

KINDER SPIELEN THEATER

The Christmas Story

The Christmas Story

Scene 1: In Nazareth

The stage set is divided into two parts. The left part shows the inside of a house in Israel at the time of the birth of Christ. One can see a cabinet maker's workshop and a living room. On the right half one can see Nazareth (white flat roofed houses). Everything looks very nice. There are many flowers and trees. A choir sings a Christmas carol. Then a sign is carried across the stage which reads 'In Nazareth'.

Mary sits on a low stool. She sews while she is humming a song. Joseph is busy in the workshop. Somebody is knocking on the door.

Mary: Come in.

Daniel enters the room.

Daniel: Hello, Mary.

Mary: Hello, Daniel. Why are you here?

Daniel: I want to ask Joseph if the box I asked him to make is ready.

Mary: Just go to him in the workshop and ask.

Daniel goes into the workshop.

Daniel: Hello, Joseph.

Joseph: Hello, Daniel. Your box is ready. You can take it home.

Daniel: Oh, that's great, because I'll need it today.

Joseph gives him the box and says.

Joseph: We can talk about the payment when you come to pick up your chair
It will be ready tomorrow.

Daniel: Done. Good bye, Joseph.

Joseph: Good bye.

Daniel leaves the stage and says to Mary.

Daniel: Good bye, Mary.

Mary: Good bye, Daniel.

After Daniel has left, Mary puts her sewing things aside, sets the table and Joseph continues his work.

Mary: Joseph, dinner is ready!

Joseph comes and sits down at the table. Both break off a piece of bread while they say.

Mary and Joseph: We thank you, oh Lord, for the bread you give us today.

Both eat and drink.

Mary: Joseph, I have to tell you something. I wanted to tell you this morning but I was still too upset and had to think about it.

Joseph: What, Mary?

Mary: Last night I experienced an unimaginably great fortune which will be granted to the two of us.

Joseph: What kind of fortune?

Mary: An angel appeared to me and said (*now some music can play*): Don't be afraid, Mary, the Lord is by your side. You will bear a son whom you shall call Jesus. This son is the son of God and he will rule from now and for ever.

Joseph: (*turns to Mary and embraces her*) Mary, what wonderful news! We will have a son and what a grace: you will give life to the son of God.

Mary: Yes, Joseph. But why has God chosen me from all women?

Joseph: I don't know. Perhaps, being humans we can't understand it.

Mary: The child will be a great delight for me. But I am still a little afraid.

Joseph: God will help us.

In this moment trumpet- or drum sounds set in and a troop of Roman soldiers and their commander come on stage. They line up on the right side facing the audience. The trumpeter (drummer) finishes his presentation. Mary runs outside and says.

Mary: Joseph, a unit of Roman soldiers has assembled.

Joseph: They will have something to announce.

Joseph comes outside as well and stands next to Mary. Now the Roman commander steps a few steps forward and shouts

Commander: (*loud*) Citizens of Nazareth, listen to what the Emperor in Rome has ordered!

Several citizens then come on stage. among them Magdalena, Judith, Habakuk and Micha.

Magdalena: *(to Judith)* I hope they are not going to order anything bad this time.

Judith: I hope not too.

Now the trumpeter (drummer) gives another signal.

Commander: *(loud)* The Emperor Augustus has ordered that all people are to be counted. And you too, citizens of Nazareth, will have to be counted *(The trumpeter or drummer plays another signal)*. Everyone is to be counted in the city he was born in. *(The trumpeter or drummer gives another signal.)* For this reason, all men and women have to travel to the places where they were born. The count will take place in six months. This is the Emperor's demand.

With trumpet- (drums) sounds the soldiers march off the stage.

Habakuk: *(to Mary and Joseph)* Joseph and Mary, did you hear that?

Mary: Of course we did.

Micha: Isn't this a very tough order? Some people will certainly need to make far and difficult journeys now.

Judith: And how hard it will be for the old and sick.

Magdalena: The Romans are not interested in this. They order and we have to obey.

