

# The Christmas Rose

## Story synopsis

It is a snowy, starlit night in Bethlehem. **(Song: Starlight & Snowflakes)**

After saying goodbye to her parents, a young shepherdess called Madelon goes out with her sheep dog, Ziggy, to tend her sheep on a hillside. **(Song: Where are your sheep, Madelon?)**

Her shepherd friends, Jim, Alf and Daisy, come by to tell her that the Son of God, has been born in Bethlehem and that they are going to take gifts of honey, fruit and a dove for this special baby. They ask her if she would like to come along and take a gift too. Madelon is very excited but, being poor, has no gift to give to the baby. She thinks hard and decides that she might take some beautiful flowers. **(Song: What shall I give?)**

Madelon begins to search for flowers on the hillside. However, it has been a very cold winter and she cannot find any growing there. She asks her wild animal friends, including a snow leopard, a gazelle and a kestrel (all of which would have lived in the hills in Israel in those times) if they have seen any flowers, but they cannot help her. **(Dance music: Dance of the Wild, Winter Animals)** The kestrel tells her that she will have to wait for springtime for flowers. **(Song: I can't wait that long)**

Disappointed and without a gift, she travels with her shepherd friends to the stable, where they see three wise men present the baby with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. **(Song: Wise Men Three)** The other shepherds also give their presents. Outside Madelon begins to weep because she has nothing to give to the special baby boy.

**(Incidental/dance music: Angels' entry music)** Suddenly angels appear. A kind angel sees Madelon and tells her not to cry. He reaches down to the ground in front of him and brushes aside a small patch of snow. There growing in the frozen ground are a bunch of small white delicate flowers with pink tipped petals – Christmas Roses.

Madelon thanks the angel, joyfully gathers the flowers and enters the stable where she offers her very special gift to the baby. **(Incidental music: Little Christmas Roses)** Her shepherd friends help Madelon to decorate the manger with the flowers. All sing and the Christmas roses dance to their special song. **(Song/Dance: Little Christmas Roses)**

## **Characters and costumes**

Costume ideas are only suggestions – feel free to use your own ideas and the children's!

**Madelon** – the little shepherdess, major speaking & solo singing part – confident child required, smock-type outfit, shepherd's head-dress

**Madelon's mother and father** – minor speaking parts, peasant-style dress

**Ziggy, the sheep dog** – non-speaking (just 'woofing!'), active part, black and white patched T-shirt & leggings/trousers, tail, and black ears on headband

**The six sheep** – non-speaking (just 'baaing!') dancing parts, white T-shirts & leggings/trousers, white ears on headbands, woolly tails - You may also wish to have some black sheep.

**Stars** – any number, dancing parts (opening song) - gold and yellow glittery costumes - One main, bigger star also appears in the scene with the three wise men.

**Snowflakes** – any number, dancing parts (opening song) - white and silver glittery costumes

**Jim, Alf & Daisy** – Madelon's shepherd friends, major speaking parts

**Moonbeam** – appears in the song 'What shall I give?' - carries a little guitar or harp - white or pale yellow costume, with trailing white and yellow ribbons

**Firefly** – appears in the song 'What shall I give?' - carries a lantern - a red, orange and yellow costume, with doodlebug headband, and fly-like wings

**Pink & red flowers** – any number, appear in the song 'What shall I give?' - dancing parts - bright pink or red T-shirts and/or skirts, green tights or leggings, with flower headdresses

**Kestrel** – minor but important speaking and movement part, and appears in the Dance of the Wild, Winter Animals. Brown feathers, curved beak on headdress, wings on arms. The kestrel costume should not restrict movement too much as the bird 'flies' around the stage.

**Snow leopard** – minor but important speaking and movement part, and appears in the Dance of the wild, winter animals. Grey and white dappled costume, leopard pattern. Ears on headband, long tail. Should allow the leopard to move freely.

**Gazelle** (deer) – minor but important speaking and movement part, and appears in the Dance of the wild, winter animals. Light brown T-shirt, brown leggings or trousers, ears and small antlers on headband, bob tail. Face paints could be used to create the black and white markings on a gazelle's face.

