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- Perform a musical up to 5 times in one academic year, to a public audience, within your school.*
- Reproduce song lyrics on paper or for display on interactive whiteboards or similar screens.
- Photocopy the script and score for the cast to learn lines, and musicians to play the songs.

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- by post – Edgy Productions, 8 Roman Way, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7PQ
- by FAX – 0845 833 33 49
- by email – info@edgyproductions.com

The performance licence will permit the holder to do the following:

- Perform a musical up to 5 times in one academic year, to a public audience, within your school.*
- Reproduce song lyrics on paper or for display on interactive whiteboards or similar screens.
- Photocopy the script and score for the cast to learn lines, and musicians to play the songs.

Contact name:

Name of school / organisation:

Address:

..... **Postcode:**

Tel: **email:**

Number of performances: **Performances Dates: from** **to**

By ticking, select one of the performance licence options below:

Standard Performance Licence ☐ **£36.00** (including VAT)
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or

Performance Licence with charges ☐ **£42.00** (including VAT)
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By ticking, select one of the payment options below:

☐ **I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to Edgy Productions Ltd**

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**Writers rely on payments from public performances for their livelihoods.
Please ensure they receive their dues.**

PLOT SUMMARY

With the opening song (***Life’s Good***) we meet the carpenters of Bethlehem, one of whom is a young apprentice, Joseph, who works for an elderly carpenter called Simeon. Although very happy in his job, Joseph leaves Bethlehem to start his own business in Nazareth, where there is less ‘competition’! Simeon therefore needs a new apprentice (***song – Scratch My Back***), but when all the suitable youngsters are snapped up by other trades people, the only candidate left is a poor girl called Sarah. Although reluctant to take her on (***song – The Lucky Ones***), Simeon realises that Sarah is a talented woodworker when he sees the intricate carvings she is trying to sell to make money for her poor family. The two really hit it off and over time they become the most sought-after carpentry team in Bethlehem.

One day, the Roman soldiers announce that lots of visitors will soon be coming to the town. This means all the innkeepers and guesthouse owners want their properties repairing and renovating (***song – Spick And Span***), which in turn means lots more work for the carpenters. We learn that one particular visitor will be Joseph, Simeon’s old apprentice, who is returning to Bethlehem with his new wife Mary (***song – Side By Side***). Mary is soon to have a very special baby; a gift from God.

As his workload increases, sprucing up the inns and guesthouses, the now frail Simeon finds it all too much. Although desperately sorry for Sarah, he has to hang up his chisel and saw, retire from carpentry and let his apprentice go. Sarah bravely tells him that she’ll be fine and goes back to selling her carvings, hoping she’ll make enough from Bethlehem’s visitors to support her family. However, as they arrive, the visitors are more bothered about finding somewhere to stay rather than buying souvenirs. Also, their attention is drawn to the unusually starry sky (***song – Stars Over Bethlehem***) and they pass by Sarah without noticing her.

Sitting sadly at the roadside, Sarah is approached by one of the innkeepers. He has a broken manger which urgently needs repairing, as it’s the only place to lay a baby which has just been born in his stable! Having expertly fixed the manger (for which she generously asks no payment) Sarah then meets a group of shepherds. On the instructions of angels who appeared to them, the shepherds are hurrying to see the baby whom they’ve been told is the son of God. One shepherd feels embarrassed to meet such a special child as he has a broken crook, so again without taking payment, Sarah fixes it for him and the shepherds rush off. Sarah then meets three mysterious strangers also looking for the baby, and each carrying a gift for Him in a wooden box. Unfortunately one of the boxes (containing a gift of gold) has a broken lid (***song – I’ve Broken My Box***) which the stranger feels would not be right to give to the son of God. Sarah mends the box for nothing and she is left alone once again.

However, the stranger whose box she mended soon returns and, recognising Sarah’s kindness and generosity, invites her to come to the stable (***song – Fill Your Hearts***) to meet the baby herself. On learning that Joseph is there (having heard Simeon talk fondly of him over the years) she insists that the old man comes too. After an emotional reunion around the manger, Sarah is given some of the gold as a thank-you for her help in making this wonderful night run a little more smoothly. We are told that, with the gold, she ensures Simeon has a comfortable retirement and sets up as a carpenter in her own right, securing the future of her family. So once more, life’s good! (***song – Life’s Good - reprise***)

CHARACTERS

(31 speaking parts in order of appearance)

5 Narrators

Joseph – including singing solo

Simeon – including singing solo

Weaver

Builder

Baker

Farmer

2 Carpenters

Sarah – including singing solo

4 Soldiers

4 Innkeepers

Mary

Gabriel – singing solo only, no spoken lines

2 Travellers

4 Shepherds

First Wise Man – including singing solo

(Ensemble Characters – for featured songs and choreography)

Carpenters

Trades People

Children

Soldiers

Townsfolk

Travellers

The other Wise Men

Angels

Scene 1

(As intro music plays (CD track 9) the children enter and take their positions for the first scene. Fade the music when ready.)

