



Bible Drama Scripts

presents

CONVERSATIONS WITH GABRIELLA

Four Angelic Sketches for Advent and Christmas

By Patricia Souder

SYNOPSIS: Gabriella, a clueless young angel, repeatedly tries to get Gabriel to help her learn her choir music. Gabriel explains he is busy getting ready for a special mission for the Mighty One. While Gabriella initially sees this as exciting, she becomes frustrated when Gabriel is sent on four special missions . . . all to earthlings. Gabriella can't imagine why Gabriel has to leave heaven to go to earth, especially since he always returns with "dusty, musty earth vapors."

Gabriella's bungling attempts to second-guess the Mighty One's agenda yield many humorous moments that point to memorable insights about the cost and impact of the Incarnation.

SETTING: Heaven before the Incarnation.

- GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #1: 15 months before Jesus' birth
- GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #2: 9 months before Jesus' birth
- GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #3: 6 months before Jesus' birth
- GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #4: Just before Jesus' birth

CHARACTERS:

- GABRIEL: a large angel with a deep voice and lots of presence.
- GABRIELLA: a younger, smaller angel with an enthusiastic, but flighty, personality.

PERFORMANCE TIME: Approximately 5-7 minutes for each "Secret Mission."

PERFORMANCE POSSIBILITIES:

- Use individual sketches for worship each week during Advent.
- Use individual sketches to promote discussion in small groups during Advent.
- Stage all four sketches to create a delightful outreach event, such as a Christmas brunch, tea, dinner, or dessert.
- Combine the sketches with choral and instrumental numbers to create an unforgettable program of drama and music.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

- Characters say lines together when marked with a star.
- “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” features a rich 4th century text coupled with a haunting plainsong from the 13th century. It offers an ethereal, eternal dimension that emphasizes the mystery and majesty of the Incarnation. The score is included so you can incorporate it in your program.

BIBLE REFERENCE: Luke 1:5-2:20.

PROPS: See **SCENERY, COSTUMES, and PROPS, page 16**

GABRIEL’S SECRET MISSION #1 – Heaven, 15 months before the birth of Christ

Suggested music: Instrumentalist plays “Of The Father’s Love Begotten.”

Gabriel: *(Enters stage right carrying a gold foil scroll. Places scroll on podium, sits on stool, and studies scroll until disturbed by Gabriella’s singing)*

Gabriella: *(Enters stage left with music folder. Tries to sing tune for “Of The Father’s Love Begotten.” Very off key) La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .*

Gabriel: *(Rolls eyes, clears throat, and sings melody correctly) La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .*

Gabriella: *(Looks up, a bit sheepishly)*

Gabriel: *(Indicates Gabriella should sing along)*

Gabriella: *(Joins Gabriel. Uncertain at first, but gradually gets tuned up and gains confidence as she sings with Gabriel)*

Both: La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .

Both: La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .

Both: La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .

Gabriel: Good . . . good . . . very good.

Gabriella: *(Beams happily. Sings alone) La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . . (Takes deep breath and puts music folder on music stand) Oh, Gabriel, that’s so much better!*

Gabriel: *(nods, then studies scroll again) Yes, it is. Now, let’s see . . . I’m to go to . . .*

Gabriella: *(Approaches Gabriel and taps him on the shoulder) Gabriel, why weren’t you at choir rehearsal? You have such a magnificent voice . . .*

Gabriel: *(Looks up briefly. Smiles)*

Gabriella: Besides, we’re practicing *the* most *divine* music ever.

Gabriel: I’m sure you are. *(Smiles warmly)* And . . . I love to sing.

Gabriella: Well, then, where were you tonight?

Gabriel: *(Clears throat and points to scroll) I have to prepare for a special mission.*

Gabriella: *(Mouth drops open and eyes bulge. Paces across stage)* A special mission? No way! I'll bet it's a secret mission.

Gabriel: Well, sort of secret . . .

Gabriella: *(Rolls eyes)* Sort of secret? Whoa . . . that's more secret than just plain secret.

Gabriel: No . . . no . . . It's not *more* secret. It's just that nobody knows about it yet.

Gabriella: *(Becomes almost breathless with excitement)* No way! Sounds pretty secret to me!