**Wild Winter Animals** – any number, dancing parts – might include onagers (wild horses), snow wolves, lizards, ostriches, ravens, sand rats (gerbil-like), onyx (larger deer). All of these animals may have been found around Bethlehem in the hillside areas in biblical times. Research and see if you can discover any more. All costumes should allow the animals to move freely.

**Frogs; little song birds; raindrops; sun rays; yellow blossom flowers** – any number of each, dancing & movement parts, appearing in 'I can't wait that long'. Frog costumes might be green T-shirts & leggings or trousers, with face paints or frog masks. Song birds should be contrasting colours to the birds in the wild winter animal scene ie. blue, purple, orange, green etc. Raindrop costumes might be shimmery blue and silver. Blossom flower costumes should be

covered in little pale yellow blossoms and small leaves, as a contrast to the other flowers in the show.

**The three wise men** – minor speaking parts, grand eastern dress

**Three pages** (servants of the three wise men) – optional, non-speaking walk-on parts, peasant-style costumes

**Mary & Joseph** – minor speaking parts, costumes as you wish

**Donkey** – non-speaking walk-on part, grey T-shirt and leggings or trousers, grey ears on headband, tail

**Ox** – non-speaking walk-on part, brown and white patched T-shirt and leggings or trousers, brown ears and horns on headband, tail

**Angel** – angel that helps Madelon to find the Christmas roses, main speaking part

**Other angels** – any number, dancing & movement parts - Costumes and wings should not be so elaborate that they restrict free movement.

**Christmas Roses** – any number, dancing parts - white T-shirts and/or skirts, green tights or leggings, with 'Christmas Rose' flower headdresses, white petals with pale pink tips surrounding faces

**Instrumental players** – Your musicians can be dressed in nativity-style costume (perhaps as shepherds or angels) or as winter animals. Make sure, however, that the costumes do not restrict their playing ability.

# The Christmas Rose

## SAMPLE from full script

(sample from simpler, narrated script page 8)

*Key to stage directions: Stage LT & Stage RT (left and right, facing stage)*

### **SCENERY – A HILLSIDE NEAR BETHLEHEM/OUTSIDE MADELON’S HOUSE**

*The star and snowflake dancers enter from both sides of the stage to dance to their song. The other children sing from their seated positions around the stage.*

**Song: Starlight and Snowflakes** *(all sing, stars and snowflakes dance)*

**All (Verse 1):**           **Down from the sky fall snowflakes, clean and white,  
Covering the world, making everything seem bright,**

**Chorus**                   **Starlight and snowflakes,  
Starlight and snowflakes.**

**Verse 2**                   **Up in the sky there's a special star tonight,  
Shining on the world, making everything seem bright,**

**Chorus**                   **Starlight and snowflakes,  
Starlight and snowflakes.**

*Dance interlude – 8 bars*

**Verse 3**                   **Down on the earth, there's a baby born tonight,  
Loving all the world, making everything seem bright,**

**Chorus**                   **Starlight and snowflakes,  
Starlight and snowflakes.**

*At the end of the song the stars and snowflakes take their seated positions around the edges of the stage.*

*The door to the house opens and Madelon, her mother and father come out and stand outside.*

**Mother:**               **Now, be careful, Madelon. It's getting dark.**

**Father:**               **There are lots of dangers on the hillside for a little shepherdess.**

**Madelon:**           **Don't worry. I like being out at nighttime... and I've got Ziggy to look after me.**

*Ziggy the dog 'barks' from inside the house...*

Ziggy: ...Woof-woof!

*...and then rushes outside, running round Madelon and her mother and father. He stops next to Madelon panting.*

Ziggy: ...Woof-woof!

Father: Well, take care, both of you.

Mother: Make sure you're back in time for breakfast!

Madelon: We will!

*Madelon's mother and father go inside and close the door.*

Madelon: *(looking up at the sky)* Look, Ziggy! The stars are very bright!

