



Meet the Nativity

Christmas present. Christmas past.

MeetTheNativity.com

On the website you can:

- Watch all the episodes,
- Watch all the explainer videos,
- Read the explainer articles.

If you want to access to the *Meet the Nativity* **graphics** (for Powerpoints, invitations, etc), or if you want an **HD video file** of *Meet the Nativity* for your own screenings, go to speaklife.org.uk/Christmas

If you want to organise your own screening for MTN, you don't need to ask for permission, please be our guest. (But do tell us how it went!)

Use these resources however you like but if you want the best deals on *Four Kinds of Christmas*, the book we give away to those interested in the film, I highly recommend going to 10ofthose.com and buying in bulk.

CONTENTS

THE THINKING BEHIND MEET THE NATIVITY.....	p2
THE OUTLINE OF A FOUR-SERMON SERIES ON FOUR KINDS.....	p4
THE FULL SCRIPT.....	p12

THE THINKING BEHIND MEET THE NATIVITY



Meet the Nativity is based on an old apocryphal tale—the shepherd who shows up to the nativity gift-less. He feels his lack keenly. He is outshone by the opulent presents of the magi and, dejected, is about to leave when he notices a problem. Joseph has his arms full with the gold and frankincense. The third magi wants to give Mary the myrrh, but her hands are full with her precious firstborn. She needs to offload the baby. But who is fit to receive Jesus? Wonderfully, she moves toward the empty-handed outsider. Precisely because he is empty, he is filled. With nothing to bring, he instead receives Christ, the ultimate Christmas gift.

Meet the Nativity updates the story and brings in three other modern characters — not just the empty-handed “shepherd”, Will. Across the four episodes we tell the story of four members of a modern family. In each episode, each character has a distinct *lack* revealed but it is then met by the nativity story.

WILL is full of charm

CLAIRE is full of plans

RUTH is full of sadness

KEN is full of status

But none of these are working for them. They all must be emptied...

WILL must stop trying

CLAIRE must let go of her plans

RUTH must let go of her fears

KEN must let go of control

In the end, the 21st century family is transformed by the 1st century nativity.

SERMON OUTLINE(S)



If you want to do just one sermon or event using *Meet the Nativity* we suggest just concentratin on episode 1.

SERMON 1: WILL'S STORY — Meet the Nativity and Find your Family

Text: Isaiah 9:2-7

Meet the Outsider

Will is our everyman. He's desperate to belong, but he can never gain the acceptance he craves. We relate to Will because we all want to be accepted—embraced at the heart of a loving community. Somehow, though, Will's charms fall short and his efforts seem wasted.

For Will, the magical turn comes when he meets the nativity. He finds an instant welcome. Though he's the most ridiculous outsider he finds he belongs with this family. Though he has nothing, he is given everything. In fact, because he has nothing, his empty hands are the perfect resting place for Jesus.

Outsiders Become Insiders

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but her hands are full with her precious firstborn. She needs to offload the baby. But who is fit to receive Jesus? Wonderfully, she moves toward the empty-handed outsider. Precisely because he is empty, he is filled. With nothing to bring, he instead receives Christ, the ultimate Christmas gift.

Isaiah 9:6 says, “To us a child is born, to us a son is given.” And this present is offered to “a people walking in darkness” (Isa. 9:2). To those who have nothing—who know they have nothing—Christ becomes our everything.

Perhaps you feel you don’t belong—not in earthly families, and not in God’s family either. Christmas is God’s welcome. God the Son became God our brother to bring us home to God the Father. We bring nothing to the table. Our offerings are as ridiculous as crumpled wrapping paper. Worse, we bring sin and selfishness. But that’s why he came. And in return he offers himself.

This Christmas, bring your emptiness and receive God’s fullness. Here’s a family where anyone can belong.

SERMON 2: CLAIRE'S STORY — Meet the Nativity and Be Surprised

Text: Luke 1:26-38

Bright Future

Meet Claire. She has everything going for her and everything planned out for the future. She's young, smart, attractive, and full of potential. It's nearly Christmas (yay!) and her adorable boyfriend, Will, is meeting her darling Daddy for the first time. She's even started to get along with her stepmother.

Claire's the type who has her favorite Christmas movies (plus appropriate festive treats) lined up for each day of the holidays. She's bought (and wrapped) ideal gifts for others, and her Amazon wishlist has been in her Twitter bio since the start of November. Will is without excuse.