Narrator 1 We're sure there won't be many of you out there who don't know the story of the very first Christmas. Most of you must have seen (or even taken part in) a fair few nativity plays over the years, so Mary, Joseph, the innkeeper, angels, shepherds, wise men and of course the baby Jesus will all be very familiar to you.

Narrator 2 Now, these characters will play an important part in *our* story, but we'll also be introducing you to one or two less well-known ones, whom you probably won't have heard of! But even though you've not come across them before, they still had an important part to play in what happened all those years ago.

(Joseph enters carrying a chisel and a saw.)

Narrator 3 But let's start off with someone who *is* well-known. Joseph, whom we mentioned earlier, was a well-respected, hard-working carpenter. He lived in a village called Nazareth, but he wasn't born there. No, Joseph was born and grew up far away, a four-day journey to be precise, in a town called Bethlehem.

Narrator 4 Bethlehem was where, in his youth, he learned the carpentry trade. Along with other keen youngsters in the town, he spent his early years mastering the saw, hammer, chisel and plane, until he and his friends became qualified, skilled craftsmen.

(The other carpenters enter, each carrying tools of their trade.)

Narrator 5 And oh, what a jolly bunch the carpenters of Bethlehem were, never happier than when they were busying themselves at their workbenches, surrounded by sawdust and wood-shavings. They would whistle merrily as they turned a piece of timber into a door, a table, a cartwheel or a simple set of bowls and plates. For them life was busy, and life was good.....

Song Life's Good *(CD tracks 1 & 10, lyrics p16)*

(Carpenters supported by the whole cast)

(As the song finishes Joseph stands forward of the other carpenters. A suitcase is slid across the floor to him. He picks it up.)

Joseph Friends, gather round; I have an announcement to make. Although I'm very happy here, Bethlehem has more than enough carpenters, so I'm leaving to set up in business where there's a little less competition!

(Simeon, with a grey beard, stands forward and embraces Joseph, who then exits.)

Simeon *(waving to Joseph)* Joseph, my dear, dear friend. I’ve known you since you were a child. Things just won’t be the same here without you!

Narrator 1 Simeon was one of Bethlehem’s oldest and most experienced carpenters. When Joseph was a boy he had been Simeon’s apprentice. That means Simeon had taken Joseph under his wing, taught him all his carpentry skills and had given him his very first job.

Narrator 2 They worked happily together for many years and became the best of friends. But now, with Joseph deciding to move away, Simeon was a man down. He couldn’t manage everything on his own, so there was only one thing for it.....he had to find himself a new apprentice.

Simeon I need to find myself a new apprentice, and I know just the place to go!

(The trades people enter; builders, bakers, weavers, farmers etc, two or three of each, all carrying a sign showing the tools/products of their trade and the word ‘HIRING’. With the carpenters, they stand in their groups at one side of the stage – see staging suggestions/props.)

Narrator 3 One day every month the local trades people would gather in Bethlehem’s town square, to hire youngsters who were looking for work.

(The children nervously enter and stand on the other side of the stage.)

Narrator 4 These children, many from poor families, were keen to start earning a living. They would come to the town square hoping to be chosen as apprentices by the local bakers, builders, weavers, farmers and, of course, carpenters.

Narrator 5 It was an arrangement that everyone benefitted from. In this way the town prospered and everybody kept themselves busy.

Song Scratch My Back *(CD tracks 2 & 11, lyrics p17)*

(Trades people and children supported by the whole cast)

(As the song finishes the trades people and children mingle. The trades people inspect the children, checking their hands, muscles, teeth and behind their ears. As the following conversations take place, they ‘pair-up’.)

Weaver Hmmm, on closer inspection you’re a bit grubby, but I reckon after a good scrub we could make a decent weaver out of you!

- Builder** Well, you’re nothing but skin and bone. Still, with a few good meals inside you and a bit of fattening up, we’ll have you carrying bricks in no time. You’re hired!
- Baker** You’re kind of rough round the edges. You need a haircut, and a pair of shoes wouldn’t go amiss, but I think you show promise. Fancy being a baker, you little whipper-snapper?
- Farmer** *(sniffing)* Phew! What a pong! You’ll certainly fit in on my farm, particularly with the goats and sheep! They’ll love you!
- Carpenter 1** One..two...three.....ten whole fingers - good! That means it doesn’t matter if you lose a couple while you learn how to use a saw! Come on, you’re going to be a carpenter!

(The rest of the children and trades people mingle then all exit in pairs, leaving only one tradesman, Simeon, and one child, Sarah. Sarah sits cross-legged, looking sad. She has a cloth bag slung across her shoulder.)