Joseph: Unfortunately this is the way it is.

Magdalena, Judith, Habakuk and Micha say good bye to Mary and Joseph and all together say.

All: Good bye, Mary and Joseph.

Joseph: Mary, we will soon have to go to Bethlehem then.

Mary: Yes, Joseph, I'll soon start packing.

Joseph: The journey is far and will be very exhausting. Will you be able to manage it, Mary? I am very worried.

Mary: The child will probably be born on the journey. But I'm sure we'll manage. You will be with me and God will help us.

A Christmas carol is sung.

-End of scene 1-

Scene 2: Observatory in Persia

The stage set is divided into two parts. To the left one can see the inside of an observatory. One can make out quadrants, star maps and scrolls. To the right there is a desert landscape at night. In the sky there are many small stars, the Milky Way and one very large star. A sign reads: 'In an Observatory in Persia'.

Three astronomers Kaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar are working in the observatory: they read scrolls, observe the stars etc. Kaspar suddenly discovers the bright star in the Western sky, points to it and then excitedly says to his colleagues.

Kaspar: Melchior, Balthasar, come here please! *(Both come and stand next to him).*
Look there! In the Western sky a new star has appeared, or am I wrong?

Melchior: No you're right, Kaspar. It really is new!

Balthasar: Not only is it new, it is also the brightest star in the sky!

Kaspar: In order to make sure, let's check in the star directories. Perhaps it has been discovered and recorded after all.

All pick up scrolls and read in them.

Melchior: I can't find anything.

Balthasar: Me neither.

Kaspar: I can't find anything either. So it really is a brand new star!

Melchior: A new star which shines brighter than all the others. What is that supposed to mean?

Balthasar: It can only mean the revelation of a very important event.

Kaspar: I am going to check in the old books. *(Does that and then says)* This star will reveal the birth of a very big king.

Melchior: And as this star can be seen on the Western horizon, it shows the birth of a king far in the West.

Balthasar: We have to show the star to our wives and children. *(Calls loudly):* Wives, children, come over please!

3 wives and 2 children appear and one wife says.

Wife 1: Why are you calling us?

Kaspar: Just look at the bright star over there in the West!

All look.

Child 1: Does this star mean anything, dad?

Kaspar: Yes, it reveals the birth of a very great king.

Wife 2: I find that it's nothing special. There were uncountable big kings. Unfortunately it was always the case that the bigger the king, the greater and more dreadful the wars that he led.

Melchior: So far there has never been a king who was revealed through such a bright star. This is why I believe that this king will be a very special king. Perhaps even one who will rule all without wars.

Wife 2: Then he would fulfil the hope of all people and he would really be a very big king.

The wives and children leave the stage.

Balthasar: I want to see this new king. What do you think? Shouldn't we travel to the West together and visit him in order to pay tribute to him?

Kaspar: Yes we should do that.

Melchior: But it will be a very long and dangerous journey to get there. What will our wives say to it?

Balthasar: They will understand that scholars like us cannot miss the birth of such a king. Come, let's pack and go to the next oasis. From there we will join a caravan to the West.

Kaspar: But first we have to say good bye to our wives and children.

They put some items inside bags, take them on their backs and leave the stage. A Christmas carol plays.

- End of scene 2-

Scene 3: In Bethlehem

The stage set is divided into two parts. On the left one can see the inside of a stable with animals. The stable has a flat roof. Above there are some more white houses with flat roofs and further above, the stars and the sky. To the right a landscape at night can be seen. In the sky there are many very small stars, the Milky Way and a large star. On the earth one can make out a flock of sheep. A Christmas carol is sung and a sign reads 'In Bethlehem'. Mary and Joseph stand in front of a cradle. If possible they are spotlighted so that the shepherds who are in front of the right stage set can not be seen. Mary takes the child from the cradle onto her arm. She says.

Mary: I have a beautiful child, more perfect than a flower made from gold. I wouldn't give it away for the whole of Galilee and Israel. *(Music playing)*

She puts the child back into the cradle.