For Claire, the present is calm, and the future is bright.

Unexpected Christmas Present

But then comes her surprise. And if there's one thing people like Claire doesn't appreciate, it's surprises. It throws everything into a spin, and suddenly she has as many doubts and fears as she had hopes and plans.

It's odd that even though Christmas is on the same day each year—and some people have their tree up in October—it's actually the ultimate interruption.

Christmas is a person who bursts into the room waving a flag, riding a lion, and playing a trumpet; everything we'd planned that morning will have to wait. Christmas says there's something we haven't foreseen and haven't taken into account; there's something that didn't make it into our color-coded spreadsheet. Except, of course, that Christmas is far more real than our plans for our future. If anything, it's our plans for success-without-interruption that exist in the realm of fantasy.

Unexpected Christmas Past

When Claire meets the Nativity, Mary tells her, "Life is what we're given." The *Biblical* Mary would have learnt that kind of truth the hard way. In Luke 1 she might have had all

sorts of plans — marrying Joseph, settling down and having a family, in her own time in her own way. But Christmas showed up to upend all her carefully choreographed plans.

When Mary says in episode 2, “Life is what we’re given,” there’s a deep connection between the Life with a capital L within her and the life that we all lead. “Life” with a capital L — Jesus — is a sheer gift, but he’s a disruptive gift, crash landing into our lives no matter what our previous plans had be.

Verse 32-33 is full of royal language. Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of David, he has a throne and a kingdom and he will reign forever. Luke couldn’t be more emphatic about the Royal Status of this Life. He’s in charge. How do we feel about that?

Well actually, we all need to realise that we are not in charge of “Life”, “Life” is in charge of us. Didn’t John Lennon say that Life is what happens while we’re busy making other plans. There’s nothing like an unexpected pregnancy for teaching this truth! Claire is beginning to it and she would do well to listen to Mary. Life is not what we make it. Life is the gift that comes down from heaven to be received. Life is a Person and he won’t be managed. He is the King.

So how should we respond? We should receive this royal gift, just like Mary. In Luke 1:38, Mary says “Let it be to me according to your word.” Those three little words “let it be” can be scary, but if they’re said while trusting the God at the heart of the nativity, they’re the liberating truth that life really is what we’re given. And at Christmas we’re given the life-giving One himself. The greatest interruption of all.

This King does not come as a Dictator but as a Gift. in verse 35 we learn that he is the Son of the Father, full of the Spirit. He’s the Son in God’s Royal Family. And why has he come? To join our broken family. He entered our failures to bring us into his Family, if only we will receive him.

And so for people like Claire—the up-and-coming types, full of plans, dreams, and strategies—Christmas says something revolutionary: Don’t worry, it’s not up to you — actually it — he! — comes down. The world isn’t waiting for you to execute your master plan; but as we meet the Nativity, we’re invited into a far better one.

No doubt you have plans for Christmas, but this year discover that Christmas has plans for you.

SERMON 3: RUTH'S STORY — Meet the Nativity and Find True Joy

Text: 1 John 4:7-12

“Tidy Things Up A Bit”

Meet Ruth, the stepmother. She is another outsider at Christmas. Like Will, the boyfriend, she too feels estranged—from the heart of the family and from the joy she’s “meant” to feel at this “most wonderful time of the year.” But it’s not a wonderful time for Ruth. In fact, Christmas is quite difficult for her. And so she copes the only way she knows how—by taking control of her immediate circumstances (the house, the food, the decorations) and becoming a whirl of frenzied activity. She’s doing her best but feeling far from Christmas joy.

Ruth’s story reflects the story of so many. We feel we need to be full of Christmas cheer, and yet, for any number of reasons, it’s a particularly hard season. How do we cope? Perhaps we try to take control, order the chaos, “tidy things up a bit.” But it never works. We just end up feeling fed up, underappreciated, and surrounded by mess.

Brokenness

Why do we feel the pain of this broken world so much? And why is it particularly raw at Christmas? Perhaps it’s because Christmas is a picture of how things are meant to be. We are meant to be gathered together in bonds of love, we are made to rejoice, we are made for the wonder of freely giving and receiving gifts, we are made for family.