- Narrator 1** When the carpenters, farmers, weavers, builders and bakers had chosen suitable apprentices, they took them to begin their training in the skills of their new trades.
- Narrator 2** Nearly every trades person now had a new apprentice. Simeon, however, had found no-one. He still needed a youngster who could fill the position left by Joseph, but the only child remaining was a little girl called Sarah who, quite frankly, didn’t look up to the job.
- Narrator 3** Sarah was from a poor family who lived on the outskirts of Bethlehem. They were relying on her to earn extra money so they would have enough food and clothing to see them through the coming winter. If she couldn’t find a job, they would really struggle.
- Narrator 4** But a small girl like this couldn’t become a carpenter, surely? Who’d ever heard of a girl making a living hammering and sawing great lumps of wood? Simeon certainly hadn’t. Nevertheless, he was a kind man and the least he could do was offer this lonely little girl a few minutes of his time.....

Song The Lucky Ones *(CD tracks 3 & 12, lyrics p18)*

(Sarah and Simeon supported by the whole cast)

- Narrator 5** Simeon longed to help Sarah, but what could he do? There was no way he could make this small, weak girl his apprentice. As he put a comforting arm around her, he noticed the cloth bag she had over her shoulder.
- Simeon** What is in your bag, child?

*(Sarah takes out three or four intricate wooden carvings – **see staging suggestions/props**. She hands them to Simeon.)*

Sarah I like to carve wood, you see. I make these ornaments and try to sell them to get money for my family. I know they’re not very good, not as good as a proper carpenter like you could make.

Narrator 1 But Simeon was astounded at the quality of the carvings. Never in his life had he seen such beautiful woodwork, especially not created by the hands of a small child. He immediately had a change of heart.

Simeon Well I never! This changes everything. I’d be a fool not to make you my apprentice. Sarah....you’re hired!

*(As **intro music** plays (CD track13) Simeon and Sarah exit and the stage is made ready for the next scene. Fade the music when ready.)*

Scene 2

*(A workbench stands centrally – **see staging suggestions/props**. Sarah, now wearing an apron, is sanding a length of wood. Simeon sits on a stool looking tired.)*

Narrator 2 During the next few years, under Simeon’s watchful eye and guiding hand, Sarah became a fine carpenter. With hard work and dedication she perfected her carpentry skills and together she and Simeon became a great team.

Narrator 3 Simeon would make all the large items; beams, posts, doors and frames, while Sarah shaped and carved them to fit exactly, often adding beautiful details and decorative touches to really finish them off. Of all the buildings in Bethlehem, it was easy to tell which ones had been worked on by Sarah and Simeon.....because they looked the best!

Narrator 4 However, Simeon was now an old man, much frailer than when he had first met Sarah. He had been struggling lately with his heavy workload and finding it hard to cope. This was something that would not get easier, especially given the announcement made in the town one afternoon.

*(A small regiment of Roman soldiers marches on. In formation they stand across the front of the stage – **see staging suggestions/costumes**. The rest of the trades people, extra townsfolk and the innkeepers follow on and gather round to listen. Soldier 1 reads from a scroll.)*

Soldier 1 Caesar Augustus, the ruler of this land, has issued a decree. Every man must return to the town of his birth, with his family, to register their names for a new tax.

- Soldier 2** Which basically means the few of you who weren’t born here in Bethlehem will have to clear off for a while, back to where you came from. But seeing as most of you *were* born here, most of you will be staying!
- Soldier 3** Now, our records show that over the years many hundreds of men born in Bethlehem have left to live elsewhere. This means they will all be returning here, with their families, to sign the register.
- Soldier 4** This is the calm before the storm! Brace yourselves, ’cause this town is going to get pretty busy! Oh, and you might want to tidy up a bit.....

Song Spick And Span *(CD tracks 4 & 14, lyrics p19)*

(Soldiers supported by the whole cast)

(As the song ends the soldiers exit.)

- Narrator 5** So why did this announcement mean that things were going to get harder for Simeon? Well, with lots of expected visitors, the innkeepers and guesthouse owners of Bethlehem would have to make sure their properties were in a good state of repair.
- Innkeeper 1** The rafters in my roof are riddled with woodworm! I can’t have them collapsing on my guests’ heads! That would be really bad for business!
- Innkeeper 2** My dining room table is too small. I’m going to need a much bigger one or else all my extra guests will be eating off their laps. I couldn’t possibly ask them to do that!
- Innkeeper 3** Well, the door on my outside toilet is rotten and falling off its hinges! I can’t have my guests sitting in there with the whole world watching them!
- Innkeeper 4** And my old stable is really in need of a complete makeover. The last thing I need is horses and donkeys complaining about the standard of their accommodation! There’s nothing worse than a grumpy donkey!
- Narrator 2** This meant the carpenters of Bethlehem were going to have a lot of heavy work coming their way, to make sure the visitors to the town had somewhere comfortable to stay. Unfortunately, Simeon wasn’t sure his old bones were up to the job.....

(As intro music plays (CD track15) all exit, with Sarah supporting the fragile Simeon. The stage is cleared for the next scene. Fade the music when ready.)

