

Mary wraps the baby in the clothes and lays him in the manger. The animals gather around. The children sing "Mary Had a Baby".

Mary: (Piece of wool) We had visitors that night. First there were some shepherds. That's where I got this piece of wool. They had a fantastic story to tell. They had been out on the hillside near Bethlehem keeping watch over their flocks. As night fell an angel of God appeared to them. They were afraid. Little wonder! It isn't something that happens every day. They fell to the ground. But the angel told them not to be afraid.

Angel: I bring you news of great joy. A Saviour is born this day in Bethlehem who is Christ the Lord. This shall be a sign to you. You shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Angels: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to all people.

The congregation sings "Shepherds in the Fields abiding". The shepherds react in fright to the angel. The angel hosts appear and dance to 'Gloria in excelsis deo'.

Mary: They hurried to Bethlehem as fast as their legs could carry them. They knew as soon as they caught sight of Jesus that they had found the right place. Later, they went around the town telling everybody the good news.

The congregation sings the chorus of "Go Tell it on the Mountain". The choir sings the verses. The shepherds travel through the congregation shaking hands and motioning towards the stable.

Mary: (Piece of incense) This still smells exotic like the other visitors we had that night. What a strange lot they were! They didn't see any angels. But they did talk about a star that they had been following. They were foreigners - astrologers from the east, they said. They had followed a star all the way from the Orient, thousands of miles. It was really exciting to see them. I had never seen anything like it before. They weren't riding on donkeys - no, believe it or not they came by camel. They wore rich robes of the finest silk. One had a turban wrapped around his head. They brought wonderful gifts to my baby Jesus. When I opened that first package and out came tumbling those gold coins, I could hardly believe my eyes. Then there was some sweet smelling incense like this piece. It's the kind the priests use in the temple. The third gift was really strange, although after all that has happened I understand why they brought it. But to bring myrrh, something we use for embalming the dead, seemed an odd gift for a baby. They knew that Jesus was destined for great things. That is for sure! They knew that he would be our Saviour and die for us.

The congregation sings "We Three Kings" as the magi process into the church and offer their gifts to the baby.

Mary: (Mary takes out a candle and lights it.) I have shared my son's story with you. The rest of it is up to you. Just as this candle can light up the whole room, so Jesus came to light up the whole world. Just as Jesus was born in that stable so many years ago, so he is born in each one of us. We may ask what Jesus wants of us. He wants us to give our hearts to him. By giving ourselves to God we too become lights to the world.

The children sing the first verse of Away in a Manger. All join in on verses 2&3. It is followed by the Offertory hymn "Joy to the World" and Eucharist.