

# Birth of John and Birth of Jesus Play

**ZACHARIAH, ELIZABETH, MARY** (Luke 1:5–80)

**Narrator:** In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest – his name was Zachariah. Zachariah had a wife named Elizabeth. Zachariah and Elizabeth\* were old and Elizabeth was considered to be barren. They were holy before God.

Zachariah was offering incense in the temple when he saw the angel and he was afraid.

**Gabriel:** Fear not Zachariah. God has heard your prayer and Elizabeth will have a son and you will name him John. John will be great before the Lord.

**Narrator:** Zachariah was slow to believe and doubted the angel.

**Zachariah:** How can this be I am so old and so is my wife.

**Gabriel:** I am Gabriel sent by God to give you good news. But since you doubted, you will be speechless until these things happen.

**Narrator:** The people were worried because Zachariah was in the sanctuary too long. When he came out, he could not speak and the people realized he had seen a vision.

Then, when he was finished with his assignment at the temple, he went home.

After this time, his wife Elizabeth conceived. She stayed by herself privately for five months. Elizabeth was very happy to be pregnant because it was considered disgraceful for a woman not to be able to give birth to children.

**Elizabeth:** The Lord has given me a child at this time and he has taken away my disgrace before others.

**Narrator:** In Elizabeth's 6<sup>th</sup> month Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary who was engaged to Joseph of the House of David.

**Gabriel:** Hail favored one – The Lord is with you.

**Narrator:** Mary was troubled by this and wondered what it could mean.

**Gabriel:** Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. Behold you will have a baby and name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called God's son and God will give him the Throne of David his father and he will rule over the House of Jacob forever.

**Mary:** How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?

**Gabriel:** The Holy Spirit will come upon you and so the child will be called Holy, the Son of God. Behold your cousin Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age and she is in her 6<sup>th</sup> month— for nothing is impossible with God.

**Mary:** Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.

**Narrator:** Mary said yes – I will do whatever God asks and the angel left.

Mary left to go be with her cousin Elizabeth, in Judah. When she entered the house of Zachariah and greeted Elizabeth, John leaped in Elizabeth’s womb when he heard Mary’s voice. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Elizabeth:** Blessed are you among women and Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? When I heard your voice the baby leaped with joy in my womb.

**Mary:** My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

**Narrator:** Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned home. Elizabeth gave birth to a son. Her friends and relatives were happy the Lord blessed her with a son. When the 8<sup>th</sup> day came to circumcise the child, they were going to name the child- “Zachariah” after his father.

**Elizabeth:** No! He will be called John.

**Narrator:** They answered her - you do not have any relatives who have this name. So they made signs to ask Zachariah what he wanted the baby to be named. Zachariah wrote “John” on a tablet and immediately he was able to speak.

**Zachariah:** John is his name. Blessed be God forever!

**Narrator:** The people were fearful of John because they knew the Lord was with him and blessed him. Then Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesized.

**Zachariah:** Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel for he has done great things for his people. John will be a great prophet of the Most High and will go before the Lord to prepare his way.

**Narrator:** The child grew and became strong in the Spirit of the Lord and was in the desert until the time of his ministry.

JOSEPH AND MARY (Matthew 1:18-24, Luke 2:1-5)

**Narrator:** Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a good man, but he didn’t want to shame her and decided to divorce her quietly.

**Joseph:** Mary, maybe we should *not* get married.

**Narrator:** Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

**Angel:** Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

**Narrator:** When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him.

**Joseph:** Let us get married and you will live with me in my home. Your son will be named Jesus!

**Narrator:** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

Six months after John was born, there was a decree from the emperor Caesar Augustus. All people must go to one's home town to be enrolled in a census. Joseph's family was the family of David.

Bethlehem was the city of David.

So Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem in Judea. They traveled from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. The trip was about 65 miles. (It would be like walking from Carlisle to Lancaster) And very soon Mary was about to give birth....

#### BIRTH OF JESUS (Luke 2:4-21)

**Narrator:** Mary and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to enroll in the census. When they arrive in Bethlehem, Mary goes into labor; it is time for her to have her baby. They come to an Inn. (An Inn is like a hotel.)

**Joseph:** Do you have any rooms? My wife is about to give birth.

**Innkeeper:** I am sorry; we have no room for you in the Inn. There *is* shelter in the stable over there. At least, you will be able to rest.

**Narrator:** While they were there, she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.

**Angel:** Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David, a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

**Narrator:** And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

**Angel:** Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on who God loves.

**Narrator:** When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

**Shepherds:** Let's go to Bethlehem to see what has happened since the Lord has told us about the newborn Messiah!

**Narrator:** So they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they explained the angels' message about the Christ child. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.

**Shepherds:** Glory to God in highest, we have seen the newborn king!

**Narrator:** All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Eight days after Mary's baby was born, he was circumcised and he was named Jesus. Jesus was the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**Characters:**

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| 1. <b>Narrator</b>                | 5. <b>Mary</b>        |
| 2. <b>Zachariah</b>               | 6. <b>Joseph</b>      |
| 3. <b>Angel(s) and/or Gabriel</b> | 7. <b>Innkeeper</b>   |
| 4. <b>Elizabeth</b>               | 8. <b>Shepherd(s)</b> |
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**Relationship of Mary to Elizabeth**

<b>Mathan</b> Jesus' Great-Grandmother (Mathan had three daughters: <b>Mary, Soba, and Ann</b> )		
<b>Mary</b> – married a <b>Levite</b>	<b>Soba</b> – married a <b>Levite</b>	<b>Ann</b> married <b>Jochabin</b>
Children of <b>Mary</b> : <b>Salome</b> – married <b>Zebedee</b>	Children of <b>Soba</b> : <b>Elizabeth</b> -married <b>Zachariah</b>	Children of <b>Ann</b> : <b>Mary</b> -married <b>Joseph</b>
Children of <b>Salome</b> <b>St. James the Greater</b> <b>St. John the Evangelist</b>	Child of <b>Elizabeth</b> <b>St. John the Baptist</b>	Child of <b>Mary</b> : <b>Jesus</b>

Mary and Elizabeth were cousins. John the Baptist, Jesus, James the Greater, and John the Evangelist were all cousins. Mary was a Levite from the line of priests. Joseph was from the house (family) of David. Because of this, Jesus could fulfill the prophecies about being a royal priest from the line of David that would rule forever.