

VENI IMMANUEL

A script for Advent

WILD GOOSE RESOURCE GROUP

Set up

The story of the relationship between Jesus' parents and John the Baptist's parents is not as well known as other parts of the Christmas narrative.

Here the four parents-to-be have a conversation. Zechariah has to participate by signing, as he has been struck dumb. Whoever takes that part must, therefore, be able to make interpretative signs and allow for some laughter.

The script is best ended by the singing of an Advent hymn or chant. VENI IMMANUEL (which means 'Come, Emmanuel') is a four-part chant which is published in Wild Goose Songs Book Vol. 1, 'Heaven Shall Not Wait'.

Characters

Elizabeth: mother of John
Mary: mother of Jesus
Joseph: father of Jesus
Zechariah: father of John

The Script

It may be necessary to amend certain specific references or language usage, depending on when and where the script is to be used.

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Elizabeth: (Speaking to audience)
I'm expecting.

Mary: I'm expecting.

Joseph: I'm expecting.

Zechariah: (Makes a sign of despair)

Elizabeth: I'm expecting a baby.

Mary: I'm expecting a baby.

Joseph: I'm expecting to get my books.

Zechariah: (Makes a sign of despair)

Elizabeth: I'm an older woman who never thought I'd get pregnant at my age.

Mary: I'm a younger woman who never wanted to get pregnant at my age.

Joseph: I don't know how I ended up in this mess.

Zechariah: (Signs total confusion)

Elizabeth: I'm a minister's wife.

Mary: I'm her cousin.

Joseph: I'm her boyfriend.

Zechariah: *(Signs his relationship to Elizabeth)*

Elizabeth: Elizabeth.

Mary: Mary.

Joseph: Joseph.

Zechariah: *(He tries to utter his name. The others turn to him and look)*

ALL: Go on... Try.

(Zechariah attempts to make signs, but then gives up in exasperation. Joseph goes over and offers him a throat sweet)

Elizabeth: *(To Joseph)*
That'll do him no good.

We've had the doctor at him,
the speech therapist,
the psychologist...
it's no use.

(To the audience)

Sorry...
That...
he...
is Zechariah, my husband,
he's a priest,
but to save anyone asking why he's married
if he's a priest,
I just say he's a minister
...and I'm the minister's wife.

Mary: How long has he been like this, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: *(Looks to Zechariah and he puts up 8 fingers)*
Eight months.

(Zechariah puts up half a pinkie)
...Eight and a half months.

Mary: That's as long as you've been pregnant.

Elizabeth: That's right.
I got pregnant and he stopped talking.

Joseph: Was the shock too much for him?

Elizabeth: No...
actually he stopped talking
a while before I knew I was expecting.

It's really the strangest thing.

Him... a minister...
and not being able to speak.
The congregation think it's marvellous!

Maybe if some of them had got pregnant instead of me,
they wouldn't be so over the moon.

Joseph: Well, if anyone should have stopped talking,
it should have been me.
I mean, we're not even married
and Mary's six months gone.

Elizabeth: Is it just six, Mary?

Mary: Aye (Yes)...
you were expecting before me, Lizzie.

Remember how I came to tell you my good news
and your baby was already kicking?

Elizabeth: Yes, that's right, I remember now.

Mary: Have you got a name for the baby yet?

Elizabeth: No... *(Interrupted by Joseph)*

Joseph: No...
maybe she's waiting on an angel to tell her.

(Here Zechariah gets animated, trying to attract attention to himself)

Elizabeth: *(Looks at Zechariah gesticulating)*
Call him after you...?
Zechariah?

Don't be silly !
I'm thinking on a more modern name like...
well, maybe like Boris or Nikita.

Mary: Oh, you're full of Eastern promise in your old age, Lizzie.

Elizabeth: Of course that's if it's a boy.
It might be a wee girl.

(Zechariah gesticulates against the nation)

Mary: What's up with him, does he not want a wee lassie? *(or girl)*

Joseph: Haw, Zechariah, if you get a wee lassie,
we'll swap you.
I always wanted a daughter.

Mary: We'll do no such thing!

Elizabeth: So, you're quite sure, Mary...?

Mary: Oh, I am, Lizzie.
It'll be a boy.

And we've to call him Jesus.
That's what God wants...
that's what the angel said...

Elizabeth: How do you feel, Joseph?

Joseph: *(Speaking seriously)*
I believe her now, Lizzie.

Elizabeth: It took you a wee while.

Joseph: Well I had a dream that helped.

Elizabeth: Honestly, the pair of you
with your dreams and your angels,
I don't know.

Mary: Have you never seen an angel, Lizzie?

Elizabeth: No, I'm too old for that.

Joseph: What about old father time here?
Have you ever seen an angel, Zechariah?

Zechariah: *(Nods vigorously)*

Elizabeth: *(Looking at him, aghast)*
You've never told me that!

Zechariah: *(Points to his mouth)*

Mary: Lizzie,
is it usual for ministers to lose their voice?

Elizabeth: No...
but there is that story about Daniel.
You remember he had a vision
and couldn't say a word
until the Holy One arrived.

Joseph: Perhaps we'll just have to hope
the Holy One doesn't take too long.

Mary: No...
he won't take long.

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