A Godly Play Insta-Pageant

Ahead of time, prepare

Advent Boards and easels to display them

Costumes as usual (Mary & Joseph, Shepherds, Sheep, Donkey, Cow, and Magi) (note, the angels are invisible this year)

Chimes; large drum

Advent candles, as large & high-up as possible

Purple and white cloth

Bethlehem model

CAST OF CHARACTERS: non-speaking

* Mary
* Joseph
* Donkey
* Cow
* Shepherds (1+)
* Sheep (2+)
* Magi (3)
* Baby Jesus OR a doll
* SCENERY STAFF: at least 4 (in teams of 2; older children or teenagers; need to set table, light candles, carry boards and set them up on easels, and “change” candles at the end. )

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

* READERS: at least 2, up to 12, in teams of 2

SINGING: we have 2 solos in “While we are Waiting Come” and 3 solos in “Born in the Night”; 3 solos on “Twas in the moon of Wintertime;” *OR we can do them all as congregational singing without soloists.*

SCENERY PEOPLE LAY OUT: Purple cloth, 5 candles on the table; an empty manger.

Readers 1&2: OPENING

**1 Everything has changed. It is now the time of the color purple.**

2 Purple is the color of kings and queens. Nobody could wear purple in those days, except royal people. Roman citizens could wear a little stripe of purple, but that was all.

**1 Purple is a serious color, and something serious is about to happen. A king is coming, but he is not the kind of king that people thought was coming. This King had no army, no great house, and no riches. This King was a baby, born in a barn.**

2 The King who was coming is still coming. This is full of mystery. You know, a mystery is hard to enter sometimes. That is why this time of Advent is so important. Sometimes people can walk right through a mystery, and not even know it is there.

**1 This time of year you will see people hurrying in the malls, buying things and doing this and that, but they will miss the Mystery. They don’t know how to get ready… or maybe they just forgot.**

2 The Church learned a long time ago that people need a way to get ready to enter or even come close to the mystery of Christmas. The Church set aside four weeks to get ready. This is such a great Mystery that it takes that long to get ready. During this time, we are all on the way to Bethlehem. We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas.

**1 So let’s go now, with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, the Magi, and all the rest, to make the journey that was not just back then… it is also now.**

2 Please Join us in singing all the verses of Hymn #121, O Little Town of Bethlehem

Congregational Singing

AT THE END OF SONG: BRING FORWARD BOARD #1: Prophets

Readers 3&4: PROPHETS

**3 Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important.**

4 They pointed the way to Bethlehem. They didn’t know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew this was the place.

**3 On the first Sunday of Advent we remember the prophets. Here is the hand of a prophet, pointing the way to Bethlehem, showing us the way too.**

(SLOWLY)

4 Stop.

**3 Watch.**

4 Pay Attention!

**3 Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem.**

(pause – point and stare at the empty manger)

4 Let’s light the candle of the prophets.

CANDLE LIGHTER 1 LIGHTS

SOLOIST(S) SONG: While We are Waiting, Come (#92)

AT THE END OF THE SONG, BRING FORWARD BOARD #2: Holy Family

READERS 5&6: HOLY FAMILY

5 On the Second Sunday of Advent we remember the Holy Family.

**6 The Holy Family is on the way to Bethlehem, and we are going with them.**

5 Here they come!  *(point)*

*(3 characters enter, walking slowly around the church to end up at the front)*

**6 The Mother Mary,**

5 the Father Joseph,

**6 and the donkey.**

5 Mary was about to have a baby. It is very hard to walk when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she could not take another step. Then she rode on the donkey.

**6 It is also very hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. When she couldn’t ride another step, she got down and walked.**   
  
5 She rode and walked, and walked and rode.

**6 They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.**

*Pause until they are in place at the manger*

5 Let’s light the candle of the Holy Family.

CANDLELIGHTER 2 LIGHTS

SOLOIST(S) SONG: ‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime #142

AT THE END: BRING FORWARD BOARD #3: SHEPHERDS

READERS 7&8: SHEPHERDS

7 On the Third Sunday of Advent we remember the shepherds. Here they come. There are a few shepherds, and a few sheep. There were probably more, but this will do, to help us remember.

*(Shepherds and sheep come and stand near the manger)*

**8 The shepherds were standing in the fields around Bethlehem, keeping their sheep. They were trying to stay awake so the wolves could not come and get the sheep. Suddenly, there was so much light in the sky that it hurt their eyes.**

*(Drum beats in a heartbeat rhythm over the next 2 paragraphs)*

7 They were afraid. Their hearts were beating so loudly. When they could hear something besides their own hearts beating, they thought they heard singing in the sky! That also scared them, until they heard the words of the song. The angels were singing, “Don’t be afraid.”

