

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MUSICAL INFORMATION



WE KNEAD a little Christmas

SUMMARY:

Bethlehem was called "the house of bread", so no wonder that the little town's best bakery is "The House of Bread". Owner Ezekiel, along with his wife Naomi, and daughters Challah and Dora, are busily baking up fresh delights for the residents of Bethlehem, and all the visitors in for the census, when their son Babka, the shepherd, bursts on the scene with tales of angels appearing in the night sky.

Excitement rises along with the bread dough with news of a baby born that very day – a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! Will Challah's "Best New Bread" creation win the annual baker's contest and keep the shop in business? Will Babka and the shepherds find the baby lying in a manger, just as the angel told them? Did the Magi really say "we have seen his star in the yeast . . ." (no, but that's fun to say!)

Fresh baked, upper-crust, the best thing since sliced bread . . . We Knead a Little Christmas!



WE KNEAD A LITTLE CHRISTMAS – CAST

SPEAKING ROLES *(in order from most to least lines)*

Challah (Female) – The oldest daughter of Ezekiel and Naomi

Naomi (Female) – The mother, owner of House of Bread

Ezekiel (Male) – The father, owner of House of Bread

Doe (Female) – The youngest daughter of Ezekiel and Naomi

Babka (Male) – The son of Ezekiel and Naomi, and a shepherd

Maya Ciabatta (Female) – A customer in town for the census.

Malachi Ciabatta (Male) – Maya's husband

Brioche (Female) – A faithful customer for years

Nathan (Male) – The innkeeper next door

Anna (Female) – A shepherd

Gil (Male) – A shepherd

Ruth (Female) – A shepherd

Biff (Male) – The rental donkey delivery boy

NON SPEAKING ROLES

Mary (Female) – Mother of Jesus

Joseph (Male) – Father of Jesus

Angels – A multitude

WE KNEAD A LITTLE CHRISTMAS – REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

All dates are subject to change – Please try to attend as many rehearsals as possible.

There will be a Tech Rehearsal and a Dress Rehearsal before the performances. During this time we will run the show multiple times with full set, lights, and microphones. **THESE REHEARSAL ARE REQUIRED ATTENDANCE.**

MAIN CAST REHEARSALS

Sunday, September 27 – Rehearsal, READ THROUGH – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, October 11 – Rehearsal – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, October 18 – Rehearsal – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, October 25 – Rehearsal – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, November 1 – Rehearsal – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, November 8 – Rehearsal – **4:30-5:30pm**

Sunday, November 15 – Rehearsal, ALL CAST – **4:30-5:30pm**

- *First week they do not use a script. They need to always bring their scripts to make notes on about instruction. Remind them to review their scripts every week. This week we will give a lot of help with cues.*

Sunday, November 22 – Rehearsal, ALL CAST – **4:30-5:30pm**

- *Begin to practice all scenes in order. They're allowed to review the next scene for 1 minute. Make sure they are conscious of where the audience is located, and facing them when speaking. Discuss what song follows the scene, make sure they know if they are supposed to start a scene.*

Tuesday, December 1 – Rehearsal, ALL CAST – **4:30-5:30pm**

- *Run through show with music as much as we can.*

Thursday, December 3 – Tech Rehearsal, ALL CAST – **5:30-7:30pm**

- *Full run of show with lights and mics.*

Friday, December 4 – Dress Rehearsal, ALL CAST – **5:30-7:30pm**

- *Full run of show with costumes, mics, etc.*

MUSIC REHEARSALS *(All music will be taught during Kids Choir each Tuesday during the Fall starting Sept. 29.)*

Tuesday, September 29 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, October 13 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, October 20 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, October 27 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, November 3 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, November 17 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

Tuesday, November 24 – Kids Choir – **4:30-5:30pm**

PERFORMANCES

Saturday, December 5 – **PERFORMANCE at 6:30pm** – **Call at 5:00pm**

Sunday, December 6 – **PERFORMANCE at 6:30pm** *(Dessert Fellowship After)* – **Call at 5:00pm**

***We Knead a Little Christmas* – Costumes**

The costumes for *We Knead a Little Christmas* are first-century Bethlehem robes. All the major and minor characters in the musical should be dressed in basic Biblical dress.