Scene 3

Narrator 3 Now, you’ll remember that one of the men who left Bethlehem, the town of his birth, was Joseph, Simeon’s former apprentice. A lot had happened to him since he set up as a carpenter in Nazareth, a town far away.

Narrator 4 Actually, it’s probably fairer to say that a lot had happened to Mary, the young woman he had recently married. Her life was going to be a lot busier and more complicated than she’d ever expected. But we’ll leave it to the happy couple to explain the details to you.....

(Mary and Joseph enter, hand in hand.)

Song Side By Side *CD tracks 5 & 16, lyrics p20)*

(Mary, Joseph and Gabriel supported by the whole cast)

(Two suitcases are slid across the floor to Joseph. He picks both up.)

Joseph So we’ll have to travel all that way just so that Caesar Augustus can clear me out of this year’s profits! As if we haven’t enough on our plates!

Mary Look on the bright side, Joseph. Maybe there’s a chance you’ll be able catch up with your old friend you speak so much about, the one you used to work with.

Joseph Of course, Simeon! If I could see him then that would make this trip worthwhile. Now I’m actually looking forward to it. Come on Mary, we’re off to Bethlehem!

Narrator 5 So, with Mary’s baby due any time, they saddled up their donkey and set off on their long journey back to the place Joseph was born.

(As intro music plays (CD track 17) they exit. Fade the music when ready for the next scene.)

Scene 4

Narrator 1 Back in Bethlehem those hundreds of visitors had started to arrive. The local trades people, in particular the carpenters, had been very busy sprucing up the town, making necessary repairs and getting everything ship-shape. But, as expected, Simeon had been finding the workload very difficult.

(Simeon hobbles on supported on each arm by two other carpenters. Sarah follows and watches from a short distance, unseen by them.)

Simeon *(wincing in pain)* It’s no good. I just can’t cope with the work. It’s all getting too much for me. I hate to say it, but I think my carpentry days are over. It’s definitely time I retired.

Carpenter 1 But what will you do Simeon? How will you make ends meet? You can’t be without money in your old age.

Simeon I’ll get by, I don’t need a lot. It’s Sarah, my apprentice, whom I worry about. She can’t be without a job. Perhaps one of you could take her on?

Carpenter 1 I’m sorry Simeon, but I already have an apprentice, a strong boy who can lift heavy timber.

Carpenter 2 No other carpenter in Bethlehem is going to take on a weak girl, Simeon, even one as skilful as Sarah.

Simeon But her family rely on her to bring home money. They will really suffer this winter, all because of me. I feel terrible.

(The carpenters exit as Simeon rubs his aching joints. Sarah approaches him.)

Narrator 2 Sarah had overheard everything that had been said. Her sweet nature and the fact that she loved Simeon, meant that she didn’t want to add to the old man’s worries. For his sake she knew what she had to do.

Sarah Simeon, I’ve been thinking, I don’t want to be a carpenter anymore. Sorry to let you down, but it’s time for a change. I’m going to look for another job, perhaps as a weaver or a baker.

Narrator 3 She wanted to make their parting as painless as possible. She thanked him for everything he’d done for her, then before he could see the tears in her eyes she turned and walked away.

(Sarah exits in one direction. Simeon hobbles off in the other direction.)

Narrator 4 Simeon wasn’t a fool – he knew exactly what Sarah was doing and why. It was a selfless act, but somehow it only left him feeling worse. As he shuffled home he asked God to watch over this kind and brave little girl, hoping that one day he would see her again. Little did he know, he wouldn’t have to wait long.....

*(As **intro music** plays (CD track 18) they exit. Fade the music when ready for the next scene.)*

Scene 5

(Sarah enters, carrying her shoulder bag, and sits centre stage. She takes out the wooden carvings and displays them in front of her. She also takes out a piece of wood which she begins whittling with a knife.)

Narrator 5 Sarah couldn’t face telling her family she no longer had a job. Instead of going home, she sat at the side of the road with her wooden carvings on display, hoping to sell a few to the large number of visitors who were flocking to the town.

(The Travellers enter. They ignore Sarah and stare at the sky instead.)

Narrator 1 But not a single one of them noticed her. Everyone’s attention was drawn to the evening sky, which seemed be alive with shimmering light. And there, directly over Bethlehem, was a bright new star, illuminating the heavens and the earth below.

Song Stars Over Bethlehem *(CD tracks 6 & 19, lyrics p21)*

(Travellers supported by the whole cast)

Traveller 1 Well, as beautiful as the sky is, I really can’t stand around gazing at it all evening. I have to find a room for the night.

Traveller 2 I heard they’re being snapped up so quickly there aren’t many left! We’d better hurry or else we’ll be sleeping rough on the streets!

(The Travellers exit, leaving Sarah alone.)

Narrator 2 Things were looking hopeless for Sarah. Even with all these visitors milling around, she hadn’t sold a single wooden carving, and without a job she had no idea how she might provide for her poor family.