Gabriel: *(Sighs and shakes head)* Only until I do what the Mighty One has asked me to do. *(Attempts to study scroll again)*

Gabriella: The Mighty One? You're on a secret mission for the Mighty One? *(Gasps)* Oh, Gabriel, I'm so excited I can hardly stand it! *(Gets puzzled look on face and scratches head)* What are you going to do?

Gabriel: *(Looks up, then points to scroll)* First, I have to find a priest named Zechariah.

Gabriella: How are you going to do that?

Gabriel: *(Checks scroll)* This says that Zechariah will be the priest burning incense in the temple today.

Gabriella: *(Rolls eyes. Clasps and unclasps hands)* Oh, Gabriel . . . a temple job! How exciting! *(Leans forward eagerly)* What are you going to tell him?

Gabriel: *(Checks scroll again)* To not be afraid.

Gabriella: To not be afraid? Why would he be afraid? Do you have a scary message?

Gabriel: *(Moves finger down scroll as if reading)* No, not really. In fact, it looks like it's an answer to a prayer he and his wife have been praying for many years.

Gabriella: All right! *(Gestures enthusiastically, then gets a puzzled look)* Then why do you have to tell him to not be afraid?

Gabriel: *(Stands and faces Gabriella)* Well, this will probably sound funny to you . . . but earthlings get pretty frightened when they meet an angel.

Gabriella: Why? *(Scrunches up face in disbelief)* Angels aren't scary.

Gabriel: Not to us. But earthlings can't usually see us, so it's a bit unnerving when we appear.

Gabriella: Even when we're answering prayers?

Gabriel: Even then. *(Pauses and shakes head)* I'd guess Zechariah is going to be very surprised. First, because he's never met an angel before . . . and second . . . because he stopped expecting an answer to this prayer many years ago.

Gabriella: Oh . . . *(Looks confused)* So, why's it being answered now?

Gabriel: *(Smiles and points upward)* Gabriella . . .

Gabriella: *(Smiles weakly. Speaks hesitantly)* I guess the Mighty One knows what's best, doesn't He?

Gabriel: *(Nods)*

Gabriella: So, what's the deal? What's going to happen?

Gabriel: Zechariah and his wife are going to have a baby.

Gabriella: A baby? *(Smiles broadly, then exclaims:)* No way!

Gabriel: That's what they're going to think.

Gabriella: *(Looks confused again)* What do you mean? You said they prayed for a baby, and now they're getting one. They should be happy.

Gabriel: Oh, I'm sure they'll be happy. It's just that they'll be a bit shocked at first. It's virtually impossible for them to have a baby, you know.

Gabriella: What do you mean? *(More confused than ever)*

Gabriel: They're way too old.

Gabriella: Too old?

Gabriel: Yes, too old. Earthlings aren't like us. As the years go by, their skin wrinkles, their joints creak . . . they can't see . . . they can't hear . . . and they can't have babies.

Gabriella: *(Backs away. Rolls eyes. Looks very perplexed)* Well, if they can't have a baby, why are you going to tell them that they are?

Gabriel: I'm just doing . . . *(Points up)*

Gabriella: *(Nods, rolls eyes, looks up)*

Both: What the Mighty One wants.

Gabriella: *(Looks at Gabriel)* Pleasing the Mighty One is important to you, isn't it?

Gabriel: *(Nods and smiles warmly)* More important than anything, Gabriella.

Gabriella: *(Takes deep breath; sighs)* Even when you can't figure out why?

Gabriel: *(Especially)* when I can't figure out why.

Gabriella: *(Looks confused)* What?

Gabriel: It's not what. It's Who. *(Smiles knowingly and points upward with a loving look)*

Gabriella: *(Watches Gabriel closely, then bows head)* You really trust the Mighty One, don't you?

Gabriel: He's worth trusting, Gabriella.

Gabriella: *(Looks at Gabriel and smiles)* OK, so when do you leave on your top-secret, surprise mission?

Gabriel: *(Peers out into space)* Just about now.

Gabriella: Do you think you'll get back in time for our next rehearsal?

Gabriel: I'll do my best.

Gabriella: *(Picks up music and exits stage left, singing tune to "Of The Father's Love Begotten," slightly off key)*

Gabriel: *(Shakes head, rolls eyes, tucks scroll under arm, and sings with Gabriella as follows her off stage left)*

Both: La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la . . .