*(chimes and/or organ play softly, as the drumbeat quietens)*

**8 Angels often say “don’t be afraid,” because it is very scary to have a messenger of God come to you.**

7 The angels singing sounded something like this: “Don’t be afraid. We bring you tidings of great joy. Peace on earth and good will to everyone. A child is born.”  
  
**8 “Go. Hurry! Run to Bethelehem, and see the Child who will change everything!”**

*Music fades out; enjoy a moment of silence*

7 Let’s light the candle of the Shepherds

CANDLELIGHTER 3

**8 Look! There is something different about this candle! It is the color of roses. This is to remind us of the great joy the angels sang of. It also helps us remember that even if it is very serious to get ready to come close to a great mystery like Christmas, you can’t be serious all of the time as you get ready. It’s also time for celebration!**

7 There is one more thing about the color of roses. It is also one of the colors for the Mother Mary. We remember her again, for without the mother Mary, there would be no baby.

**8 Please stand with us to sing all three verses of hymn #113: Angels we have heard on high**

Congregational Singing

CHIMES PLAY on the first note of every phrase ONLY

AT THE END OF THE SONG, BRING FORWARD BOARD #4: Magi

Readers 9 & 10: Magi

**10** *(if the people did not sit down at the end of the song)* **You may be seated.**

9 On the fourth Sunday in Advent, we remember the three kings, the Magi, the wise people. They came from far in the East, and they were so wise that people thought they were magic. In fact we get our own word, “Magic,” from the name they were called in their language, “The Magi.”

**10 Of all the many things they knew, they knew the most about stars. They knew where each star was supposed to be at each time of the year, so they could tell people when it was time to plant their crops, or take a trip on the ocean in a boat, or cross the high mountain passes when the snow wasn’t too deep.**

9 Suddenly they saw the wild star. It was not on any of their star maps. It went where it wanted to go. It didn’t stay put. They decided to follow the wild star to see where it was going and what it wanted to show them.

**10 Look, here they come.** (point)

*Magi enter, taking a long route around the church to end up at the front*

*Wait for them*

9 They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem, but they came from so far away that they got there after the baby was born. They are always late, it seems… every year they are late. They usually don’t arrive until January 6th, but we remember them anyway, because, like us, they too are on the way to Bethelehem.

**10 Let’s light the candle of the Magi.**

CANDLE LIGHTER #4

9 Please sing with us the first and last verses of Hymn# 151: We Three Kings

Congregational Singing

BRING IN FINAL BOARD

Readers 11 and 12: Christ Child

**11 Next week is Christmas, and we will celebrate the great mystery.**

12 Look! When you come to the mystery of Christmas, everything changes. It becomes the time of the color white – the color of pure celebration.

TABLESETTERS PLACE WHITE FABRIC

**11 This is when the baby is born, the one we have all been waiting for.**

*Baby Jesus is delivered by one of their parents,*

*placing them in the cradle/manger or in the arms of Joseph or Mary- wait for them to settle in*

12 Here is the Christ Child, the mystery of Christmas. This is amazing.

**11 But of all the creatures there that night, perhaps the most amazed was the old cow.**

*Cow comes up to the manger, slowly*

12 When the old cow came up to the feed box in the morning to eat some straw, she found a baby lying in the manger. Someone had put a soft cover over the straw. The manger had become a bed. All the old cow could do was look and look at the baby with her big brown eyes.

*Pause and look at the cow*

**11 Let’s light the Christ candle.**

12 We are almost done now; but wait. Watch. We want to show you something very strange and very important.

**11 We want to show you what happens when the light is changed. Sometimes people don’t pay attention to this. They miss this part.**

*Point at the candles*

12 Look! Do you see how the flame is in just one place now? It is right here. When I change the light, it will no longer be in just one place. You can’t see it after it spreads out all over the room, but it is there.

CANDLE CHANGER BEGINS TO CHANGE LIGHTS

**11 Watch. Do you see it? It is no longer here in this one place. Now it is spreading out, getting thinner and thinner as it fills up the room with the light of the prophets… the light of the Holy Family… the light of the shepherds… and the light of the Magi… the light of the Christ Child.**

12 Soon you might not even be able to see it at all. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t there. You can still feel the lights, filling up the room with the Christmas story. Anywhere you go, you can come close to them.

**11 This is the end of our pageant, but it isn’t the end of the story. We are still on the road to Bethlehem, because the journey was not just back then. It is still happening, now.**

# 158 Born in the Night, Mary’s Child: Soloists and everyone sings