Narrator 3 But then she was suddenly approached by someone whom she recognised. It was one of the town’s innkeepers – the one whose stable she and Simeon had recently repaired! He was carrying something quite heavy, huffing and puffing and looking very anxious!

(Innkeeper 4 enters, carrying a manger – see staging suggestions/props.)

Innkeeper 4 *(garbling anxiously)* Oh there you are, Sarah! I’ve been looking for you everywhere! You have to help me! There’s a woman in my stable...she’s just had a baby. This manger... it’s all I can offer her....but look, it’s broken! Is there something you can do?

Sarah A manger? Why would someone who’s just had a baby need a manger? Isn’t it for animals to eat out of? Surely she doesn’t want to do that!?

Narrator 4 He explained how a woman and her husband had turned up at his inn, begging him for a room for the night. Unfortunately, the only free space he had was his stable, which they had gratefully accepted. The woman was about to have a baby and needed a cradle; the manger of hay was all there was to lay the baby on....but it was broken.

Innkeeper 4 I don't know what it is, but there's something special about these people, Sarah, particularly their baby. I can't really explain it, but I know we have to help them! Please can you mend this manger?

(Sarah takes the manger and works on it with some tools from her bag.)

Narrator 5 Quickly and skilfully she worked on the manger until it was as good as new. Without asking for any payment she gave it back to the innkeeper, who thanked her and hurried away. Sarah didn't have long to think about his strange story, as the innkeeper wasn't the only person that night who was in need of some emergency woodwork!

(The innkeeper exits. A group of shepherds then hurriedly enters. One shepherd stops by Sarah while the rest continue in the same direction as the innkeeper. They stop just before exiting and turn to the shepherd with Sarah.)

Shepherds WILL YOU PLEASE HURRY UP! WE'RE GOING TO BE LATE!

Shepherd 1 Wait a moment! *(to Sarah)* Sarah, please help me! We're on our way to see the new baby king, but I can't meet him with a broken crook! It just wouldn't be right!

Sarah The new baby king? Whatever do you mean?

Shepherd 1 The son of God! He's been born tonight in Bethlehem, in a stable! While we were watching our sheep on the hillside, a host of angels came to us to give us the wonderful news! They told us we had to visit Him! But the top of my crook has snapped off and I simply can't show up carrying it in this state!

Narrator 1 Sarah fixed the broken head back onto the crook. She even carved some beautiful detail onto it, so that the shepherd could hold it with confidence in front of the special baby. Without taking any payment, she gave it back and the shepherds all hurried off. But the requests for Sarah's help didn't stop there.....

(To the opening bars of the next song, the three Wise Men enter.)

Song I've Broken My Box *(CD tracks 7 & 20, lyrics p22)*

(The three Wise Men supported by the whole cast)

Sarah *(stepping forward)* Excuse me, but I think I can help.

Narrator 1 Sarah took the broken box containing the gold and skilfully repaired the lid. It looked perfect when she’d finished, a gift worthy of God’s own son. The mysterious men thanked her, took the box and hurried away to find the baby. Yet again Sarah neither asked for nor received payment for her work.

Narrator 2 She smiled to herself. True, she had sold no carvings and therefore had no money to take to her family, but she was happy that she had been able to help all those who had needed it that evening. Hungry and tired she fell asleep at the roadside, her head spinning with thoughts about the special baby, the new king born in a stable.

(The lights fade slightly as Sarah lies down. After a moment, Wise Man 1, whose box was broken, re-enters and stands over Sarah. He gently shakes her awake.)

Narrator 3 But Sarah’s evening wasn’t over just yet.....

Wise Man 1 Child, wake up. You must come with me. There’s someone I want you to meet.

(As intro music plays (CD track 21) Sarah wakes and the two exit. Fade the music when ready for the next scene.)

Scene 6

(The nativity tableau. Mary and Joseph sit centrally by the manger. The shepherds and two wise men kneel either side. Angels stand in attendance.)

Narrator 4 That night Mary had given birth to her baby, whom she had named Jesus, just as the angel Gabriel had told her to do. She had wrapped Him up and laid Him in the manger. Now, as He slept, angels watched over Him and the shepherds and wise men knelt and worshipped Him.

(Wise Man 1 enters with a nervous Sarah. They stand at the edge of the group.)

Wise Man 1 Sarah, this is Jesus, whom we have all travelled so far to see. Because of your help tonight, because of your kindness and generosity He has a comfy bed, and visitors and gifts worthy of a king.

(Wise Man 1 leads Sarah to the manger, where she kneels.)

Narrator 5 So Sarah got to see the special child. She felt so happy to be part of this small group who were there in the stable, kneeling in worship and giving thanks for His birth.