1 John 4:8 tells us “God is love”. Not just that God is loving — God *is* love, God is a Father always loving his Son in the joy of the Spirit. This is foundation for Christmas joy — the family, the giving, the feasting joy all finds its origin in God. This is how life is meant to be.

And that’s what makes our fractured lives and loves so heartbreaking. Especially at Christmas we feel how far we fall from that height.

Joy in Chaos

But Ruth “meets the nativity,” and there she discovers a Christmas joy that invades our chaos. “That baby should not be here,” she cries, and she’s right. God the Son shouldn’t

stoop to such circumstances. He belongs on a throne, not wriggling on straw in a cold and hostile world. But there he is. And he's offered to Ruth.

Why? Verses 9 and 10 show us. Jesus came to live our life (v9) and to die our death (v10). That's what we see with the Christmas child. He came to live our life (and who could deny that he lives the good life of love, joy and giving?). Then on the cross he died our death (he entered into the darkness, estrangement and curse of our broken lives). But this is what love does! Love comes for the broken, no matter the cost.

In the episode, Ruth is astonished to see the gift of the Son given even to her. "My hands are dirty," she objects. But he doesn't seem to mind! He is given anyway. And finally, as Ruth receives this ultimate Christmas gift, she is still. As she had exclaimed in exasperation to the vicar, now she says to Christ: "Welcome to the mess." What mess? The mess of the stable, the mess of the world, the mess of our lives and hearts that can never be clean and tidy the way we might want. "Welcome to the mess," we say, and as the carol says: "Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in."

By receiving the gift of Christ, Ruth find peace and joy. She knows a heavenly love and she's released to love others (hence her moment with Claire at the end of the episode). This is the good life Jesus frees us to enjoy. As we love one another (v11-12), so we participate in the love of God all the more.

Messiah for Mess

This Christmas, there's one guest you don't have to tidy up for. His whole mission is to enter our mess, to be received by dirty-handed failures like you and me, to take that dirt on himself on the cross and offer us true peace. When we grasp this then we can finish the carol:

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today,
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

SERMON 4: KEN'S STORY — Meet the Nativity and Laugh

Text: Luke 2:1-21

The Heavens Scowl And So Do We

In science fiction there are stories of alien invasions. Martians descend with their ray guns saying “Take me to your leader.”

In these stories the “truth is out there” but it’s a very dark and unsettling truth. The heavens are against us so we’d better hunker down and do our best.

Perhaps that’s what the shepherds were thinking. They were in their domain, doing their thing, they were in control. Except that they weren’t.

In *Meet the Nativity*, Ken is shown to be a man who likes control. He can be domineering. He’s anxious and unhappy. He can even be a bully when things don’t meet his expectations. That’s because Ken’s in the grip of a familiar delusion: the idea that we can control the people and circumstances around us.

As Ken knows, the desire to control leaves us feeling miserable, fearful, powerless, and weak. And when things don’t go the way we want, we feel angry and betrayed by life. As one friend of mine puts it, “If you want to be anxious today, pretend you’re in control.” “It’s hard to let go”, says Joseph in this episode and that sums up Ken perfectly.

Ken doesn’t laugh in this episode, not until the end anyway. That’s because to laugh, we have to be willing to give up control. Find the person who never laughs at a joke other than his own, and you’ve found the most controlling person in the room. Because real laughter is involuntary, overwhelming, overpowering. It’s why we have the phrase “laughing helplessly.”

It has a life of its own and can be badly behaved, as you’ll know if you’ve ever gotten the giggles at a funeral. When that kind of laugh gets going, we feel powerless to control it. And yet it is one of the most enjoyable experiences a human being can have. For a moment, when we laugh like this, even the oldest faces recover the bloom of their youth.

The Joy Of Heaven

The incredible surprise for the shepherds is this heavenly invasion. But more than the shock of it, it's the joy that must have been completely unsettling. When these creatures from "outer space" (a.k.a. heaven) arrive, they expect to meet their doom (verse 9!). But it's the shock of their lives to realise that the heavens are not scowling, they're smiling! Verse 10-14: Good news of great joy!

And actually it liberates the shepherds to forget all about the domain over which they thought they had control — their flocks — and to worship the true Source of joy (v16)

When Ken "meets the nativity" (or rather when he meets *Joseph*) he encounters a man who had his world turned upside down by Jesus. Joseph realised he'd have to let go, even of Jesus himself — even into the hands of evil-doers. Joseph knew he was not in control but he found a way forward because he could trust the One who was.

And when we encounter the Christmas child, we too realise that we can trust him. There he is: unable to walk, feed himself, or clothe himself—and yet all-powerful. Needing to be carried—and yet upholding an entire universe. Laying down his power and even his life for those he loves—and yet in control of everything.

He left everything for us and he's worth leaving everything for. Like these shepherds, released from the delusion of control, liberated with the joy of heaven, hurrying off to see and speak of the God who has shown himself to be utterly trustworthy. *This* God has pledged himself to us in flesh and blood — that's what will make us praise and glorify him forever (v20)

Is there something better than anxiously trying to hold on to the illusion of control this Christmas? There is. The relief of handing it over to the One who really is in control, knowing that he will hold you securely in his arms, gaze at you with infinite love, and nurture you with unfailing care. The One who removes our delusions of control and replaces them with uncontainable laughter.

FULL SCRIPT (including extra dialogue not in the final cut)

EPISODE 1: THE BOYFRIEND - WILL'S STORY

EXT. LOCATION #1 THE FRONT OF A MANSION HOUSE - EVENING

CAR pulls into FRONT DRIVE. IMPRESSIVE MANSION HOUSE. Holly on front door.

We see CLAIRE and WILL inside the car, bags of Christmas presents in the back seat.

WILL

You grew up in a palace! This explains everything.

CLAIRE

It's not a palace. Technically it's a mansion.

WILL has started putting on his silly Christmas hat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What are you wearing?

WILL

(Strikes a pose)

It's Christmas!

CLAIRE

My father is not a 'Christmas hat' person. Ruth is *definitely* not a 'Christmas hat' person.

WILL

I'll charm them.

CLAIRE

With what?

WILL takes it playfully. Narrows eyes.

CLAIRE takes hat off him and exits car.

WILL exits too, catches up to CLAIRE as they crunch up the drive.

WILL puts his arm around CLAIRE, then snatches the hat back and puts it on.

They reach the doorstep

EXT. LOCATION #2. FRONT DOOR - EVENING

CLAIRE gives a "Behave!" look, rings the doorbell and takes WILL's hat off.

WILL
Happy Crimbo!

CLAIRE and WILL come into entry hall.

INT. LOCATION #3 ENTRY HALL. EVENING.

Awkward greetings. CLAIRE and KEN share a warm embrace. CLAIRE then kisses RUTH on both cheeks. (We see from this embrace that RUTH is step-mother not mother).

WILL first offers to hug KEN, then offers a handshake, but neither are on offer from KEN. KEN simply pats WILL on the shoulder.

WILL sizes up the etiquette for RUTH, decides to go for cheek-kissing. She turns her head at the wrong moment and WILL ends up kissing RUTH on the lips right under KEN's nose.

KEN clearly thinks WILL is a buffoon.

WILL
(Recovering)
Who needs mistletoe, eh?

Beat.

KEN
I'll go make up the spare room for you Will.

KEN starts up the stairs

WILL
Oh no need. I'll just sleep with Claire

CLAIRE glares at WILL. KEN stops on the stairs. WILL back tracks.

WILL
Joking! As if. With her? Yuck! Spare room's great.

KEN continues up the stairs frowning.

RUTH
Are you allergic to anything Will?

WILL
No, I love all Christmas food... within reason. Not nut roast obviously. Remember nut roast?

RUTH's expression changes. CLAIRE realises first. Then WILL.

INT. LOCATION #4 DINING ROOM

KEN
(Serving up nut roast.)

More nut roast WILL?

WILL

Yes! Takes me back.

WILL smiles at CLAIRE and RUTH. He gets little in return.

KEN

And I hope you can join us later for midnight mass, bit of a family tradition.

WILL

Oh, church? Not for me I'm afraid.

The mood heavies in the room. WILL senses it.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hope that's ok?

WILL turns to CLAIRE for support. She's not looking at him. All awkwardly eating in silence. Clock ticks excruciatingly.

EXT. LOCATION #1 OUTSIDE HOUSE

WILL bids the others farewell as they head off for midnight mass.

WILL grabs CLAIRE's hand, the last to leave.

WILL

(Whispers)

Is this going as badly as I think?

CLAIRE

Yes.

(Clasps hands)

I'll pray for you.

WILL winces. CLAIRE kisses her fingers and presses them to WILL's forehead.

