

ACT 3

Gabriel and Mary

Characters: Gabriel (G)
Mary (M) Can be played by a girl 12 or older

Mary is tending garden.

Once again, the PULPIT OR LADDER will be situated for Gabriel. There should be a place for Mary to sit—A BENCH, CHANCEL CHAIR OR FOLDING CHAIR.

There should be a DUFFEL BAG OR SMALL SUIT CASE standing toward the side. It should not be particularly noticeable.

Mary can be a gardener, dressed in period attire or modern gardening attire. She is using a HOE OR RAKE.

Gabriel can be dressed as a delivery man. White shirt. Bow Tie. He should wear a NAME TAG with GABRIEL in clear letters.

Gabriel enters from the back of the sanctuary or auditorium. He holds a ROSE. He stops now and then and addresses individuals in the audience/congregation.

G: Excuse me. Flower delivery for Mary of Nazareth. Can you point the way?

The audience is free to answer. (If you are uncomfortable with ad libbing, arrange to include some congregational members ahead of time.) Gabriel should be prepared with some additional lines such as:

She's young, probably still living in her father's home. I heard she is about to be married.

She is promised in marriage to a man—a carpenter, I believe—goes by the name of Joseph—Joseph the Nazarene.

An audience member may point to the chancel where Mary will be working in her garden.

Gabriel should thank the audience members who helped him.

G: Thank you. I think I see her now. Thank you so much for your help. All of you.

Gabriel proceeds to the chancel and takes his place in the pulpit or on a ladder.

Mary does not appear to notice.

G: (addressing the audience) I've really been looking forward to today. I'm used to bringing good news to people, but this—I have to tell you—is the best news yet. On days like this, I

wouldn't trade places for anyone, not even King Herod. (Glances toward Mary.) Just look at that young gal. Her world is about to change.

Gabriel watches Mary for a moment and then clears his throat.

G: Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you.

Mary looks up and steps back.

M: Who are you? What are you doing here in my garden?

G: I came to speak to you, the chosen one.

M: What do your words mean? Favored one? Chosen one? How can I be anyone's favored one? I am as you find me. A lowly maiden. Just look at me, if I am chosen, it is a choice without honor. I am 'chosen' to pull my own weeds, chosen to plant my own food. When the crops are ripe, I will be chosen to gather them, scrub them, and cook. I will spread the food on the table. I will be the last to eat and the first to carry away the scraps. Chosen, indeed!

G: Oh! If you only knew what plans God has for you.

M: Stop. You are frightening me.

G: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

M: You know my name!

Look. (Notices name tag) Look, Gabriel. I don't know you. You have no business hanging around my garden. I'll ask you one more time, Why have you come here? Answer me or I'll be calling my father and my fiancée. They will be sending you on your way. Who are you, Gabriel? From what village have you come?

G: I am Gabriel. I am a messenger sent by God. Technically, I'm not from any village, but if it's true that it takes a village—well, then, I'm from heaven.

M: Likely story. (Mary takes a moment to gather herself) All right, Gabriel. What message do you have for me?

G: Maybe you should sit down for this.

Mary looks confused but follows Gabriel's direction and sits down.

G: That's better. Are you ready to listen?

M: Surely, you can see me shaking. Have mercy on me. I beg you. Please, please get to the point. What message does God send?

G: You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

M: Jesus? God saves?

G: Yes, Jesus. God saves.

M: Your message is not shocking for I am betrothed. Joseph and I are not yet married. As a couple, pledged to one another, we have broken no law or custom. I am a virgin and I have promised to remain chaste until our marriage. But there is no reason why next year at this time, I might be nursing an infant.

G: Listen, Mary. Do not be surprised to learn you are already with child.
(Give Mary time to react.)

There is more. Your child will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

M: A king? Like David? This is a lot to take in.

Does Joseph know? If he does, surely he will leave me to live here in Nazareth with nothing but shame to carry as a burden for the rest of my life?

G: Mary, God has chosen you because of your faith and trust. Rely on these gifts and God will not forsake you. God is asking no more of you than he knows you can deliver. He knew you before you were born!

M: I cannot argue with you. I have always felt His presence. Still, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine this day.

G: Believe me, Mary. God knows this. You are carefully chosen. God has indeed been by your side, even as you pulled weeds from your garden. Things are going to move quickly now. Be prepared. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Your child will be born holy; he will be called Son of God. He will grow with the character of his heavenly Father. And you will be his mother, his guide.

M: What about Joseph? He is a good man, but plain. He will not know how to father a king.

G: I will have a talk with Joseph. He will not leave you. He will love you and your child. God will guide both of you.

M: I don't know what to say. I have no experience raising even one child of my own. How am I to raise the Son of God?

G: One word, Mary, trust. (He hands her the rose). God sends you this gift—a rose, a most delicate flower. Look upon it for its beauty. Touch its petals to feel its gentleness. Breathe its fragrance. Hold the stem in your hand, keeping it straight before you, always within your sight.

Mary takes the rose and pricks a finger on a thorn.
Gabriel reaches for her hand.

G: Ah, yes, Mary. You will touch an occasional thorn. Thorns cannot be avoided. But God gives his faithful servants this promise. God will help you bear the pain. The wounds will heal.

Gabriel kisses the wounded finger.

M: I don't know what to say, Gabriel.

G: Say nothing now. The words will come. In time, Mary. All things in time.

Mary stands and walks a bit about the chancel or stage, looking at the rose.

G: One more thing, before I go. You are not alone with this miracle. Your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son. This is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.

M: Elizabeth. Dear Elizabeth. A child! She must be overjoyed.
Overjoyed? She must be overwhelmed! I must go to her.

Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. (She glances toward the distance.)

Gabriel leaves the sanctuary.
Before his final exit, he turns and calls back.

G: Remember, Mary, I'm only the messenger.


Mary props her tools against a wall. She picks up her bag and follows Gabriel with an air of acceptance and determination. She repeats:

M: Elizabeth, I'm on my way.

The congregation sings a version of the Magnificat.

Suggested hymn: *Canticle of the Turning*. It is in newer hymnals.

Here is one video version found on line.

 <http://cantusmundi.blogspot.com/2010/05/canticle-of-turning-my-soul-cries-out.html>

Lyrics are also available online.

Scene Change Music: (Each title will link you to one online reference. Do your own search to find chords and videos.)

 [Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming](#)

 [Love Divine, All Loves Excelling](#)