Song Fill Your Hearts *(CD tracks 8 & 22, lyrics p23)*
(Whole cast)

- Mary** *(smiling at Sarah)* Hello Sarah. I am Mary, His mother.
Thank you for everything you have done tonight.
- Joseph** And I am Joseph. We’ve come from Nazareth, but I used to live here in Bethlehem. I’m a carpenter like you, Sarah.
- Mary** Yes, Joseph would have mended the broken manger, but his hands have been rather full with other things tonight, as you can see!
- Sarah** You’re Joseph? Joseph the carpenter who used to live here in Bethlehem? *(exiting excitedly)* Everyone, please excuse me! There’s something really important that I have to do. I’ll be back in just a minute!
- Narrator 1** Sarah knew there was one person who should really be here with them at this happy gathering. As she and Simeon had worked those long hours together, she had often listened to him talk fondly of his old apprentice and friend, Joseph. Excitedly she ran to the old man’s house, woke him from his sleep and brought him to the stable.
- (Simeon enters with Sarah. Joseph rushes over to him and they embrace.)*
- Joseph** Simeon! Simeon! My dear old friend! You’re here!
- Narrator 2** Both men wept with joy at being reunited. Joseph introduced Simeon to his new family and Simeon, like the other visitors to the stable that night, knelt by the manger and thanked God for His special gift.
- Narrator 3** We know how the story of Jesus’ life continued after that night, but what of Sarah and Simeon? Well, fortune did smile upon them. The wise man whose box Sarah had fixed, gave her a small share of the gold that was inside it, enough to keep her family fed and to take over Simeon’s carpentry business. This in turn gave Simeon a small pension and happy retirement.
- Narrator 4** In Bethlehem, Sarah became everyone’s first choice when they needed a bit of woodwork doing and, never happier than when she was standing at her workbench, for her life was busy and life was good....

Song Life's Good *(CD tracks 9 & 23, lyrics p16)*
(Whole cast)

THE END

Life's Good

Chorus *Life's good when you work with wood
And do nothing but create all day.
Hey! Hey!
Life's fine when you spend your time
With a chisel and a saw
Who could ever wish for more?*

Verse 1 There's no-one so contented,
We are such happy folk,
When sawing up a piece of pine
Or fashioning a chunk of oak! Well,
The rain may fall
And clouds may fill the sky.
You won't hear us complain
And here's the reason why....

Chorus *Life's good when you work with wood.....*

Verse 2 And when we get a splinter,
Or bash our finger tips,
Or drop a hammer on our toes
The smile will never leave our lips! Well,
The rain may fall
And clouds may fill the sky.
You won't hear us complain
And here's the reason why....

Chorus *Life's good when you work with wood.....*

Shout *LIFE'S GOOD!*

Scratch My Back

Verse 1

(Trades people) If you have got stick-ability, there is the possibility
You’ll be an apprentice here today.
So if you’re bright and keen and fit
And not afraid to work a bit,
Come with us and maybe earn some pay.

Chorus

(All) Scratch my back, scratch my back,
Scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours – OK?
Scratch my back, scratch my back.
I’ll scratch yours – we’re partners all the way!

Verse 2

(Children) If we have got stick-ability, there is the possibility
We will feel grown-up and learn a trade.
We’re ready to work hard, it’s true
And do the best we can for you!
’Specially if we know that we’ll be paid!

Chorus Scratch my back, scratch my back.....

Verse 3

(All) If they have got stick-ability there is the possibility
They will earn a crust and make some dough!
Their boss’s work-load will be less,
As long as they don’t make a mess!
Go on, why not let them have a go!

Chorus Scratch my back, scratch my back.....

Repeat chorus

The Lucky Ones

Verse 1

(Simeon)

Little girl, why are you all alone in this place?
Who are you? What is this sorry look on your face?
You are too small to work, you should be back at home
Where you’d be safe and sound, not out here on your own.

Chorus

(All)

*And we know that we are the lucky ones.
There are others without their fair share.
Who can they lean on when they need a friend?
Who’ll show them somebody cares?*

Verse 2

(Sarah)

I am here seeking work, as my family is poor.
Yes, I’m small but I’ll try really hard, that’s for sure.
My father is ill, there’s no money you see,
So I must find a job – I need you to help me.

Chorus

And we know that we are the lucky ones....

Verse 3

(All)

What will happen to Sarah? We all want to know.
Will she feel bitter winds or a warm, sunny glow?
Simeon must decide what the future will bring.
He must make up his mind. Will he do the right thing?

Chorus

And we know that we are the lucky ones....

Spick And Span

Verse 1 Caesar Augustus, the ruler of this land,
Has given an order that every single man
Must pay a tax
Back in the town where he was born.
It's safe to bet Bethlehem will get
Visitors in the thousands!
Get yourselves ready,
This is the calm before the storm!
So let's make this place.....

Chorus *Spick and span, spick and span!
We need to tidy up just as quickly as we can!
Spick and span, spick and span!
Tidy up as quickly as we can!*

Verse 2 Caesar Augustus, the ruler of this land,
Has given an order that every single man
Must pay a tax
Back in the town where he was born.
Just days from now (oh, holy cow!)
You won't know what has hit you!
Get yourselves ready,
This is the calm before the storm!
So let's make this place.....