Joseph: Mary, this child has been born for all the people in the world.

Mary: I know, Joseph, and this is why my heart is a bit scared as well.

Joseph: God will protect us and his child. Look, already yesterday he helped us again, when he provided this accommodation for us. Even though there was no space left anywhere.

Now the spotlight is taken off Mary and Joseph and moved to the shepherds. One can hear the bleating of sheep and the howling of the wind. The resting shepherds pull their blankets up.

Shepherd 1: It is just another cold night.

Shepherd 2: I will try to fan the fire.

Does that. Now, if possible, the night sky should be spotlighted by an additional light which would make it even brighter. The shepherds then make gestures which show that they are fearful. For instance they put their hands in front of their eyes, move closer together, etc. The voice of an angel speaks.

Angel: Don't be afraid. I am announcing a great fortune which will be shared by all people. Because today the Saviour is born, who is Christ, the Lord. And here is my clue: you will find the child wrapped in a cloth and lying in a cradle.
(*music playing*)

Now a choir takes over.

Choir: Shall God in the sky be honoured and may peace on earth bring pleasure to the people.

The light is now dimmed back down again.

Shepherd 3: Let us go to Bethlehem and witness the story which happened there!

They go to the stable. The light follows them.

Shepherd 4: (*pointing to the child in the cradle*) Look, there is the child in the cradle, just as predicted!

Shepherd 5: It really is the Saviour for all people, also for us.

Shepherd 1: Let us pray to it!

They go down on their knees. After a short while they get back up and give presents to Mary and Joseph.

Shepherd 1: Here you are. I'm sure you can do with some milk.

Gives Joseph the milk.

Characters

	large role	medium role	small role or non-speaking role
Scene 1 In Nazareth	Mary Joseph	commander	Daniel Magdalena Judith Habakuk Micha soldiers drummer
Scene 2 Observatory in Persia	Kaspar Melchior Balthasar	wife 2	wife 1 child 1 child 2 wife 3
Scene 3 In Bethlehem		Joseph Mary Angel Kaspar Balthasar	shepherd 1-5 choir Melchior Host soldiers trompeter or drummer
Epilogue		child 1	child 2

Costumes

The costumes can be fantasy-costumes, for example made from old clothes. For the children the customs are much more important than the scenery or the props, because the costumes help them to identify with their roles.

Mary: long dress of blue smooth fabric, a belt of the same colour, a white and gold headscarf.

Joseph: Garment of dark brown jute fabric, a brown headscarf, a waistcoat.

Women of Nazareth: Garments of plain sheets, headscarves of cotton (for example coloured nappies).

Men of Nazareth: Garments of ecru jute fabric, plain headscarves of cotton.

Soldiers: Garments of red cotton fabric; armament of gold-coloured paperboard helmets of toy stocks, the shoes can be made of leather leavings.

The wives/children

of the magicians: oriental fantasy costumes (caftan, coloured embroidered blouses, harem-pants, white and gold affected headscarves, adornment).

Angel: white garment with wide sleeves and gold braid.

Herdsmen: Similar to the men of Nazareth, with additional fur and wool waistcoats or capes.

Innkeeper: similar to the men of Nazareth, additionally an apron of leather or brown fabric.

Music

The music for this play is composed as background music for some text passages and in addition proposals for songs.

The accompanying instrumental music can be played at the following text passages:

1st scene: Maria tells about the annunciation

3rd scene: Maria and her child - annunciation to the herdsmen

The music can also be played before or after the specific passages, so that the children can speak their text without the background music.

The music (composed by Mr. P. Peters) is available at:

P.Peters

c/o Fam. Deutsch

Zum Bauckmert 28 b

51702 Bergneustadt

Scenery

The script of the play includes brief notes and proposals on scenery.

On the following pages copy-masters are provided as an aid to the creation of the scenery.

These are photocopied on a transparency, placed on an over-head projector and projected onto a paper (for example a wallpaper) that is to be used for the scenery. The class can now trace the contours of the copy-master onto the wallpaper, using wide felt-tips.