Although all of your characters are dressed in Bethlehem robes, your main challenge will be to create costumes or individual characters that are distinctive so the audience can readily tell the characters apart. One way to accomplish this task is through color. One character can be largely dressed in different variations of blue, another character sports shades of yellow, etc.

A second tip is to forgo any head cloths. These head wrappings were used to protect individuals from the sun so they probably did not wear them indoors or at night. But even more important, head cloths hide the actors' faces; your audience will have a much easier time watching (and understanding) your actors if their faces are unobstructed.

Finally, you can help distinguish the different characters by adding character/job-appropriate anachronistic additions to the Biblical robes. There are three basic groups in *We Knead a Little Christmas*: bakers, shepherds, and customers/townspeople. All three groups contain both girls and boys. Here are some ideas on how to adapt the basic Biblical costume for each of these three groups:

THE BAKERS (Challah, Doe, Naomi, Ezekiel)

The easiest costume additions for the bakers are a chef's hat (called a toque) and an apron or chef's jacket. The actors would wear these items over their basic Biblical robes. These items are easy to purchase online and certain vendors not only make the toques and aprons available in a variety of colors, but will monogram them for you for a modest price. (You could monogram or hand-stencil "House of Bread" on the toques and/or aprons.)

THE SHEPHERDS (Babka, Anna, Gil, Ruth)

The four shepherds in the musical should wear a basic Biblical robe with a rope tie or sash and a sleeveless mantle. (Both boys and girls can wear the same basic attire.) The defining costume characteristic for the four shepherds is a crook. I genuinely believe the easiest method to create a uniform set of crooks is to buy them. You have a choice of vendors online. I have listed the Party Works site below as an option, with crooks at less than \$7.00 a piece: <https://www.thepartyworks.com/shepherds-crook-brown/>

Having said that, you can go to the trouble of making shepherd crooks out of doweling or PVC pipe and plastic candy canes, hot-gluing them together and covering them with brown tape or ribbon. (But I honestly doubt you can make them for less than \$7.00, so again—if you do not already own shepherd crooks, this may be the time to buy them.)

THE CUSTOMERS/TOWNSPEOPLE (Brioche, Maya, Malachi, Nathan, Pita, Caleb)

The rest of the characters are citizens of Bethlehem and they would be dressed in traditional Biblical dress. This would include the Mary and Joseph characters for the nativity sequence. You should probably take a little extra time with Mary, however, and dress her in traditional blue with a long head covering.

We Knead a Little Christmas – Costumes

BIFF

A special note about Biff, the Hartz Rent-A-Beast agent. You can choose to not add anything to his costume but just let his clipboard identify his profession. But you can also add a fun uniform hat and coat over his Biblical robe. Most costume or party stores have children's police or pilot caps you can adapt and any double-breasted coat will do.

THE CHOIR

The choir should wear solid red or green t-shirts and black slacks or jeans for a sharp, uniform effect.



We Knead a Little Christmas – Props

THE BAKED GOODS

The most important props in your production are unquestionably the baked goods – and you will need a lot of them. The good news is that there are several different methods you can use to create faux baked goods for stage props, and all of them are relatively inexpensive. As you decide what type of baked goods to create, just remember that size is paramount. You will want to create large loaves of different sized breads as well as large rolls.

THE FROSTED LAYER CAKE

Challah's frosted cake that she plans to enter in the local contest demands a special set of directions. This important prop must be created for your production – you can't use a real cake and just let it dry out and harden. Trust me, it will not last through your rehearsals. But building a multilayered faux cake is surprisingly easy, and often cheaper than buying the real thing. Fake cakes are usually constructed by spreading wall filler or caulking over Styrofoam rounds. Varying the size of the rounds will create a tiered cake, which is what you'll want to create for this production. The color of the frosting and decorations are left to your own creativity.

After you create your cake, you will need to find a box that easily covers the cake so that it can be easily removed on stage. The box is initially covered with a cloth towel.