Chorus *Spick and span, spick and span.....*

Middle 8 Clear the litter, sweep the floor,
Paint each window frame and door.
Trim the bushes, clean the well
And someone please sort out that awful smell!

Chorus *Spick and span, spick and span.....*

Repeat chorus

Side By Side

Verse 1

(Joseph) When I met Mary I soon fell in love
And asked her to marry me.
(All) Bunches of flowers he took to her house
And he knelt down on one knee.
(Mary) I'll be the wife of a carpenter,
A life that will suit me just fine.
(All) But there'll be sawdust all over the place,
So let's hope she doesn't mind!

Chorus *Who knows what is coming today or tomorrow?
Life can make us happy or fill us with sorrow.
The ups and the downs will happen, whatever.
Standing side by side they will face it together.*

Verse 2

(Gabriel) I came to Mary to tell her that she
Was going to have God's son.
(All) She had been chosen from many, and He
Decided she'd be the one.
(Mary) I was afraid, it was like a dream,
I worried about what you said.
(All) You would be mum to a king, and that's quite
A change from the life you led!

Chorus *Who knows what is coming today or tomorrow.....*

Verse 3

(Joseph) I need to go back to Bethlehem -
This letter, it tells me so.
(All) That's where you came from, you have to return,
The law says you have to go.
(Mary) I'll come with you, though I'm not too keen!
The journey will be such a drag!
(All) You have to leave right away, hurry up!
Get ready and pack your bag!

Chorus *Who knows what is coming today or tomorrow.....*

Repeat *The ups and the downs will happen, whatever.
Standing side by side they will face it together.*

Stars Over Bethlehem

Chorus *Stars over Bethlehem twinkle on high,
Dotted around in the evening sky.
This town’s so pretty, it’s hard to believe
Any of us ever wanted to leave.*

Verse 1 Look up above at this magical scene!
Pin-points of silver, with darkness between.
See how they sparkle and flicker and glow,
As the earth watches from here, far below.

Chorus *Stars over Bethlehem.....*

Verse 2 One of the stars stands out more than the rest,
Bigger and brighter, so clearly the best.
Shimmering gently, it lights up the night,
Beaming, as if to show heaven’s delight.

Chorus *Stars over Bethlehem.....*

I've Broken My Box

Verse 1

(All)

Wise men come to see the king,
Presents each for Him they bring.
Special wooden boxes hold
Frankincense and myrrh and gold.
But, something awful happened not so very far from here...

Chorus

(Wise Man 1) *I've broken my box!*

(All) *He's broken his box!*

He snapped off the lid and it no longer locks!

Oh what can he do? He hasn't a clue!

He can't meet the son of God with a broken box!

Verse 2

(All)

Over plains and desert sands,
Distant countries, foreign lands.
They have travelled far and wide,
One bright star their only guide.
But, something awful happened not so very far from here...

Chorus *I've broken my box....*

Verse 3

(Wise Men)

Years we've waited patiently,
Now it's happened, finally.
Our hearts are filled with joy,
We're soon to meet this baby boy!
But, something awful happened not so very far from here...

Chorus *I've broken my box....*

Repeat Chorus

Fill Your Hearts

Chorus *Fill your hearts and raise your voices,
Join with us in song.
Sing out loud, give Him the glory.
It's a brand new start for everyone.*

Verse 1 Asleep on a manger of hay,
A new king born on this day.
Beneath a star shining bright,
A miracle's happening tonight....

Chorus *Fill your hearts.....*

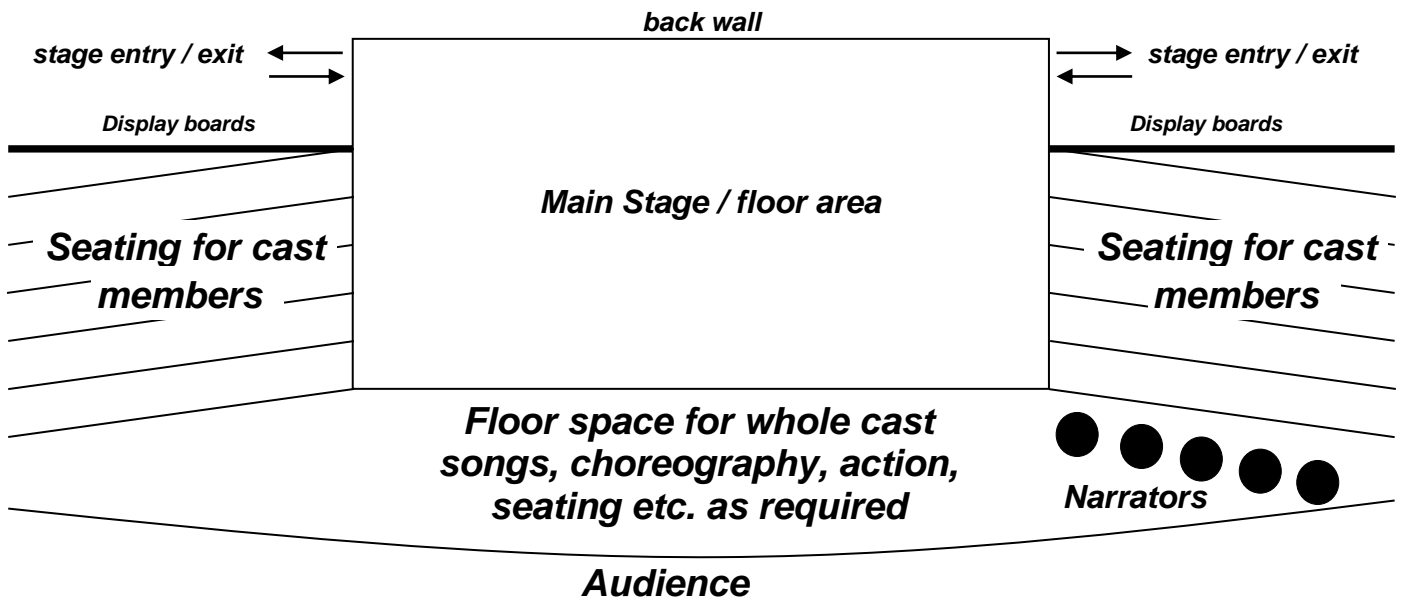
Verse 2 A gift of peace and of love
Is given from heaven above.
Beneath a star shining bright,
A miracle's happening tonight....