Materials

wallpaper (48 m, ca. 50 cm broad) for six sceneries for 24 parts each 2 meters in length (4 parts per scenery)

plus

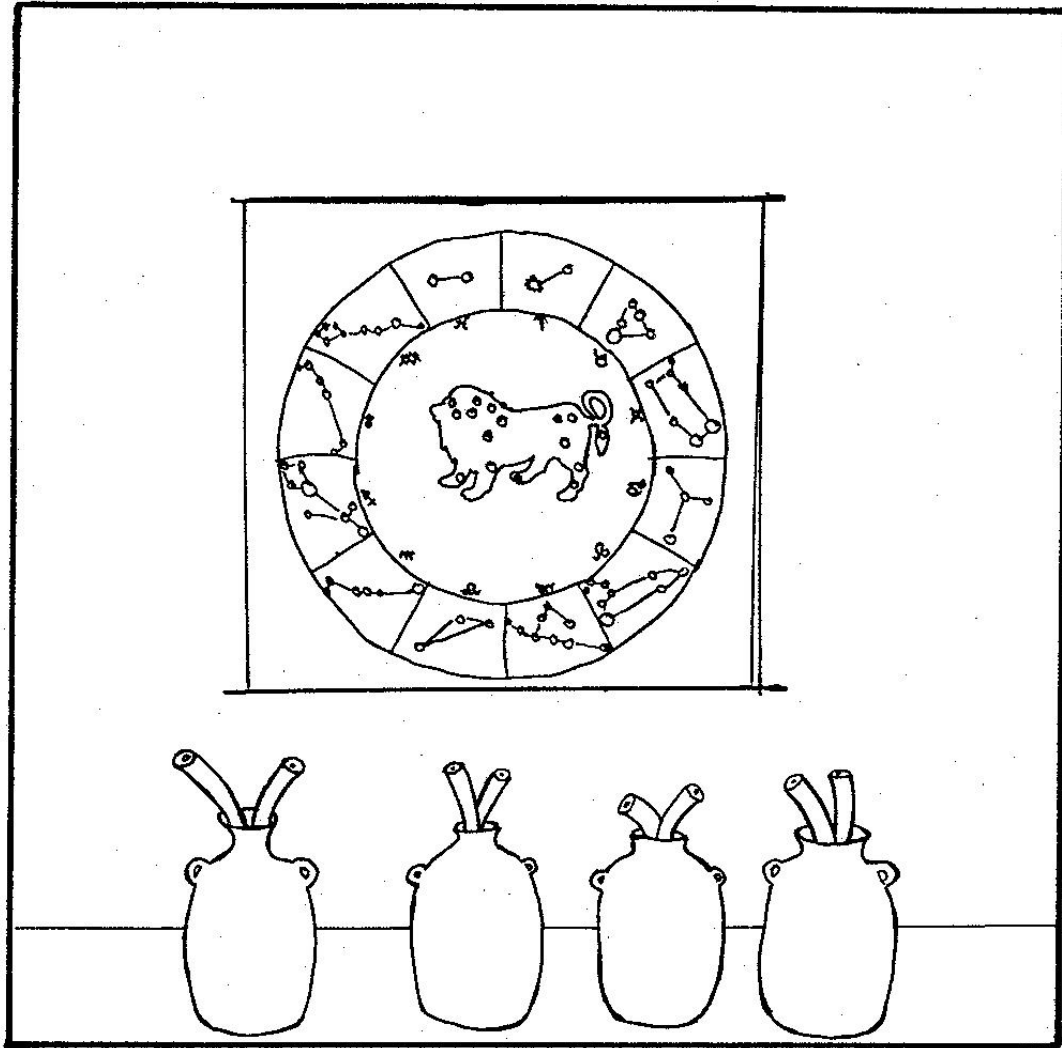
- tape, ca. 36.5 meters (ca 5 cm broad) to stick the parts together;
- another 50.5 meters of tape to mask the borders of the sceneries
- 6 wooden rods, each ca 2.20 meters in length
- stapler

