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“Angels Don’t Do Diapers”

By
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- What** An off-duty Gabriel stops in to visit Mary and Joseph just after Jesus is born.
- Themes: Christmas, Messiah, God’s Will
- Who** Mary - a young woman
Joseph - a young man
Gabriel - an archangel
- When** A little while after the birth of Jesus, on the same night
- Costumes** Period clothing for Mary and Joseph. An angel costume for Gabriel. Our Gabriel wore bright-colored sneakers for an additional comic touch.
- Props** A swaddled baby doll (or a real baby if you’re a glutton for punishment)
Extra swaddling cloths
- Why** Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25
- How** The comedy and the heart of this whole script hangs on the casual attitude of Gabriel contrasted with his moments of genuine care. The set can be minimal – just a place or two for Mary and Joseph to sit occasionally. This script pairs well with “Gideon’s Nighttime Academy of Sheep Herding,” using the same actor for Gabriel.
- Time** 5 minutes

Lights up.

*Inside the stable, **Mary** sits alone, holding the swaddled Baby Jesus.*

She is quietly singing or humming a lullaby.

Mary: *(a soft chuckle)* I'm singing to the composer of the universe. No pressure there.

Joseph enters with a bundle of swaddling cloth.

Joseph: Dinah said she'll bring us something to eat in a little while. She still feels bad that this was the only place they had for us to stay. Oh... and she sent these clean cloths for the baby.

Mary: *(still looking at the Baby)* Oh, good. I guess that means it's time to change him. *(she continues to look at Him, not moving to stand)*

Joseph: I guess so. *(He comes closer with the cloths. He speaks tenderly with a little bit of teasing)* So then... you'll need to put him down.

Mary: *(a small laugh)* I know, I know. I just can't stop looking into His face.

Joseph: *(also looking at Him)* He looks like you.

Mary: I don't know about that.

Joseph: *(teasingly)* Well, He certainly doesn't look like me.

Mary: *(breaking her gaze at the Baby for the first time to look at Joseph)* I know this has been hard. But I hope you know... *(glances up toward the heavens)* He chose you just like He chose me.

Joseph: *(takes a moment, then turns to look at her)* I know that in my head. But in my heart... I'm afraid, Mary. These hands... they're rough. I've got a splinter that's been there for a week. There's sawdust under my fingernails. And this brain – I don't know about theology or prophecy or even parenthood. I know about miter joints and wood grain and table legs. How can a man like me be father to a baby conceived by the Holy Spirit?

Gabriel enters behind them, but **Mary** and **Joseph** don't see him yet.

Mary: Joseph... that morning when you came and saw me... you told me what the angel said. Do you remember?

Gabriel: *(grandly)* "Joseph, Son of David, don't be afraid."

Startled, **Mary** and **Joseph** turn to look at the angel.

Gabriel: *(much more casually, surveying the surroundings)* How do you like the place? Not bad for a stable, is it?

Mary: Gabriel?!?

Gabriel: In the flesh. Well... whatever this is I'm made of. I thought I'd come check on you two and your little bundle of joy before it gets a little crazy. *(he approaches **Mary** to look at the Baby)*

Joseph: You seem... different.

Gabriel: *(momentarily confused, then realizes)* Oh – you mean the voice, the pose, the gravitas. That's my proclamation self. I'm sort of on break. By the way, I heard what you were saying, and you should know that "don't be afraid" thing – that came straight from the top.

Joseph: Really? I mean... I know the Lord sent you...

Gabriel: Yeah, the Lord sent me to tell *you* all of that *specifically*. Not just the part about Mary – but that you shouldn't be afraid.

Mary: You said that to me, too.

Gabriel: Oh, yeah! *(formally)* "Mary, do not be afraid. You have found favor with God." That one was a personal highlight. *(notices **Mary** and **Joseph** aren't that impressed. He gets more serious, but still friendly)* Listen... Joe. Can I call you Joe? Mary's right. The Lord chose you. You're a carpenter, right? Look at it this way... you're not going to use a hammer to cut a board. You're not going to use a saw to pound a nail. You're going to choose the right tool for the right job. Same with the Lord. Now, I'm not privy to all of the Master's plans. But I know this... He wanted you to be in this place for this moment. So no fear! You're going to teach this Little Guy things He'll need to know. The importance of hard work. Integrity. Kindness.

Joseph: That's exactly what makes me afraid. I mean... how can I teach Him anything? He's the Son of God, right?

Gabriel: *(compassionate)* No one expects you to understand it all. For heaven's sake, I'm an archangel, and I don't understand it all. I also don't know all the details, and the details I *do* know... well, I don't want to spoil a lovely visit. But trust me... you can trust *Him*. *(gestures heavenward)*

Mary: Those details you won't mention... they're going to be rough, aren't they?

Gabriel: *(more somber)* Yes, Mary. Yes. But it's a good plan. The *best* plan. For all humanity.

Mary: And it all starts with Him.

Gabriel: In one way. In another way...

Joseph: *(beginning to understand)* It starts with you, Mary.

Mary: *(a pause as she takes this in... then)* With us, Joseph. It starts with us.

Gabriel: *(pleased, he moves in between them)* You both said yes. To each other. To the unknown. To Him. That's not easy. *(he pulls them both in for an awkward embrace)* I'm so proud of you two kids. And I've got it on good authority that the Master is, too. *(there is a quiet moment, all three of them looking at the Baby. Gabriel breaks the moment and the embrace.)* Now... here's some free advice. Enjoy these quiet moments alone with Jesus. They won't last forever.

Joseph: That sounds ominous.

Gabriel: Oh, no, no... not ominous. Not for now. Just... things might get a little louder. You might want to give Dinah a heads-up that you're going to have visitors.

Mary: Visitors? Who?

Gabriel: Sorry. No spoilers. But you'll like them. *(leans in to see the Baby's face better, then wrinkles his nose)* And... one of you might want to change the baby before they arrive.

Joseph: Well... since you're here...

Gabriel: *(throws hands up in a "woah" gesture)* Hey now... angels don't do diapers. *(glances at non-existent watch)* Look at the time. I've got some shepherds to surprise. *(realizes he slipped up)* Forget I said that.

Mary: Thank you for stopping by... and for everything else.

Gabriel turns to leave, but **Joseph** speaks and he stops.

Joseph: Hey... one last question... *(gestures heavenward)* He's watching over us, right?

Optional: Underscore begins. If followed up with a song, the accompaniment could start here.

Gabriel: *(smiles)* Oh, Joe... you don't quite get it. He's not just watching over you. He's looking up at you. *(looks toward the Baby).* He's *with* you.

Gabriel exits.

Joseph: *(quietly)* It's all true. This Baby... our Son...

Mary: Emmanuel.

Joseph: God... with us.

Lights down.