THE BAKING TOOLS

No bakery would be complete without the tools needed to bake the breads. The good news here is that most of the tools are not actually used during the production; the tools are basically for stage décor. (However, there should be a few elements on both center tables to accommodate the baking activities of your main characters.) Put out a word to your church or school community and start collecting bowls, pots, vases, plates, and baskets that would be largely believable in a first-century bakery. Also collect hand tools such as spoons, rolling pins, and pastry cutters. (Look for items that are wood, clay, metal, or woven; stay away from anything with paint or plastic.) The majority of these tools are displayed on the shelves next to the oven and are on the table in front of the oven. A fun optional prop is an oven paddle (or peel). This large wooden paddle on a long (four feet or more) pole would have been used to put the bread dough loaves into the oven and take them back out. Building one can be as easy as attaching painted cardboard to a piece of painted PVC pipe to a more elaborate construction out of wood. The paddle should be stored upright beside the oven.

All of the tools should be practical to the extent that they could actually be used.

THE BAKERY DÉCOR

Depending upon the size of your set, you may want to add some additional bakery décor. These pieces can include tall standing baskets and barrels, open baskets with baked goods piled high, a broom, and burlap sacks tied off on top. (Fill them with crumpled paper.) Also remember that there needs to be a substantial amount of items for Babka to throw about as he goes searching for the map in Scene 3. These items should be soft (clothing, towels, small stuffed bags, etc.) and placed inside crates and barrels and baskets around the set. An especially effective optional addition would be several lanterns. These could be mounted on your flats near the doors or even hung over the center of the room. There are a number of very period-appropriate open lanterns that are available from Amazon for under \$10. They contain battery-operated candles and would be a lovely addition to your set once night falls in Scene 2.

We Knead a Little Christmas – Props

SMALL HAND PROPS

Below is a complete list of all the hand-held, small hand props that actors will use during *We Knead a Little Christmas*.

- Lumps of “dough” (multiple characters)
 - It’s best to use beige play dough or clay to simulate dough on the work station table. This dough can be used by multiple characters during the production.
- Sliced bread (Brioche and Ezekiel)
 - The sliced bread that is used in Scene 1 should be real sliced bread. (That’s the joke.) Simply buy a loaf of thick-sliced bread or carefully (and uniformly) slice up a loaf of brioche or French bread. (It will need to be fresh for your performance.)
- A filet of fish (Ezekiel)
 - This prop needs to be clearly identifiable as a fish from the audience, so I suggest you find or make a fake full-bodied fish. (Making a sandwich from a full-body fish is also much funnier.) You can create the fish from cutting foam and painting it or using sculpted newspaper covered in paper maché. You can also purchase an inexpensive fake fish (usually rubber) in novelty/party stores or on Amazon.
- A large bagel (Naomi)
 - Naomi’s bagel should be a real one—the biggest one you can find—then just let it harden and varnish it. (While you’re at it, varnish several back-ups.)
- A square pan of cornbread (Doe)
 - Simply bake a ceramic square pan of real cornbread and let it harden. I doubt it needs varnishing.
- The “Open” and “Closed” sign on the working wooden door
 - There should be a sign that hangs on the upstage side of the working wooden door in the bakery. One side says “Open” and the other side says “Closed.” Best to create this from thin balsa wood or thick foam core board; paint it appropriately and hang it from a large hook with wall adhesive on the back. Challah will turn the sign in Scene 2.
- Large basket (Nathan)
 - Nathan’s basket should be large enough to carry several big loaves of bread—like baguettes and large round loaves. Line the basket with a colorful cloth.
- Bags of belongings (Malachi)
 - Find (or sew) several generic cloth draw-string bags and fill them with a few old clothes surrounding crumpled newspaper. (This will silence any sound the paper would make inside the bags but will allow the bags to remain light enough for a child to easily carry.)
- Strips of cloth and towels (Challah)
 - The strips of cloth and towels that Challah fetches in Scenes 2 & 3 to aid in the birth next door should be stored on the work station table under the oven. Make sure the towels are the kitchen (not bath) variety and are a neutral, earth tone in color. The strips of cloth should be ripped muslin.