Suggested music between Secret Mission 1 and 2: Instrumental soloist or group plays "Of The Father's Love Begotten," followed by a vocal soloist or group singing verse 1: "Of The Father's Love Begotten."

GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #2 – Heaven, 9 months before the birth of Christ

Gabriella: *(Enters stage left carrying music folder. Struggles to sing last line of "Of The Father's Love Begotten.")*
Ev-er-more . . . and ev-er-more . . .

Gabriel: *(Enters stage right carrying green foil scroll and Earth Time Calculator)*

Gabriella: *(Stops singing as she notices Gabriel)* Gabriel! Where were you tonight? Choir's not the same without you.

Gabriel: *(Smiles and shrugs. Opens scroll and studies it as Gabriella talks)*

Gabriella: I see you have another scroll. *(Crouches down with inquisitive look)* Does that mean you're going on another secret mission?

Gabriel: Well, sort of.

Gabriella: *(Becomes very excited)* Oh, wow! Is it about another baby?

Gabriel: As a matter of fact, it is.

Gabriella: No way!

Gabriel: That's what you said last time.

Gabriella: It's just an expression.

Gabriel: Whatever. All I know is that Zechariah said something like that . . . and he hasn't been able to speak ever since.

Gabriella: No wa . . . *(Starts to say "way" but covers mouth quickly and shakes head back and forth. Eyes get big)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. Really. I mean, I can't imagine what it would be like to not be able to talk.

Gabriel: *(Smiles and raises eyebrows)* I'm sure you can't!

Gabriella: Will he ever be able to talk again?

Gabriel: After the baby's born.

Gabriella: *(Sighs and smiles)* Oh, good! *(Pauses, then asks hesitantly)* How long will that be?

Gabriel: *(Holds up Earth Time Calculator and punches in data)* Well, let's see. It's been six months since I gave him the news. Subtract that from the normal nine-month gestational period for earthlings, and he has just over three months left.

Gabriella: No wa . . . *(Starts to say "way" again but covers mouth quickly and shakes head back and forth frantically. Looks horrified)* I mean, that's a looong time to not be able to talk, isn't it?

Gabriel: *(Smiles. Puts calculator away)* Pretty long.

Gabriella: *(Nods head yes)* Glad it's not me!

Gabriel: *(Chuckles)* Yes, if you were silent, it would stagger the universe.

Gabriella: Gabriel! *(Turns away as if offended)*

Gabriel: *(Takes deep breath and sighs softly)* Gabriella, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you. *(Goes to Gabriella and tries to get her to look at him)*

Gabriella: *(Starts to respond)*

Gabriel: Why, I'd be real lonely if you weren't here to chatter away.

Gabriella: *(Turns away abruptly when Gabriel says, "chatter away.")*

Gabriel: Gabriella . . . Look, I'm sorry. *(Beat)* Not being able to talk is tough. *(Beat)* Even for Zechariah . . . *(Beat . . . beat)* And he never was much of a talker. *(Looks at Gabriella, hoping she'll forgive him)*

Gabriella: *(Remains aloof)*

Gabriel: *(Looks up; lifts hands in prayer)* Uh . . . Mighty One . . . this silence treatment . . . It's pretty hard on all of us. *(Beat)* I hope you're giving Elizabeth special grace. *(Beat)* And Zechariah . . . *(Beat, beat)* Please give him patience . . . *(Beat)* And faith to enjoy the miracles he's about to witness.

Gabriella: *(Eyes light up. Turns back to Gabriel, excited)* Miracles? I love miracles!

Gabriel: *(Sighs with relief, looks up and whispers "Thank You!" Then looks at Gabriella)* Gabriella, it's good to hear you talk again!

Gabriella: *(Nods grudgingly to Gabriel)* And it's good to hear you say so, Master Archangel. *(Becomes excited again)* Now tell me about the miracles.

Gabriel: *(Looks at watch)* Oh, dear, I don't have much time. *(Consults scroll)* Let's see . . . I'm to go to Nazareth to tell a young woman named Mary that she's going to have a baby.

Gabriella: *(Thrilled)* Another baby mission! That's so sweet!

Gabriel: *(Clears throat nervously)* Yes, well . . . I hope she'll feel that way.

Gabriella: Why wouldn't she? Babies are adorable!

Gabriel: Yes, they are.