for tracing the outlines

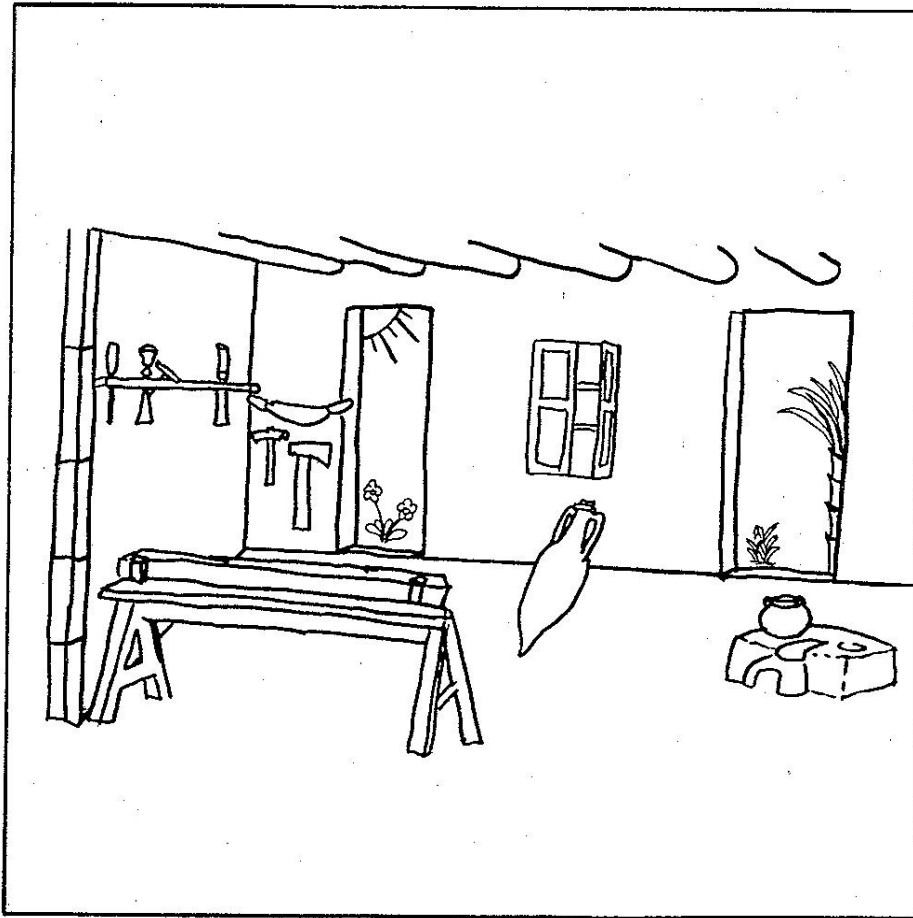
- foils for the overhead projector
- black, wide felt-tips
- tape (to stick the wallpapers on the wall)
- an overhead-projector

for painting

- colours (yellow, red, blue, green, brown, white, black etc.) and pots
- to mix the colours
- brushes with different breadths
- old newspapers and / or protective sheets and
- tape (to fix the sheets)
- overalls (one per child; for example discarded shirts)



The inside of an observatory at the time of Jesus' birth.
Picture of the zodiac and tankards with scrolls (Scene 2, left)



The inside of a house in Nazareth at the time of Jesus' birth
living-room and workshop. (Scene 1, left)

Photos of a performance



Mary tells Joseph about the angel that had appeared to her.



A troop of Roman soldiers appears in front of the house of Mary and Joseph.



The soldiers announce the demand of the Emperor Augustus.



The wise men in the observatory in Persia, reading in old scrolls.



The women of the wise men talk about the new bright star on the western sky.



The wise men start their journey to Jerusalem.



Mary and Joseph and the shepherds in Bethlehem.



The angel appears to the shepherds.



The shepherds present their gifts.



The wise men appear and talk with the host.



The wise men present their gifts.



Mary learns, about the danger for her child.