We Knead a Little Christmas – Props

- Clipboard (Biff)
 - A contemporary clipboard and pencil will be fine.
- Map (Doe)
 - Find a good, paper road map; open it up completely, then roll it up and tie with a cord. Hide the map inside a basket or crate so Babka has to really search to find it in Scene 3.
- Manger (with hay) and a stool
 - A full-size manger with hay needs to be brought in during Scene 5 just before *"Away in the Manger with God's One and Only Son."* You probably have a manger from previous Christmas productions.

We Knead a Little Christmas – Set

The story of *We Knead a Little Christmas* takes place in a single interior locale: The House of Bread bakery in first-century Bethlehem.

This bakery features a mash-up of elements from the Bible alongside your local bakery/donut shop. The set should be as whimsical as the musical itself, so be sure to have fun!

THE BAKERY

The set of *We Knead a Little Christmas* can certainly suggest an ancient bakery from Biblical times, but should also remain fanciful in style. A good way to think about such a set is to see it in a “Flintstones frame.” (The classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon that placed the prehistoric world in a contemporary setting.) Keep the mood upbeat, airy and colorful.

THE DOORWAYS AND THE WINDOW

The script of *We Knead a Little Christmas* calls for two working doors: one that leads from the bakery to the street on one side of the stage, and one that leads to the interior rooms of the bakery on the opposite side of the stage. These will accommodate the various entrances and exits of characters. The door that leads to the exterior of the bakery should be a working wooden door with an “Open” and “Closed” sign hanging on the upstage side. It is suggested that the interior door be covered with a piece of draped fabric or burlap. You are also encouraged to include a window in your set. This will give the room a more authentic look and will accommodate the day-to-night transition. The window should have practical curtains hanging from a horizontal rod that can be closed and opened. This will allow characters to close the curtains at the beginning of Scene 2 to indicate the onset of night and will alleviate your need to light a night scene outside the window.

THE BAKED GOODS DISPLAY SHELF

The first shelf that customers encounter when they enter the bakery is a tall shelf that displays various baked goods for sale. This can be an existing wooden shelving unit or one you create for the set. I suggest you make the shelf at least six feet tall with several shelves of adequate depth allowing you to display a wide assortment of baked goods. Make sure the baked goods are of adequate size and variety to be easily seen from the audience.

THE BAKING TOOLS SHELF

The other prominent set of shelves is located next to the oven and should contain a wide assortment of baskets, pots, pitchers and vases, and baking tools. These shelves can be another existing shelving unit, or can consist of individual selves mounted onto the flat itself. Once again, be certain the tools displayed are of adequate size to be seen from the audience.

THE OVEN

Along the back wall, center stage, there should be a large oven. The size and style of the oven can certainly be of your own choosing, but you should make sure this important item is included in your set. It’s suggested that you frame the oven opening with bricks or stones. The oven should be fronted by large wooden doors. The script never dictates that an oven needs to be used, so the doors needn’t be operational. If you do decide to build an oven with doors that open, be sure to carefully construct the oven’s interior from a black box, a mounted iron grill, and a faux fire.

We Knead a Little Christmas – Set

THE TABLES

It is suggested that you include three tables in your set. The first table is long and slender. (18" in width and at least 4' in length.) This will fit underneath the oven and various baked goods and tools can be placed on it; it serves as a general workstation. A second table more traditionally square table should be placed center stage. This table will serve as the "counter" for the customers who enter the bakery as well as accommodating various props used during the action of the script. The final table should be small (like a vanity) and will be placed under the window on the stage left wall. This table will be the exclusive location of the boxed layer cake. All three tables should have tablecloths of period-appropriate colors/patterns. Not only will this add some welcome color to your set but will also hide any contemporary design features on your tables.

CRATES & STOOLS

It is always helpful to have several places on your set for individuals to sit down, whether that action is specifically called for in the script or not. There are a large number of characters on stage at once during many of the scenes in *We Knead a Little Christmas* and allowing several individuals to sit down will help you create more balanced (and less crowded) stage pictures. You should place a stool under the small table with the layered cake. You can also have several crates and other stools placed around the set, especially in the far down right and down left corners.