Gabriella: So, what's the problem?

Gabriel: Joseph's not the father.

Gabriella: Not the first time that happened.

Gabriel: But Mary's a virtuous young woman who's a virgin.

Gabriella: Oh . . . I see.

Gabriel: *(Furrows brow as studies scroll again)*

Gabriella: *(Pauses, then looks at Gabriel with puzzled look)* Actually, no I don't see. I'm not too good on earthling terminology, but I think there's a problem with "virtuous," "virgin," and "baby" all being packaged together by an angelic announcement.

Gabriel: Good point. And that's probably what the earthlings will think, too.

Gabriella: Like who?

Gabriel: Oh . . . The townspeople . . . The religious leaders . . . Mary's relatives . . . And, *(Beat . . . beat)* most importantly, *(Beat . . . beat)* Joseph.

Gabriella: Joseph? Isn't Mary supposed to be married to him?

Gabriel: *(Nods)* That's right.

Gabriella: *(Looks perplexed. Rolls eyes)* Gabriel, you're not making any sense! *(Lowers voice and shakes head)* I knew those dusty, musty earth vapors *(Wrinkles nose and makes a face)* you brought back with you would get to you! *(Goes to Gabriel, pats him on shoulder, and shakes head sadly)*

Gabriel: *(Takes deep breath; sighs)* Gabriella . . .

Gabriella: *(Backs off and lifts right index finger to scold)* No, Gabriel, you listen to me. This sounds like a seedy case for you, the Great Archangel, to be involved in.

Gabriel: Gabriella . . . *(Points to scroll, then points up)* What's happening is a miracle. It's never happened before . . . And it will never happen again.

Gabriella: *(Drops finger and combative stance)* Oh . . . Well, why didn't you say so?

Gabriel: *(Rolls eyes; takes deep breath)*

Gabriella: *(Shrugs and smiles sheepishly)* I guess I forgot about the miracle part. So, what's the deal?

Gabriel: The Spirit of the Mighty One is going to visit Mary in a special way so she'll become pregnant with the Mighty One's Son.

Gabriella: No wa . . . *(Catches herself and places hand over her mouth)* I mean, Wow! That's awesome!

Gabriel: *(Smiles broadly and nods in agreement)* Yes, it is. *(Looks out over horizon suddenly and rerolls scroll rapidly)* Hey, I've got to get going or I won't get through the ozone layers in time. *(Jumps off stool and rushes to exit stage right)*

Gabriella: *(Follows Gabriel and shouts . . .)* Wait, I need you to help me with my music!

Gabriel: *(Turns back briefly and sings)* Ev-er-more . . . *(Gestures for Gabriella to join in)*

Gabriella: *(Joins in midway)*

Both: And ev-er-more . . .

Gabriella: Right on!

Gabriel: *(Exits, then peeks back in to say)* Keep practicing!

Gabriella: *(Sings and skips happily as exits stage left)*

Suggested music between Secret Mission 2 and 3: Vocal soloist or group sings verse 2: "Of The Father's Love Begotten," followed by a group singing verse 1: "Angels We Have Heard on High."

GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #3 – Heaven, 6 months before birth of Christ

Gabriella: *(Enters stage left carrying music folder and singing chorus of "Angels We Have Heard On High")* "Glo-
(Takes breath) ho-ho-ho-ho-ho . . . *(Takes breath)* ho-ho-ho-ho-ho . . . *(Takes breath)* ho-ho-ho-ho-ho . . .
(Takes breath) ho-ri-hah!" Oh, dear, I don't think that's quite right. *(Shakes head in discouragement)*

Gabriel: *(Enters stage right carrying silver scroll and singing the chorus of "Angels We Have Heard On High.")*
Sings with good diction and proper breathing in a strong, resonant voice) "Glo-----ri---a . . ."

Gabriella: *(Runs to meet Gabriel)* Why, that's what I was just singing!

Gabriel: Wonderful!

Gabriella: Thanks! I didn't realize I sounded so good. *(Smiles happily, then looks puzzled)* In fact, I didn't even know you heard me.

Gabriel: I didn't. But I'm glad to hear you're still singing.

Gabriella: Oh. *(Looks a little disappointed, then wistful)* Do you think we could practice like last time?

Gabriel: Maybe. *(Holds up scroll)* I've got to read up on my next mission first.

