



Advent Encounters

Brief Monologs For Worship

By Lynelle Mason

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About *Advent Encounters*

Centuries-old biblical characters, in these fourteen monologs, spring to life to enhance our Advent journey. They fall within the following groups: Trust for the Future, Responding to Others, Time With God, and Living in This Day. Each monolog comes with a Scripture reference, prayer thought, and song suggestions. The monologs are simple yet profound and adaptable for presentation before Sunday school classes, youth groups, and church worship services in a variety of settings.

Costuming

Keep it simple: basic tunics and shoulder wrap-arounds for most speakers, crowns for Herod and Emperor Augustus, burlap or substitute material for Benji, satiny or velvet material for The Seeker

Staging

To the side of the presentation area, have a crèche, manger and Christ Child, spotlighted. Speaking characters share their monolog from a lectern. It is not necessary for the monolog to be memorized.

Speaker Notes

Depict age by body movements: especially Anna, Simeon, Zechariah, and Elizabeth, who are elderly. Be familiar with your monolog until you become that person in speech and mannerisms.

About *Lynelle Mason*

Lynelle Mason is a retired elementary teacher who has published twenty-two articles and received eleven awards. A life member of the Southeastern Writers Association and holding membership in the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the Mid South Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, she has also completed two courses from the Institute of Children's Literature.

Her pastor husband (now deceased) and she have served in churches large and small over many decades. Lynelle is currently a Stephen Minister, a shepherd for K-1st graders in church school, and is on the Staff Care Committee. Along with her therapy dog, Ms. Cleo, she makes weekly visits to a nursing facility. She enjoys reading, international traveling, photography, water aerobics, and Scrabble.

CD-Rom

A CD-Rom is included with this book. It contains the contents of the book in PDF form (for reprinting) and text files for the monologs (for revising, if you wish). Purchase of this book grants copyright for your worshipping community.

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Trust for the Future

Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Joseph

Hello, I'm Joseph, a Nazareth carpenter, better known as the husband of a special handmaid of the Lord. Before I met her, I knew some day she would be my wife. I put the finishing touches on the yoke I'd made, laid it aside, and smiled as I thought of Mary. After I swept up the sawdust and shavings I reached for the crock on the tall shelf at the back of my workshop. Pouring out its contents I began counting farthings, pence, and two gold pieces. For over a year I'd saved all I could for our wedding day. Now I had enough money. I asked Mary's father for her hand in marriage. Her family agreed and soon Mary and I began making plans for our future wedding. Then one day I received some dreadful news. Mary had left home!

She'd left a note saying something to the effect that Elizabeth needed her and that she'd be back as soon as the baby was born. I didn't understand her sudden departure and was hurt she hadn't talked with me before leaving. Still, I trusted Mary and anxiously waited for her to come home.

Finally she returned. Even before going home, she came to see me. I wish I could tell you she dispelled all my questions. Quite to the contrary she put me in shock!

Don't come near me, she said, I'm with child.

Mary, tell me it isn't so!

I'm pregnant, Joseph.

Whose baby is it? It can't be mine!

An angel visited me and told me I was to be the mother of God's Son.

Mary, surely you don't expect me to believe this tale about an angel. If the authorities hear you talking this way, they'll have you stoned to death!

But, Joseph, it's true! Believe me, it was and still is very scary.

I threw my cap to the ground ... but then pushed through the sawdust and wood shavings to retrieve it.

“You say an angel told you that you would bear a child. Don’t you find it strange that no angel appeared to me, your intended?”

Tears trickled down her cheeks. Well, Joseph, she said, that’s what really happened. I was hoping, against hope, you’d understand.

I sighed. Give me time, Mary. Give me time. Let’s talk again tomorrow. I still love you, Mary.

My shoulders slumped as I returned to my woodcutting. That night I went to bed early but had trouble falling asleep. I kept thinking, if it had been anyone else except Mary telling me such a crazy tale, I would have been mad enough to go out on a Samson rampage. I ran my rough hands through my mop of black curls. Mary, I thought, you don’t leave me with any easy choices. I could declare you an adulteress and have you stoned. Who am I fooling? I’d never do that to any woman, much less to Mary. I could arrange for you to leave Nazareth until the baby is born. Maybe that would hush the gossipers.

Finally I dozed off ... and slipped into a vivid dream. A voice said to me, I know you’re brokenhearted over Mary’s pregnancy. But, listen! Mary is telling you the truth.

You mean?

Exactly! Mary has been chosen to give birth to God’s Son.

But, I interjected.

Don't try to reason it out. Just accept it for what it is. Go ahead and marry her. The promised Messiah is in her womb. The baby is going to need a godly man, like you, in his life.

At dawn I raced to Mary's house. Mary! Mary! I exclaimed, please forgive me. Last night I got my angel visit! We're going ahead with our wedding plans. Isn't it wonderful? I get to serve as the baby's father! From now on we're in this together. Don't worry, Mary. I'll take good care of you and the baby.

Prayer Thought

Lord, sometimes following you calls for trust that defies reason and a journey of faith that lingers even when the world shouts, "No!"

Faithful Father, when my road is rocky and my light is dim, may you find me faithful.

Suggested Music

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine