at watches and looking around*

Story: Waiting for God to come and rescue them

Action: *Shading eyes with hands and looking to the skies*

Story: But their country was occupied by Roman soldiers

Action: *Marching on the spot*

Story: And they wanted to be free

Action: *Both hands in the air, longing for freedom*

Story: But then the angel Gabriel came

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

Story: To an old man called Zechariah in the Temple

Action: *Pretend to be walking with a walking stick*

Story: The angel Gabriel said: 'You and Elizabeth shall have a baby'

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

Story: 'His name will be John and he will prepare the way for the King'

Action/words: *Punching the air and cheers all around*

Story: But Zechariah didn't believe the angel and was from then on lost for words

Action/words: *Hands raised in despair and mumbling sounds through closed lips*

Story: Six months later the angel Gabriel appeared again

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

Story: To Mary in the village of Nazareth

Action/words: *Puzzled looks and cries of 'Where?'*

Story: 'You shall have a baby, who will be the King'

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

Story: 'His name will be Jesus.' Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and... Elizabeth's baby jumped inside her when Mary arrived

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

Story: Elizabeth had her baby and he was called John... and Zechariah now sang a song of praise to God

Action/words: *Mime singing enthusiastically while also shouting 'Hallelujah'*

Story: John would prepare the way for Jesus. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem

Sound effects: *Clip-clop of a donkey's hooves*

Story: They had to travel, even though Mary was about to have a baby... The town was busy and the hotels were fully booked

Actions/words: *Shaking of heads and chorus of 'No room at the inn'*

Story: They had to sleep in a cattle shed

Sound effects: *Animal sounds*

Story: And then the angel Gabriel came

Sound effect: *Sharp intake of breath and 'It was a big surprise'*

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