Gabriella: Don't tell me you have another secret baby mission!

Gabriel: *(Laughs, then offers Gabriella the scroll)* See for yourself.

Gabriella: *(Looks at scroll briefly, then hands it back to Gabriel)* I don't feel like reading. Just tell me what's going on. Did that old couple . . .

Gabriel: You mean Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Gabriella: *(Nods)* Did they have their baby?

Gabriel: *(Smiles broadly)* They had a big, healthy, robust baby boy.

Gabriella: So is . . . is . . . Zechariah able to . . . to . . .

Gabriel: *(Laughs)* To speak again?

Gabriella: *(Nods vigorously)*

Gabriel: Sure is. But even that's a miracle.

Gabriella: Really? Didn't he get his voice back when the baby was born?

Gabriel: No, he had to wait until the baby was eight days old. That was when their friends and relatives gathered to celebrate and name the baby. They expected him to be named after his father, but Zechariah shocked them by grabbing a tablet and writing, "His name is John."

Gabriella: Why did he do that?

Gabriel: *(Points up)*

Gabriella: Oh . . . *(Nods and points up)*

Both: It's what the Mighty One wanted

Gabriella: And then he could talk?

Gabriel: Yes, he got his voice back . . . and he began praising the Mighty One. Oh, it was wonderful!

Gabriella: I'm so glad! Now, let's see . . . What about the girl? *(Looks puzzled as tries to remember her name)*

Gabriel: You mean Mary?

Gabriella: *(Nods)* Yes, Mary. Was she happy about having a miracle baby?

Gabriel: Mary was . . . very surprised. Stunned, really. She asked me how that could happen since she'd never slept with a man. *(Takes a deep breath, then shakes head)*

Gabriella: Oh . . . So, what did you tell her?

Gabriel: That the Spirit of the Mighty One would visit her in a special way.

Gabriella: And what did she say?

Gabriel: "I'm the Lord's servant. Whatever He wants is fine with me." *(Shakes head in disbelief)* It was so sweet and simple. No arguments. No complaints. No deals. No demands for signs. *(Beat)*

Gabriella: She should feel honored, shouldn't she?

Gabriel: Well, yes. But it will totally change her life. *(Takes handkerchief out of pocket and wipes a tear from his eye)*

Gabriella: *(Looks at Gabriel quizzically)* So, how long does Mary have to wait for her baby?

Gabriel: The usual time: nine months.

Gabriella: Will she . . . *(Takes deep breath and rolls eyes while deciding how to ask question)* Will she . . . be able to talk?

Gabriel: *(Laughs heartily)* Not a problem for Mary. She believed . . . and accepted . . . everything the Mighty One told her.

Gabriella: Well, that's good. *(Beat)* So, what's she doing now?

Gabriel: *(Stands on tiptoe and peers over edge of stage)* Looks like she's just coming home after visiting Zechariah and Elizabeth for three months.

Gabriella: *(Perky)* Well, it sounds like everything's going great. So why do you have to go on another mission?

Gabriel: *(Offers Gabriella the scroll again)* Feel free to read all about it.

Gabriella: *(Shakes head no)* No, thanks. I don't think you should have to go to that little dust ball called Earth again. It's so . . . so . . . small and dirty . . . and you always come back smelling so . . . so . . . earthy. *(Wrinkles nose and makes face)* It's so much nicer here! *(Takes deep breath and throws arms up joyously, as if to embrace the universe)*

Gabriel: *(Clears throat and nods dubiously)* Well, perhaps you should ask for an audience to advise the Mighty One . . .

Gabriella: *(Looks at Gabriel in disbelief)* Gabriel, you know the Mighty One doesn't need my advice!

Gabriel: Precisely.

Gabriella: Oops. *(Hangs head and smiles weakly)* I guess the Mighty One knows what He's doing, doesn't He?

Gabriel: *(Nods)*

Gabriella: OK, so what's the scoop this time?

Gabriel: Remember Joseph?

Gabriella: *(Nods head. Thinks for a few seconds)* Oh . . . he doesn't know what's going on, does he?

Gabriel: *(Shakes head no)* No. He just found out that Mary's pregnant . . . and he's not the father. The law says he can have Mary stoned. He doesn't want to do that, but he can't just pretend everything's all right, either.

Gabriella: Oh . . . *(Looks troubled)* Can't Mary explain things to him?

Gabriel: She could try. But remember, this is a miracle. Nothing like this has ever happened before. Besides, Mary may feel it's so sacred she shouldn't talk about it. Or she may be afraid that Joseph will question her honesty . . . or her sanity.

Gabriella: Oh . . . *(Shakes head sympathetically)* So you have to go tell Joseph what's going on?

Gabriel: *(Nods)* Tonight. While he's sleeping.

Gabriella: While he's sleeping?

Gabriel: In his dreams.

Gabriella: *(Sighs)* So how soon do you have to go?

Gabriel: *(Peers over horizon)* About now . . . while I can slip through the thermosphere and slide through the ionosphere without disturbing the mesosphere.

Gabriella: Whatever . . . *(Looks very confused)* But what about practicing?

Gabriel: *(Chuckles and beckons to Gabriella to come along)* Let's do a quick Gloria before I go.

Both: "Glo-----ri---a . . . In excelsis Deo . . ." *(Exit stage right.)*

Suggested music between Secret Mission 3 and 4: Have audience or group sing verse 1 and chorus of "Angels We Have Heard On High," followed by soloist or group singing verses 3 and 4: "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

GABRIEL'S SECRET MISSION #4 – Heaven, just before birth of Christ

Gabriel: *(Enters stage right carrying red scroll and long bugle adorned with streamers. Places scroll on podium, then sits on stool and begins polishing bugle with handkerchief)*

Gabriella: *(Enters stage left, carrying halo and bottle of halo polish. Sings chorus of "Angels We Have Heard On High" heartily on key and with good tone quality)* "Glo-----ri---a. *(Self-absorbed at first but then notices Gabriel and stops singing)* Oh, Gabriel! I'm so glad you're here. I was worried when you missed practice again because Maestro said it's time for the concert. And we're so ready! Why, we've been practicing our Glorias and Alleluias for eons, and today, they sounded absolutely phenomenal! Every note was perfect! And the harmony was heavenly!

Gabriel: *(Smiles and nods)* Good!

Gabriella: Gabriel, I know this sounds crazy, but I think the stars were singing along.

Gabriel: *(Smiles again, broader this time)* Could be, Gabriella.

Gabriella: *(Notices Gabriel's bugle)* Hey, what's that you're polishing?

Gabriel: A bugle.

Gabriella: *(Adopts playful, mysterious tone)* Yes, but why?

Gabriel: To get the earthlings' attention.

Gabriella: *(Distressed)* The earthlings' attention? *(Notices scroll on table and goes over and picks it up)* Don't tell me you have to go on another secret mission!

Gabriel: If I remember correctly, you were quite excited the first time I said I was going on a special mission.

Gabriella: Yes, but I didn't know you'd go so often . . . or bring back such earthy odors. *(Wrinkles nose)* And now . . . *(Looks troubled)* Why, if you go now, you'll miss the grandest concert ever.

Gabriel: *(Smiles mysteriously)* Do you think so?

Gabriella: Why, yes, of course. The concert's tonight! We're to make sure our wings are groomed . . . *(Inspects wings and makes a few finger curls)* our robes glisten . . . *(Brushes and then smooths robe)* and our halos sparkle. *(Pours some halo polish on a large cotton ball and polishes halo)* We're to meet at the tail end of the Big Dipper for final instructions just as the shooting stars begin their festivities.

Gabriel: *(Holds up bugle to inspect it)* Sounds good to me.

Gabriella: *(Petulantly)* But if you're off on an earth mission, you'll miss everything.

Gabriel: Really?

Gabriella: *(Nods vigorously)*

Gabriel: Did the Maestro tell you why you're meeting at the end of the Big Dipper?

Gabriella: No.

Gabriel: Did he tell you where the concert is?

Gabriella: *(Looks perplexed)* Well . . . no . . . not really.

Gabriel: Do you remember any of the words to the songs you've been practicing?

Gabriella: *(Perks up)* Oh, sure. Like I told you before, we're singing glorious Glorias and awesome Alleluias in incredible arrangements. It's fabulous music. FAB-U-LOUS!!!

Gabriel: *(Smiles mysteriously. Polishes bugle a little more)* I couldn't agree more. But I think you have other words to sing besides Gloria and Alleluia.

