

‘ACTING THE BIBLE’

at

Beckley School

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

(Luke 2)

18 January 2024

Joint Benefice of

**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley St. Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover
St. Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley St. John the Baptist, Stanton St. John**

The Four Parishes 'Acting the Bible' team (previously known as 'Open the Book') leads assembly once a fortnight in Beckley School. The team take stories fresh from the pages of the Bible, and make them into mini dramas, to be acted out by themselves, together with Beckley schoolchildren. Through this, it is hoped that the Bible stories are brought alive, and remembered by the children, especially as they too are involved in the acting.

The team is led by Betty Dye, a Licensed Lay Reader, and includes members from Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley. They meet once a fortnight to write the scripts, with the aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original Bible texts. This often involves comparing different Bible translations and even reading the New Testament in the original Greek!

ACTING THE BIBLE JANUARY 2024

The Childhood of Jesus Luke chapter 2

Cast: OLDER MARY; OLDER JOSEPH; YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH;
SIMEON; ANNA; PRIEST; JESUS; CHORUS

OLDER MARY & OLDER JOSEPH WALK AND STAND BESIDE THE CHORUS

Older Mary: Oh, I remember everything so well, and so does Joseph here, even though it was such a long time ago. I am Mary, Jesus's mother, and he, my Son Jesus, he died and rose again about ten years ago now. I was so young then and look at me now! But those two old people made such an impression on me.

Chorus: Tell us, Mary! Who were these people? Please tell us!

Older Mary: They were called Anna and Simeon.

Chorus: Tell us Mary! Tell us about Anna!

Older Mary: Anna was 84 years old. (*ANNA WALKS ON FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN AND KNEELS DOWN*) She went to the Temple in Jerusalem every day to spend time with God and to wait for the Messiah who would come and save us. Anna would stay all day in the Temple until late, praying and often missing her meals so that she could give God her full attention.

Chorus: Tell us, Mary! Tell us about Simeon!

Older Mary: Simeon was a very holy man. (*SIMEON WALKS ON FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN AND STANDS IN FRONT OF ANNA*) Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw God's saviour coming. That very morning, he was prompted by the Spirit to get up and go straight to the Temple.

Chorus: Tell us, Mary! Did you and Joseph go to the Temple too?

Older Mary: Yes, we did! It was the custom in those days for a baby boy to be taken to the Temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated to the Lord God. Joseph and I took the baby Jesus, and a thanksgiving gift of two pigeons, and travelled up from Bethlehem.

Older Joseph: Mary and I walked into the Temple, carrying Jesus, and Simeon came up to us. *(YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH ACT OUT THE SCENE WITH SIMEON AND ANNA)* He took Jesus in his arms and then he said:

Simeon: Oh, Almighty Lord, I praise and glorify your Holy Name! Now I can go in peace, as you have promised. With my own eyes I have seen, in this baby boy, all that you have planned for us. This baby will be the light of truth to all the other people in the world, and he will bring glory to your people Israel.

(YOUNG JOSEPH GO FORWARD, ARMS OUT READY TO TAKE BACK BABY JESUS. ANNA HOBBLE FORWARD, ARMS RAISED, SO THAT THE THREE WITH ARMS OUT MAKE A TRIANGLE AROUND THE UPLIFTED BABY)

Anna: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord! Come here everyone! Here is the one who will rescue us from our enemies, the one who will pay the price for us to be God's people.

Older Joseph: I was overwhelmed, and I marvelled at what they were both saying.

Simeon: Bless you Joseph! Bless you Mary! This Jesus will make many rise and many fall and he will show what is in the hearts of all. But Mary, be prepared, because your own heart will be broken.

(SIMEON GIVES THE BABY BACK TO YOUNG MARY, THEN HE AND ANNA WALK OFF WITH YOUNG JOSEPH. YOUNG MARY, CARRYING THE BABY, WAITS FOR A BIT, LOOKING DOWN AND THEN WALKS OFF SLOWLY)

Chorus: Tell us, Joseph! What happened next?

Older Joseph: Well, we had some adventures after that! First, there were those wise men who came travelling from miles away following a star which led them to us. Then we had to escape at night and go all the way down to Egypt because Herod's soldiers were killing all the babies in Bethlehem.

Older Mary: But finally we found our way back to Nazareth, and Jesus grew up just like all the other boys in the village. Then, one day, when Jesus was 12 years old, something happened.

Chorus: Tell us, Mary and Joseph! Tell us what happened when Jesus was 12.

Older Joseph: Every year, everyone from our village of Nazareth used to go to Jerusalem for the big Passover Festival. The journey took about three days and afterwards we would get together again and walk back to Nazareth.

Older Mary: We had been walking all day and it was time to set up camp. But where was Jesus? We thought he was with his friends, but no-one had seen him all day. (*YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH START TO ACT OUT THE SCENE*)

Young Mary: Jesus! Where are you? It's time for supper.

Young Joseph: Has anyone seen Jesus? Where can he be?

YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH DASH AROUND SEARCHING

Chorus: Oh no! You must have been so worried! Whatever did you do?

Older Joseph: Everyone searched, called, questioned, but nobody had seen Jesus for the whole day. No one! So we decided to walk all the way back to Jerusalem.

Older Mary: For three whole days we searched the streets, the shops, the marketplace, but no-one had seen him. We were desperate! Then suddenly Joseph said:

Young Joseph: Mary, remember how Jesus loved the Temple! Perhaps the priests there have seen him. Come on, let's go to the Temple right now!

YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH WALK OFF BEHIND THE CURTAIN. PRIEST and JESUS ENTER AND SIT CENTRE STAGE. YOUNG MARY AND JOSEPH RUN ON.

Young Mary: There he is! Jesus, we were so worried! What did you think you were doing?

Jesus: I honestly thought you would know where I was. Didn't you realize that I would have to be here in my heavenly Father's house, the Temple?'

Priest: This boy is amazing! He asks such thoughtful questions and sometimes he even supplies answers himself. His understanding and appreciation of our Lord God is outstanding.

(BIG HUGS AND THEN ALL WALK OFF. OLD MARY STEP FORWARD)

Old Mary: I will remember that time to my dying day. Jesus walked home with us after that, so quietly, and remained as good and obedient as he had always been before. But I never forgot Simeon and Anna or the time we thought we had lost Jesus. I thought about that a lot.

Chorus: Thank you, Mary! Thank you, Joseph! You have given us all a lot to think about too.