

# BETHLEHEM BARN

*by Barbara Heimburger*



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**Animal adventures  
for Advent candlelighting**

**by Barbara Heimburger**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

DONKEY

COW

LAMB

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Bethlehem Barn* is an Advent journey with three animals (a donkey, a cow, and a lamb) that live in the stable. These Advent readings celebrate the season through the eyes of the creatures. Each script addresses a traditional component of Advent: hope, peace, love, joy, and the birth of the Christ child. Each script also closes with an appropriate Scripture reading and the lighting of a candle.

There are four readers required. The Narrator should be a teenager or an adult. The three animal readers should be children ages eight through twelve. The lamb should be the youngest of the three readers. The Narrator should stand near the Advent candles. The readers who portray the animals should stand apart from the Narrator.

The five musical selections called for in the script are well-known Christmas or Advent songs that may be found in most hymnals.

### **Costume Suggestions:**

NARRATOR: Street clothes (something conservative so as not to detract from the presentation)

DONKEY: Gray shirt and gray slacks (optional: paper ears on a headband and a pin-on tail)

COW: White shirt and black slacks (optional: paper ears on a headband and a pin-on tail)

LAMB: White shirt and white slacks (optional: paper ears on a headband and a pin-on tail)

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## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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**Music Cue:**

Organ, piano, or guitar plays

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” softly in the background.

*(When the music begins, NARRATOR, DONKEY, COW, and LAMB enter and take their respective places.)*

**NARRATOR:** Today is the beginning of Advent, that wonderful season leading up to the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We know what humans were doing in those days. But what was going on in the stable at Bethlehem? Let’s go back in time and meet a donkey, a cow, and a lamb, three creatures that live in the barn of the Bethlehem Inn.

**DONKEY:** Back and forth, to and fro, up and down the hill. I hauled supplies to the inn all day long. I’m exhausted!

**COW:** Donkey, stop complaining. Be glad you have a job.

**LAMB:** Cow’s right. You’re important to Jesse the Innkeeper. You carry all sorts of things for him. And Cow, you give milk for the guests. But I don’t have anything to do. Sometimes I wonder why Jesse keeps me.

**DONKEY:** Lamb, stop worrying. You’ll be important, too. You just have to grow a little more.

**LAMB:** Really?

**COW:** Really. One day your wool will make blankets for the inn.

**DONKEY:** Just like the blankets I carried today. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. I overheard one of the rabbis talking about a special Child who’s coming soon. He said the Child’s name will be Immanuel.

**COW:** Immanuel? *(Pause)* Sounds like an old family name.

**DONKEY:** The rabbi said it means “God with us.”

**COW:** God with us? Donkey, that can’t be right. Why would God come to earth and live like humans do? They’ve made a mess of everything!

**DONKEY:** I’m only telling you what I heard. And the rabbi also said that this baby will bring hope to the world.

- 1 COW: We really need hope.  
 2 LAMB: Where's this baby now?  
 3 DONKEY: Oh, he hasn't been born yet.  
 4 COW: Well, if that baby really is God, he'll be born in a huge  
 5 palace in a big city!  
 6 DONKEY: Maybe. But Bethlehem is getting bigger every day  
 7 because of all the visitors. In fact, Jesse has rented all  
 8 of the rooms.  
 9 LAMB: Wouldn't it be wonderful if that baby were born here?  
 10 That's what I'm going to hope for — that God will be  
 11 born in Bethlehem.  
 12 NARRATOR: *(After a pause)* "Therefore, the Lord himself shall  
 13 give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and  
 14 bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" *(Isaiah*  
 15 *7:14)*. Today we light the candle of hope. *(The*  
 16 *NARRATOR lights the candle of hope, after which ALL exit.)*

17  
 18 **Music Cue:**

19 Fade music.  
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22 **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

23  
 24 **Music Cue:**

25 Organ, piano, or guitar plays

26 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

27 softly in the background.  
 28

29 *(When the music begins, NARRATOR, DONKEY, COW, and*  
 30 *LAMB enter and take their respective places.)*

- 31 NARRATOR: When we last heard from the animals in the  
 32 stable, they were hopeful about the coming of the  
 33 special Child. But as the birth of Jesus draws closer, the  
 34 animals can sense the growing tension in the little town  
 35 of Bethlehem.  
 36 COW: I can hear Jesse the innkeeper shouting.  
 37 LAMB: What's the matter with him, Cow?  
 38 COW: He's having a fit about this new tax that Caesar

1 Augustus decreed.

2 LAMB: Tax? Donkey, you said it was a census to count  
3 people.

4 DONKEY: Lamb, first they count you, then they tax you —  
5 and there's nothing you can do about it.

6 COW: A lot of people are upset.

7 DONKEY: They're afraid that if they can't pay, the Roman  
8 soldiers will come.

9 COW: And that would be a dark day for all of us.

10 DONKEY: Maybe that special Child will help. When I heard  
11 the rabbi talking, he said that this Child would bring  
12 peace to the world.