Chorus *Fill your hearts.....*

Repeat Chorus

STAGING AND PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS

The Apprentice has been written to be adaptable to most school hall set-ups, whether you have a stage or not. Below is just one representation of a possible staging layout.



- **Scenery** – The back wall behind the main stage could display a biblical town scene, with white flat-roofed houses and wooden stables and barns. This can be repeated on the display boards behind the two seating areas either side of the stage.
- **Furniture** – An old wooden table would serve as an ideal work bench. Alternatively use a normal classroom table, the legs of which can be wrapped in corrugated card on which a grain-effect has been printed or painted. A similar covering on the table top could also be made. Logs or small tree stumps on the floor would give a more authentic ‘workshop’ look. A wooden or cardboard box can be decorated to represent the manger, with four wooden legs attached at the bottom. Bales of straw will add to the stable setting for the nativity tableau.
- **Props (listed by scene)** – **Scene 1:** A selection of carpentry tools, eg. saws, hammers, chisels etc - probably best to use toy ones! A suitcase. Signs/placards (these could be cardboard squares on sticks) reading ‘HIRING’, with pictures to represent the trade of the person holding one, eg. a loaf of bread for the bakers, a loom for the weavers, a brick for the builders etc. A cloth bag containing a penknife and small wooden carvings or ornaments – these can either be wooden figures of perhaps animals or abstract shapes borrowed from home, or clay models made by the children and painted brown.
Scene 2: Various lengths and shapes of timber and carpentry tools.

A scroll. **Scene 3:** Two suitcases. **Scene 5:** The same bag of carvings from scene 1. A broken manger – see notes in ‘Furniture’ above. A shepherd’s crook – for this you’ll need a stout stick at the end of which is a curved ‘head’, which can simply be made from stiff card and stuck on with blu-tack or similar. Sarah will need a more ornate head ready in her bag to replace the ‘broken’ one. Three ornate wooden boxes, either like mini treasure chests or plain, cuboid boxes that you can decorate. They need to have lids, one of which is easily detachable and re-attachable.

- **Costume** – For most characters, recycle those traditional nativity outfits to which we’re all accustomed, using tea-towels, white sheets, old curtains, tinsel etc! Groups of characters (ie. trades people, innkeepers, shepherds, visitors etc.) should all wear a colour to differentiate their group from another. Different coloured aprons will help differentiate the groups of trades people. A simple belted tunic would be fine for Sarah, possibly in a pastel colour. She’ll also need an apron for when she’s a carpenter. Simeon will also need a tunic, with an apron to be taken off when he ‘retires’. He will also need a grey beard to show his age. The Roman soldiers could wear breast plates over white t-shirts, and shin guards. A grey pleated PE skirt makes an ideal ‘kilt’, and helmets made from card with red plumes will add to their authenticity.
- **Use of Space** – Large groups will be involved in the performance of most of the songs. A space on the floor in front of the main stage could be used to accommodate extra bodies. In this space, for some songs, the cast could perform dance routines. A seating area for resting performers could be allocated either side of the stage. This lets them enjoy the performance as part of the audience, allows easy movement on and off the stage, and of course eliminates the need for back-stage supervision.
- **Audience seating** – The audience could be in one block facing the stage, or maybe in two blocks separated by an aisle wide enough for perhaps the entrance of some characters from the back, or to allow some of the drama and choreography to be performed on the floor.

Of course, should you have any questions, or if you want further advice about putting on this musical, please email us and we’ll be happy to give you all the information you need.