

The Birth of Jesus Foretold reader's theater

Based on Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2.

FKRL: 4.6 for regular Reader's Theater, 5.6 for the Perspectives option.

What expression would Mary have on her face to show she was greatly troubled? (NARR 1: Mary was greatly troubled at his words)

How might the angel say: For no word from God will ever fail? Would this be emphasized? Downplayed? (What do those two words mean?)

Mary's Song choral reading

If the group was to do a hand or arm motion with the line GROUP B: "He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;" what might be some possibilities?

We learn later on that Mary and Joseph are rather poor since they offer a poor persons offering of doves and pigeons instead of lamb when they went to the temple. How might this influence how Mary delivers MARY: He has filled the hungry with good things

Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son Readers Theater

If Joseph and the angel were to act this out in pantomime while this is being read, what expressions might Joseph have on his face? What would they show? How would they change?

DISCUSS: Getting in character. Sometimes actors think about situations they have experienced that remind them of a situation a character is going through. Think of some times when you face a hard decision like Joseph did. What factors did you consider to arrive at a solution. The angel talked to Joseph and helped him do the right thing. Who and how has someone helped you make a difficult decision?

The Birth of Jesus Reader Theater

The son of God is being born in a stable, probably surrounded by animals and placed in a feed trough. This is very different than how a king's child would be born. Very different than how the Jews expected their Messiah to be born. How can the narrators communicate how unusual the circumstances of Jesus' birth were? (NARR 3: She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger. NARR 1: because there was no guest room available for them.)

If you were a shepherd watching your flock at night, expecting at the very worst a wolf might come by but instead you heard angels and saw bright lights, how might you feel? React? How did these shepherds react at first? How can we show that with our voices? How did they feel or sound at the end of this section?

Jesus Presented in the Temple

What does consolation mean? (comfort) Why might the Roman occupation cause the Jews to need comfort? Where does “Consolation of Israel” originate? Read Isaiah 2:1, 49:13, Genesis 12:1-3.

How does knowing this background material help the narrators and Simeon read their lines?

DISCUSS: What might this line mean and how might it best be read? SIMEON: And a sword will pierce your own soul too.

The Magi Visit the Messiah

How can Herod’s voice show he is disturbed? How will his voice change when he says HEROD: Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him? Is he telling the truth? Read Matthew 2: 13-18 to find out what Herod did about Jesus.

The Word Became Flesh choral reading

From John 1, FKRL 2.5

Many sentences are broken up in this reading making it a bit of a challenge. It does however, heighten the audience’s enjoyment and enhances the musical quality of the text. Consider working on this segment after students have practiced with other segments.

ASK how this challenge can best be overcome. Allow for discussion before and after the 1st and 2nd read throughs.

After 1 -2 read throughs, encourage readers to “pick up their cues”. This means to have no pause or delay from one reader to the next. When cues are NOT picked up, a reading can seem choppy. Focusing throughout the entire reading is necessary and some readers will need to silently mouth the lines of other speakers to be ready.

DISCUSS: Would adding special effects of a light being turned on and off enhance the reading? How would it affect the reader’s ability to see the text?

John is the only character in this reading. What choices does the reader have in how to read his lines? What goes best with the text? Why?

Philippians 2 choral reading

FKRL: 2.3

SAY Think about what Jesus gave up to take on human form. What would he be unable to do? Still able to do? Would you have chosen to come as a servant or king? Why?

Consider how those not reading might boost the effectiveness of the reader’s lines by subtle body language or facial expression during these lines : ALL: rather, he made himself nothing; GROUP A: by taking the very nature of a servant; ALL: he humbled himself; ALL: even death on a cross!; A: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place; GROUP A: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow