

The Lost Boy

Young Jesus in the Temple

A children's musical for
unison/two-part voices and piano

*Commissioned by Helen Kemp for
The Kemp Endowment for Church Music Symposium,
Westminster Choir College of Rider University, October 2009*

Words by Tom S. Long
Music by Allen Pote

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Foreword

After the birth narratives, the only glimpse we have of Jesus as a boy is found in the gospel of Luke. Mary and Joseph lose track of their twelve year old son for three long days, and when they finally find him, he is sitting in his “father’s house”—demonstrating with his questions a precocious understanding of God that confounds even the teachers of the law. While the story makes an obvious statement about the divine wisdom of a young Messiah, we also find in it a reassuringly human message: even parents chosen by God can lose a child; even a perfect child can give his parents anxiety. The passage is sure to comfort anyone who has ever been a parent, a child, or even those who have misplaced Jesus for a while.

The musical can be produced with a minimum of costumes, props, and scenery. At under 25 minutes, it is short enough to fit into a worship service, but solid enough to stand alone. We offer stage directions in the score, and production notes in the pages that follow—but we hope you’ll feel free to adapt any of our suggestions to your particular situation.

Tom Long and Allen Pote

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Characters

Narrator—can be divided into two or more parts, or read by an adult

Mary

Joseph

Elizabeth

Zechariah

Merchant

Gambler

Beggar

Rich Person

Banqueters 1, 2, 3, and 4—can be played by two actors

Crowd 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5—can be played by three actors

Chorus—visitors to Jerusalem, sellers in the marketplace, crowd at hippodrome, banqueters, crowd in the temple

Production Notes

Approximate running time: 22 minutes

Costumes

Cast members are dressed in Biblical costumes. Each costume can be as simple as a large t-shirt dyed in an earth tone with a cloth shoulder sash and headband. The look is completed with khaki shorts and natural colored sandals, or—in even simpler productions—blue jeans and black shoes. When cast members assume the roles of the Rich Person and the Banqueters they can add scarves, costume jewelry and gold cardboard armbands to the costumes they are already wearing. The cast member who becomes the beggar can slip on a ragged burlap poncho at the appropriate moment.

Set

When the musical opens, the stage is set with a number of boxes and ladders to provide levels. The boxes are tall enough to be used as seats and sturdy enough to stand on.

There is a small playing area downstage and to the left of the main stage and another small area downstage and to the right. If necessary, use small platforms to create these areas. These provide separate spaces where Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, and Zechariah can view the city of Jerusalem, the hippodrome, and the banquet before actually entering the scene. In fact, during the banquet scene in the original production, two short white columns were placed on the edge of the stage right platform to represent a gate. The beggar and four searchers stayed on this platform while the rest of the cast stayed on the main stage—“inside the gate.”

Although additional scenery is not necessary, more ambitious productions may want to use four-sided periaktoi—painted columns that can be turned to reveal a different scene on each side. These can be constructed with large refrigerator cartons or with 4' by 8' sheets of Styrofoam glued together with a cardboard base. The following scenes are then painted on different sides: 1) Jerusalem street, 2) dark night, 3) hippodrome, and 4) temple interior. As the actors move from place to place, the columns are rotated to reveal the appropriate side.

Props

Things to “sell” in market scene—baskets of fruit, cloth, pots, dishes, jewelry, etc.

Gold and silver goblets for the banqueters to hold. (*Optional*)

Staging and Movement

The only songs that suggest full choreography are ***This Day*** and portions of ***Looking for Jesus***. In both cases, the majority of the cast can contribute simple steps and hand motions upstage, while a smaller group dances with more elaborate movements downstage.

This Day—lively movement suggestive of Israeli folk dancing

Searching for Jesus—

During the hippodrome section, when the cast turns to sing at measure 82, they should all focus to the far right behind the audience with leaning bodies and some pointing—as though they are watching the horses in the distance. As they sing, their focus slowly moves to center by measure 89 and to the far left by measure 93. At this point, the focus shifts slowly back to center by measure 97 and finishes at far right again at measure 102.

During the banquet section, a small group dances during measures 142 to 154, 171 to 191, and 207 to 214, while the rest of the banqueters make “toasting” movements with mimed or real goblets.

SCENE 1

(The entire cast enters down the aisles, as though they are pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration.)

NARRATOR: Every year Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover festival.

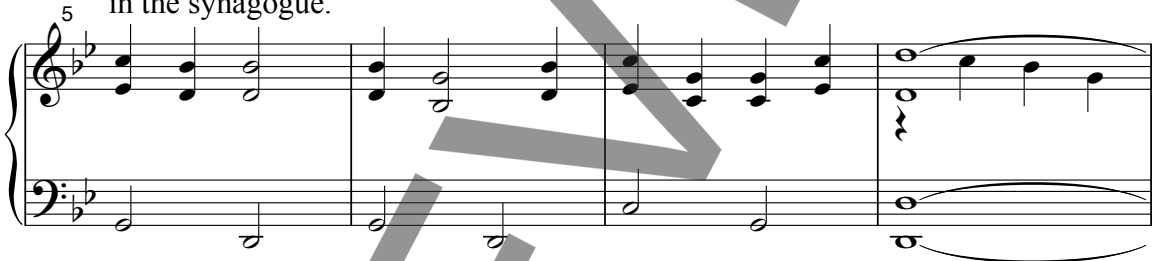
Slowly

Piano



But this year was special. Jesus had turned twelve—the age most Jewish boys began to study the scriptures more seriously. In a year or two, he would be accepted as a man in the synagogue.

5



When Mary and Joseph and Jesus arrived in the holy city—they found themselves in the middle of a joyful celebration.

9



6 Thousands of God's people
from all over the world had
gathered to remember the day
God rescued them from slavery
in Egypt.

This Day

Tom S. Long

Allen Pote

Lively (♩ = ca. 144)

Unison *mf*

f slowly with gradual *accelerando* *mf*

Piano

13 This day, we

17 cel-e-brate; this day, a ho-ly date. This day, we

21 will a-wait and sing our God is great!

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SCENE 2

13

NARRATOR: When the seven days of celebration were over, Mary and Joseph joined a great caravan with their friends and relatives to make the long journey back to their home town of Nazareth.

108 *Slowly*

mp

adjust tempo to follow narration

Mary walked at the front of the line with the women and children. Joseph walked in back with the men. Each of them thought that Jesus had gone with the other.

After a long day's walk, the caravan came to a stop for the night, and the two met up.

113

repeat if necessary

(The cast settle into a stage picture on the blocks and ladders—resting at the end of a hard day. MARY and JOSEPH approach each other from opposite sides of the stage.)

MARY: *(sitting)* Oh, Joseph, I'm so tired.

JOSEPH: Yes, it feels like the walk gets longer every year.

MARY: *(glancing around)* Where's Jesus?

JOSEPH: I don't know. I haven't seen him.

MARY: Since when?

JOSEPH: Since this morning, when he left to be with you.

MARY: What!? I thought he was walking with you.

JOSEPH: No!

MARY: *(standing)* Where is he then?

JOSEPH: I don't know! *(calling)* Jesus!...Jesus!

MARY: *(calling)* Jesus.....*(They both look around at the crowd and call for Jesus two or three more times. Then MARY turns to JOSEPH)* I'm scared. What if something's happened to him?

JOSEPH: Maybe he's with family. Talk to your cousin Elizabeth. I'll go see Zechariah.

(MARY finds ELIZABETH in the crowd as JOSEPH finds ZECHARIAH. The two pairs mime conversations, and then all four split off to search through the crowd—miming conversations with others as they go.)

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(MARY, JOSEPH, ELIZABETH, and ZECHARIAH exit into the audience walking up one aisle and down another—as though retracing their steps to Jerusalem. The rest of the cast reset the stage to represent the city, and take new positions as the CROWD in the streets.)

NARRATOR: Mary and Joseph didn't wait for daylight—they set off at once on the dark road back to Jerusalem to look for their lost boy.

Slowly



mp adjust tempo to follow narration

Elizabeth and Zechariah went with them; and the four walked all night without stopping. Just as dawn was breaking they arrived once again in the great city. Somehow it seemed even larger than before. (The cast chatter quietly, miming conversations.)



8

MARY: There're so many people. Where do we begin?

JOSEPH: Maybe he went toward the marketplace. There's a lot there to catch a man's eye.

MARY: He's only a boy, Joseph—not a man.

JOSEPH: Even more reason he might have been sidetracked.

MARY: Spread out and ask everyone—somebody must have seen him.

(The four searchers exit back into the audience, heading down separate aisles and asking members of the audience if they've seen Jesus. The rest of the cast change positions to represent sellers in a marketplace filled with stalls.)

Looking for Jesus

Tom S. Long

Allen Pote

13 **Lively** (♩ = ca. 84)

Unison *mf*

Knock till ev - 'ry door is o - pen...

17

Where could Je - sus be? — Keep on look - ing till — you find him;

21

ask un - til you see. — Knock, ask, (Where?)

(knock twice)

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The Master in the Temple

Tom S. Long

Allen Pote

ELIZABETH: What's going on?

CROWD 1: There's a great teacher here today.

Moderately (♩ = ca. 60)

CROWD 2: His answers are amazing.

CROWD 4: And he's so young.

CROWD 3: So are his questions!

MARY: Joseph—think about it.

Jesus loves to learn about the law.

JOSEPH: Yes. Maybe he came to the temple to hear this rabbi!

CROWD:

Unison *mf*

Oh, who is this mas-ter we've

JOSEPH: Oh my son. Will I ever understand you?

CROWD 2: I have to tell you—you have a remarkable child.

JOSEPH and MARY: We know.

JOSEPH: Three days we wandered around looking for him...

MARY: (to JESUS) And the whole time you were right here.

JOSEPH: Apparently, we were the ones who were lost.

MARY: (with a laugh) Yes, I guess so.

How Did We Fail to Notice? (Reprise)

Tom S. Long

Allen Pote

(JESUS stands;
MARY and JOSEPH
hug him.)

Slowly

NARRATOR: And so Mary and Joseph found
their son, Jesus—who wasn't really lost after all.
(ZECHARIAH and ELIZABETH join MARY and
JOSEPH, greeting JESUS affectionately.)

He returned to his home in Nazareth. And as he grew, so did his
wisdom—until a great many people came to love him. And still do.

(The cast slowly form a new stage picture facing the audience.)

And sometimes, like Mary and Joseph, those people get a little lost—and wonder
where he's gone.

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This Day (Reprise)

Tom S. Long

Allen Pote

Lively (♩ = ca. 144) Unison *mf*

This day, we cel-e-brate;

5
this day, a ho-ly date. This day, we will a-wait and

9
sing our God is great!

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