



## On your marks

Here's a story for an all-age Christmas service retelling the events of Luke 2:8-20 from the point of view of the sheep!

Originally this appeared in [Bethlehem Carols Unpacked](#) (BRF, 2008), which has a wealth of ideas for creative carols services.

## Get set

Why not have some woolly toy sheep to help you tell this story or maybe some fun visuals of sheep that you can project on to a screen. If you are feeling brave, you could use some sheep glove puppets!

## Go!

Following a reading of Luke 2:8-20:

What a commotion there was out on the Bethlehem hillside that night! Bright lights, heavenly singing and that amazing message! God's special rescuer had come. Everyone in those days knew that Messiah was coming one day, so these local shepherds realised straightaway that this message was important.

History was coming to a huge turning point. This really was a special moment and they, mere shepherds, were the first to know about it! They would be first with the news - what a scoop! Can you imagine their excitement, amazement and joy? They were just nobodies - in fact more than likely just hired shepherds taking the night shift for someone else - but God had chosen to speak to them. Mind you, I don't think it was by chance that God chose to go to shepherds first. Shepherds have always been very important to God and a shepherd had of course long been a picture of God's character.

So off they went to Bethlehem - running, dancing, tumbling and... **leaving their sheep!** It must have been important. Fancy leaving their livelihood behind - unheard of!

And I wonder what the sheep thought of all this? Let's use our imagination.

Take these three for example. They look pretty puzzled, don't they? Let me introduce them to you. They have names. Yes, listen:

30 Megabytes [*of Ram*]

Potters [*Bar*]



and Lionel [*Blair*]

Well, they're certainly upset at losing their shepherds. Who will feed them and protect them? What should they do? There was no question about it. They would have to follow... a very predictable thing for sheep to do. So off they trotted down the hill.

In fact it was so steep that they fell... almost flew... down the slope. So much so that one local neighbour, who saw them tumbling past his window, was inspired to write the first Christmas carol ever! You know the one: 'I saw three sheep come sailing in, on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day...'.

They arrived in the outskirts of the town. Well, where next? Where should they look for their shepherds? They hadn't really understood the angels' message, except that they had gathered that someone special was in town somewhere. So, if they found that someone, then they were sure to find their masters, wouldn't they?

30 Megabytes ruminated: 'If this special person is some sort of new god, then he's bound to be in a holy place. Perhaps we should try the local synagogue. Come on, let's go.'

Off they went to look, but they had no luck there. It was shut up, dark and empty - no one at home.

Then Potters baa-ed: 'If this special person is some sort of new king, then he's bound to be in an important building. Come on, let's try the town hall.'

So off they went, but it was no good. That was all shut up too: closed for business till next Tuesday. Typical!

Then Lionel bleated: 'If this special person is a new leader of some sort, then he's bound to be with the soldiers at the guard post. Come on, let's go.'

But they had no luck there either. They found just a few centurions warming themselves by a fire. No sign of any special visitor and no shepherds.

Where can their shepherds be? Where should they look next? They wandered about for a while like... like... like... lost sheep!

Eventually Lionel sighed: 'I'm hungry. Let's find a place to eat'.

So they began sniffing around for some animal food. They left the main streets and went down the back alleys instead. All of a sudden an old cattle shed caught their eye. It looked rundown but some lights were on and people were talking. They drew close and peeked in at the door, and guess what? There were their shepherds.

Lionel pushed in first and when his master saw him, he picked him up and held him close to a straw-filled feeding trough. 'Ah, food at last,' thought Lionel. But no - there was a baby lying there!



The shepherd smiled and said, 'Look, Lionel. You've not only found your shepherd but also God's own special lamb.'

Lionel was rather puzzled but felt privileged as well, as he looked at his master and the baby. It seemed that somehow the three of them had a lot in common. 'Fancy God's special person being like this,' he thought. 'What a surprise!'

They all stayed in the stable for some time, before finally setting off through the streets telling everyone what they had found.

The three sheep, however, were missing the warmth of the camp fire on the hillside by now and were getting rather cold. 'We could do with something to wrap round us,' said Lionel. 'I wonder if there's a Woolworths in town?'