*Ziggy looks up at the sky.*

Ziggy: Woof-woof!

Madelon: *(Looking around at the snow)* And the snow looks pretty.

*Ziggy 'digs' in the snow and runs round in a circle.*

Ziggy: Woof-woof!

Madelon: Well, I suppose we'd better find those sheep.  
*(calling)* Sheep! Where are you?

*During the first three lines of each verse, Madelon and Ziggy search the stage area for the sheep. On "Ssh!" she stands middle stage and asks the audience if they can hear a sheep. The sheep answer her from off stage, alternately from either side. The sheep could even arrive walking down a centre audience aisle.*

**Song: Where are your sheep, Madelon?** *(all sing)*

**All (Verse 1):** **Where are your sheep, Madelon?**  
**Are they asleep, Madelon?**  
**Snuggled down deep, Madelon?**

**Madelon:** *(spoken)* **Ssh! Can you hear one?**

**Sheep 1:** *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**

**Madelon:** *(spoken)* **I can hear one...**

**Sheep 1:** *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!** *(Sheep 1 walks/dances on stage)*

**All:** **Here comes a sheep right now!**

**All (Verse 2):**           **Where will you look, Madelon?  
Down by the brook, Madelon?  
Some little nook, Madelon?**  
**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **Ssh! Can you hear one?**  
**Sheep 2:**           *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**  
**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **I can hear one...**  
**Sheep 2:**           *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!** *(Sheep 2 walks/dances on stage)*  
**All:**                 **Here comes a sheep right now!**

**All (Verse 3):**           **Where can they be, Madelon?  
Under a tree, Madelon?  
Having their tea, Madelon?**  
**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **Ssh! Can you hear one?**  
**Sheep 3:**           *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**  
**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **I can hear one...**  
**Sheep 3:**           *(off stage)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**  
**All:**                 **Here comes a sheep right now...**  
*(Sheep 3 walks/dances on stage...)*  
*(...followed by Sheep 4...)* **Right now...**  
*(...followed by Sheep 5...)* **Right now...**  
*(...followed by Sheep 6...)* **Right now!**

Verse 4                   *Sheep dance during the first half of the fourth verse.  
Madelon and Ziggy join in as usual in the second half.*

**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **Where did you go?**  
**All sheep:**       *(answering Madelon)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**  
**Madelon:**           *(spoken)* **Playing in the snow?**  
**All sheep:**       *(louder)* **Baa! Baa! Baa!**  
**All:**                 **Well, you're all safe and sound right now!**

*At the end of the song, Ziggy and the sheep gather around Madelon.*

**Madelon:**           I'm glad we found you all!

**All sheep:**        Baa!

*Madelon pats each sheep on the head. Ziggy is last to get a pat.*

**Madelon:**           *(patting him)* Not forgetting you, Ziggy!

**Ziggy:**             Woof-woof!

**Jim:**               *(off stage RT, calling)* Madelon!...

**Madelon:**           *(looks puzzled)* Who's that?...

**Jim:**               *(off stage RT, calling again)* Madelon!...

**Madelon:**           *(recognises voice)* Oh! It's Jim, Alf and Daisy!

*Jim, Alf and Daisy the shepherds run on from stage RT. They are panting as if they have been running a long way.*

Jim: Madelon! *(stops to get his breath)*

Madelon: What's up, Jim?

Jim: You won't believe it! A very special baby called Jesus has been born in Bethlehem.

Madelon: *(puzzled)* A baby?

Alf: They say he's the Son of God!

Madelon: Son of God?

Daisy: Yes! An angel came to tell us!

Madelon: *(very surprised)* An angel?

Jim: We're going to see the baby and take him some gifts.

Alf: *(holds up pot of honey)* I'm taking honey.

Daisy: *(holds up basket of fruit)* I'm taking fruit.

Jim: *(holds up cage with dove)* And I'm taking a dove. Would you like to come?

Madelon: *(sighs)* I'd like to, but I haven't got a gift.

Alf: Couldn't your Mum and Dad find you something?