Gabriella: *(Puts halo on head and thinks hard. Sings last verse of "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" to herself softly)* "All glory be to God on high, And to the earth be peace . . . *(Looks bewildered)* Peace on EARTH . . . *(Eyes grow big)* What on earth does that mean?"

Gabriel: It means harmony and tranquility . . . An inner stillness which grows out of a quiet confidence that the Mighty One . . .

Gabriella: *(Rolls eyes)* I know what *peace* means. I live in *heaven*. But there isn't any peace on *earth*. So far as I can see, earthlings have been squabbling and bickering ever since they disobeyed the Mighty One in the Garden of Eden.

Gabriel: True.

Gabriella: So why are we singing about peace on earth?

Gabriel: Well, let's see what the master script says . . . "Go to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem. Tell them not to be afraid. Tell them the Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord of all—has been born, and they'll find Him lying in a manger in . . ."

Gabriella: *(Puts up hands to stop Gabriel)* Whoa! Isn't a manger where animals eat?

Gabriel: *(Nods)* Yes.

Gabriella: So why would anyone put a newborn baby in a manger? Especially if he's the Messiah?

Gabriel: That's a good question, Gabriella. *(Consults scroll)* Let's see: "Suddenly, you will be joined . . .

Gabriella: *(Rolls eyes and shakes head)* Whoa, Gabriel. I don't have time to talk about this right now. I've got to get lined up for the concert!

Gabriel: Whoa yourself, Gabriella. Listen . . . "Suddenly, ranks of angels will join you to praise God by saying, 'Glory to God . . . Glory to God in the highest . . . and peace on earth . . .'" Now don't those words sound vaguely familiar?

Gabriella: They're not *vaguely* familiar. They're exactly what we've been practicing . . . *(Pauses to puzzle things out)* Hey, wait a minute . . . Does that mean we're all going with you on this secret mission?

Gabriel: *(Nods and smiles warmly)* It's not a *secret* mission.

Gabriella: Whatever.

Gabriel: We're going to tell everyone . . .

Gabriella: Everyone? *(Eyes get big)*

Gabriel: Everyone who will listen . . . tonight . . . and *(Sings)* "ever-more and ever-more."

Gabriella: No wa . . . *(Covers mouth quickly)* This is a top se . . . *(Stops abruptly and searches for correct word)* top . . . priority mission! *(Checks wings, robe, and halo again. Swallows hard and oozes doubt)* Ah, Gabriel . . . what's it like to squeeze through gravity?

Gabriel: It takes some adjusting. *(Beat)*

Gabriella: I'm not sure I'll like it.

Gabriel: You'll never know until you try.

Gabriella: I might get my new robe dirty.

Gabriel: You might.

Gabriella: And I'll have to breathe that foul, polluted earth air.

Gabriel: True.

Gabriella: And I'll bet it will hurt when I hurtle through all those layers of the stratosphere. *(Shudders)*

Gabriel: It can be a little rough.

Gabriella: Then, why are we doing this?

Gabriel: *(Points to scroll)* Because Jesus is being born in Bethlehem . . .

Gabriella: Jesus? *(Eyes big with disbelief)* Jesus is being born in Bethlehem . . .? *(Looks very concerned)* Does that mean Jesus is leaving heaven . . . to become an earthling?

Gabriel: I think that's the plan, Gabriella.

Gabriella: *(Overwhelmed)* Why would Jesus do that? Heaven's lonely enough when you're gone, Gabriel. But Jesus . . . *(Beat)* Jesus is the very heart of heaven. He can't just turn into a helpless earthling!

Gabriel: *(Consults scroll)* It says here that earthlings are at war with the Mighty One because of sin . . . And that the war will never stop until their sin problem is solved because the Mighty One is also the Holy One who cannot tolerate sin in any form.

Gabriella: Like I said: There's no peace on earth. And the earthlings are out of luck.

Gabriel: *(Scans scroll while running finger down the columns. Becomes stunned by what he reads)* It says here that the Mighty One . . . is sending Jesus to pay the penalty . . . *(Beat)* for the sins of the earthlings . . . and that He'll die . . . *(Beat . . . beat . . .)* on a cross.

Gabriella: Jesus is going to die? *(Wide-eyed with horror)* Why would we sing about that? That's awful!