13 COW: Did the rabbi say when this would happen?

14 DONKEY: No, he didn't. I don't think he knew.

15 COW: Bringing peace to the world is a big job for a baby. I  
16 wonder how Caesar Augustus will feel about that.

17 LAMB: I don't know how Caesar will feel, but peace on earth  
18 will make *me* feel safe, especially when it's dark at  
19 night.

20 NARRATOR: *(After a pause)* "The people who walked in  
21 darkness have seen a great light ... and the government  
22 shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be  
23 called wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting  
24 Father, the Prince of Peace" *(Isaiah 9:2a, NKJV; 6b)*.  
25 Today we light the candle of peace. *(The NARRATOR*  
26 *lights the candle of peace, after which ALL exit.)*

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28 Music Cue:

29 Fade music.

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## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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**Music Cue:**

Organ, piano, or guitar plays

“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne” softly in the background.

*(When the music begins, NARRATOR, DONKEY, COW, and LAMB enter and take their respective places.)*

**NARRATOR:** During this Advent season, we’ve been visiting with three animals in the Bethlehem stable. The donkey, the cow, and the lamb are starting to feel the excitement of the town, which now overflows with visitors.

**LAMB:** Donkey, where’ve you been all day?

**DONKEY:** Working hard for the inn. Jesse’s afraid of running out of food with so many guests to feed. I’ve been carrying basket after basket to the kitchen.

**COW:** Well, the inn isn’t going to run out of milk. I’ve seen to that. Lamb, I even saved some for you.

**LAMB:** Thank you, Cow.

**COW:** You’re welcome. I know you need milk to grow.

**DONKEY:** And here’s some extra hay from my lunch.

**LAMB:** Donkey, it’s so nice of you to share with me.

**DONKEY:** Now, don’t go overboard. It’s only hay.

**COW:** I think hearing about that special Child may have changed us.

**DONKEY:** You could be right. The rabbi said the Child would be a wonderful Counselor who would love all people and creatures, remember?

**LAMB:** Even creatures like us?

**COW:** Well, he’ll probably love you, Lamb. You’re cute. But I’m not sure he’ll love me or Donkey.

**DONKEY:** You know something, Cow? I don’t think what we look like is going to matter. Somehow, I think this Child is going to love everyone.

**NARRATOR:** *(After a pause)* “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” *(1 Corinthians 13:13, NKJV)*. Today we light the candle of



1 COW: That means the manger would be his crib.  
 2 LAMB: If he's as special as the rabbi says, it won't be long  
 3 before the whole world knows where he is!  
 4 DONKEY: Just think — the three of us will be here to  
 5 celebrate his birthday!  
 6 NARRATOR: *(After a pause)* "This is the day the Lord has  
 7 made; we will rejoice and be glad in it ... the mountains  
 8 and hills will burst into song ... and all the trees of the  
 9 field will clap their hands" *(Psalm 118:24; Isaiah 55:12b,*  
 10 *NIV)*. Today we light the candle of joy. *(The NARRATOR*  
 11 *lights the candle of joy, after which ALL exit.)*

12  
 13 **Music Cue:**

14 Fade music.  
 15

16  
 17 **CHRISTMAS EVE**

18  
 19 **Music Cue:**

20 Organ, piano, or guitar plays "Silent Night" softly in the  
 21 background. Music is available in hymnals.  
 22

23 *(When the music begins, NARRATOR, DONKEY, COW, and*  
 24 *LAMB enter and take their respective places.)*

25 NARRATOR: "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and  
 26 wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a  
 27 manger; because there was no room for them in the inn"  
 28 *(Luke 2:7)*. The animals in the Bethlehem stable are  
 29 amazed at what they see.

30 DONKEY: He's so small — just like any other human baby.

31 COW: But he isn't crying, even though the straw in that  
 32 manger has to be uncomfortable — and smelly.

33 LAMB: I wish my wool had made his blanket. But one day  
 34 when I'm all grown up, my wool will make him a  
 35 beautiful robe, fit for a king.

36 COW: Look! More people are coming.

37 DONKEY: Who are they?

38 LAMB: I know one of them. It's Nathan, the shepherd. My







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*by Barbara Heimburger.*

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