Madelon: They'll be in bed now, and they haven't got much anyway.

Daisy: *(kindly holds out the basket)* Share my fruit.

Madelon: That's very kind, but I'd like to take my own gift. *(thinks for a moment)* What shall I give?

*As each verse of this song is sung, the 'characters' appear (a moonbeam strumming a little guitar or harp, a firefly with a lantern, and any number of pink and red flowers. See Costume Ideas). They parade across stage or dance with Madelon.*

**Song: What shall I give?...**

**SCRIPT CONTINUES...**

# The Christmas Rose

## SAMPLE from simplified, narrated script

...Narrator:                However, Madelon and Ziggy were not the only ones up on the snowy hillside that night. It was also home to many wild winter animals.

### Dance music: Dance of the Wild Winter Animals

*A variety of different winter creatures dance together (See Dance Ideas). These might include snow leopards, wild horses (onager), snow wolves, kestrels, lizards, ostriches, ravens, sand rats (gerbils), and gazelles. (All of these creatures might have been found in winter in the hills around Bethlehem in those days.) The animals finish their dance and take their places around the stage, some standing, and some sitting.*

*During the dance a 'rock' and a 'bush' are moved into the middle of the stage area. At the end of the dance, the snow leopard hides behind the 'bush'.*

*Madelon enters stage LT looking around for a flower.*

Narrator:                Madelon had been looking everywhere for a flower.

Madelon:                *(to herself, shaking her head)* I can't find a flower.

Narrator:                A gazelle heard her and came to help.

Gazelle:                *('trots' forward on to centre stage)* What's the matter, Madelon?

Madelon:                *(a little surprised)* Hello, gazelle. I can't find a flower.

Narrator:                The gazelle told Madelon that he was sure he had seen some bright red poppies nearby.

Gazelle:                *(points to rock)* Look behind the rock.

*Madelon looks to either side of the rock (but not behind, where the leopard is hiding).*

Madelon:                *(shakes her head sadly)* No poppies.

Gazelle:                Must be too frosty for poppies.

*The gazelle trots back to the side of stage. Madelon continues looking on the ground, front of stage.*

Narrator: A snow leopard heard them and crept over to help.

*Behind her, from behind the rock creeps a snow leopard.*

Madelon: *(a little nervous)* Hello, snow leopard. I can't find a flower.

Narrator: The snow leopard told Madelon that he was sure he had seen some bright orange lilies nearby.

Snow Leopard: *(points to bush)* Look behind the bush.

*Madelon looks all around the bush.*

Madelon: No lilies.

Snow Leopard: Must be too chilly for a lily!

*The snow leopard creeps back to the side of stage.*

Narrator: A kestrel heard them and flew over to help.

*A kestrel 'flies' around the stage once and then 'alights' near Madelon.*

Madelon: Hello, kestrel. I can't find a flower.

Narrator: The kestrel shook his head. He knew that very few flowers grew on the hillside in wintertime.

Kestrel: You'll have to wait for spring.

*The kestrel 'flies' back to their place on the stage.*

Madelon: Spring? I can't wait *that* long!

*As each verse of this song is sung, the 'characters' appear (frogs, birds [little song birds], rain drops, sun rays), and can either parade across stage or dance together.*

### **Song: I can't wait that long**

All (Verse 1):  
**I can't wait that long  
For the spring,  
For the frogs to croak  
And... birds to sing,  
I can't wait that long  
For the flowers to grow, oh no!**

Verse 2                    **I can't wait that long  
For the sun,  
For it's rays to shine on...  
...Everyone!  
I can't wait that long  
For the flowers to grow, oh no!**

**Madelon (solo, Vs 3):** **I need a flower  
And I need it now,  
Tonight, without delay,  
I need a flower  
And I need it now,  
Spring's too far away!**

**All (Verse 4):**            **I can't wait that long  
For the rain,  
For the trees to blossom...  
...Once again!  
I can't wait that long  
For the flowers to grow, oh no!**

*At the end of the song the character dancers leave the stage area to take up positions around or just off stage.*