Gabriel: To us. *(Consults scroll again)* But it's the only solution for the earthlings.

Gabriella: Do they have any idea how awesome Jesus is?

Gabriel: Probably not.

Gabriella: Jesus spoke the worlds into existence. And Jesus keeps the universe humming. Surely there must be some other way to rescue the earthlings!

Gabriel: *(Studies scroll again)* This says there is no other way, Gabriella. No one else can make them right with the Holy One. No one else can give them peace.

Gabriella: So, the Mighty One is sacrificing His Son . . .

Gabriel: *(Wipes a tear away; clears throat)* I think it's called love, Gabriella.

Gabriella: So that's how love works?

Gabriel: I guess so.

Gabriella: *(Gets tears in eyes)*

Gabriel: *(Looks out over horizon, turns to Gabriella and extends hand)* Gabriella, it's time! Are you coming?

Gabriella: *(Stands tall. Becomes decisive. Makes sure halo is on straight)* Why, of course, I'm coming. The shooting stars are already blitzing through the sky. And . . . *(Beat)* after all that practice, I'm sure not going to miss the greatest concert in all of history!

Gabriel: *(Blows bugle)*

Both: *(Exit stage left singing chorus of "Angels We Have Heard On High")*

*Suggested music: Have audience or group sing and play a medley of Christmas carols including
"Angels We Have Heard On High"
"Hark The Herald Angels Sing"
"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

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SCENERY, COSTUMES, AND PROPS

Scenery

Create the illusion of being high in the heavenly realms by designing a dark blue backdrop with tiny stars bordered by fluffy white clouds at the bottom

Cover the platform with white to look like clouds

Drape a podium with a rich fabric of purple, silver, or gold for Gabriel

Drape a music stand with a simpler but complementary fabric for Gabriella

Drape two stools with white to give the appearance of being in the clouds. Gabriel's stool should be higher than Gabriella's.

Costumes

Gabriel: Impressive white robe with generous, flowing sleeves and large filmy, flexible wings trimmed in gold or silver garland; gold or silver garland halo

Gabriella: Somewhat less impressive robe with smaller wings so she looks like an emerging, novice angel; halo which she can take off and polish in sketch #4

Props

Gabriel: A different colored scroll for each sketch. Scripts can be copied and taped inside of scrolls made from Christmas foils. Tie with contrasting Christmas ribbons. Suggested order of colors: Gold, green, silver, red.

Gabriella: Music folders. If desired, scripts can be copied and glued inside the folders, but Gabriella's remarks should sound spontaneous rather than being read.

Sketch #2: Earth Time Calculator: Cover a box (approximately 8" X 10" x 2") with black paper. Write "Earth Time Calculator" in large letters on large white label on front of box.

Sketch #4: Long, festive bugle: Cut X in the bottom of a clear plastic cup. Tape the bottom of the cup to the outside of a long cardboard roll from Christmas foil to form the bell of the bugle. (Diameter of the bottom of the cup and the roll should be the same) Tape the triangular points created by cutting the X in the bottom of the cup to the inside of the roll. Spray with gold paint. Decorate with Christmas ribbons and star garland at the neck of bugle. Cloth to polish bugle.

Halo, cotton ball, and bottle sprayed gold and labeled "Halo Polish."

Of the Father's Love Begotten

† Unison

1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten, ere the worlds be - gan to be,
 2. O that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the Vir - gin, full of grace,
 3. O ye heights of heaven, a - dore him, an - gel hosts, his prais - es sing,
 4. Christ, to thee with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly Ghost, to thee,

he is Al - pha and O - me - ga, he the source, the
 by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceive - ing, bore the Sav - ior
 powers, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him, and ex - tol our
 hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing and un - wea - ried

end - ing he, of the things that are, that have been,
 of our race; and the Babe, the world's Re - deem - er,
 God and King; let no tongue on earth be si - lent,
 prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion,

and that fu - ture years shall see, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 first re - vealed his sa - cred face, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 ev - ery voice in con - cert ring, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
 and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry, ev - er - more and ev - er - more!

WORDS: Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th C.; tr. John M. Neale, 1854, and Henry W. Baker, 1859, alt
 MUSIC: Plainsong, c. 13th C.; arr. based on C. Winfred Douglas, 1916

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.

† This song can also be used during communion.