WILL watches them go. Wanders out onto the landing and waves. Sighs. Turn back to the house. The door's shut. Oh!

WILL walks out again, considers going after the others. Thinks better of it. Lights a cigarette in the middle of the drive, puffs and exhales. Looks up into the night sky. He frowns.

From above we see that there's a bright light shining down on WILL - a star. He looks up to it, flicking away his cigarette.

Still gazing up, WILL looks over the roof of the house and hops over the fence to the back garden.

EXT. LOCATION #6. THE BACK GARDEN

From below and from above we follow WILL down the garden path as he stumbles in wonder, face heavenward, following the star.

Suddenly we see a 1st century SHEPHERD who's heading in the other direction. He passes WILL, muttering.

SHEPHERD 1

A present? Where am I sposed to get a present at this time of night?!

WILL looks back at the SHEPHERD, then looks ahead. He keeps walking a few steps then stops, mouth agape.

We begin to see what he's gawping at. There are more 1st century shepherds forming a rent-a-crowd. We can make out the stable and a bright light coming from it.

WILL is now shuffling forwards through those shepherds. The shot rises up from behind WILL and the shepherds, as it goes over their heads we see the full nativity in all its glory.

The THREE KINGS are in the middle of giving their gifts to JOSEPH and MARY, who is holding JESUS.

The gold is being given to JOSEPH.

SHEPHERD 3

(Commenting on the wise men)

Is that Gold?!

WILL

Wait, are they? Are you? Is he? Is she? Is this??

SHEPHERD 2

(Frowns at Will. Of *course* it's what he thinks it is)

What'd you bring? And where are you from?

WILL still trying to comprehend.

In the background, JOSEPH receiving a pouch of something from KING 2.

WILL

I'm from Finchley.

SHEPHERD 2

Never heard of it.

WILL

It's on the Northern Line.

SHEPHERD 3

(Overheard)

Looks like frankincense!

SHEPHERD 2

(To WILL)

So what's your present? I brought a lamb but these lads from the east are showing us all up.

WILL looks at his cigarette the packet. Feebly shows it to the SHEPHERDS.

SHEPHERD 3

For a baby?!

SHEPHERD 2

More than a baby!

WILL

(Loudly)

Right! You're right! I've screwed up again. This time with the Son of God, apparently!

SHEPHERDS 2 & 3

Shhh!

KING 3 is presenting the myrrh to JOSEPH with his hands full. He turns to MARY who is holding JESUS. She obviously looks like she needs to offload JESUS.

WILL

(Turns to leave)

Sorry, I don't belong here. I...

WILL tries to push past the Shepherds and leave. SHEPHERD 2 stands in his way and pushes him back, perhaps more forcefully than he intended.

WILL stumbles into the middle of the nativity. Everyone is looking at him. Awkward pause.

MARY softens, walks over to him. WILL flinches back. She thrusts JESUS into his hands.

WILL looks down. Looks up.

MARY squeezes his arm then turns to receive the myrrh.

WILL

(Begins to tear up)

Thanks!

MARY

(Looking back over her shoulder, smiling)

You're welcome.

Shot pulls back from WILL holding the baby. We see the full scene now with MARY receiving the third gift.

Comedy ending is Will asking Mary, "Got a name?"

Cinematic ending has the shot pulling back from Will, taking in the family, the wise men, the shepherds and finally pulling back over the family house roof to see suburbia stretching below.

END

EPISODE 2: THE GIRLFRIEND - CLAIRE'S STORY

INT. LOCATION #1 THE JUNK ROOM. MORNING

WILL in bed, face down, hair messed up, headphones still on from whatever he fell asleep listening to. Wakes up and remembers where he is. Finds and plays music on phone.

WILL leaves spare room. As he does so he walks past a chair by the door with a pressed suit laid out on it. There's a note:

FORMAL CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST (It's a tradition!). PLEASE WEAR THIS
xx

He walks right by it and out of the room, wearing only pants and his iPhone perched precariously over his left buttock.

INT. LOCATION #2 THE HALLWAY AND STAIRS. MORNING

WILL, bleary eyed, stumbles along the hallway and down the stairs.

INT. LOCATION #3 CLAIRE'S ROOM

Pokes his head into CLAIRE'S room. We hear the tinny music on his iPhone.

WILL
(Too loudly)
Claire!?

She's not there. WILL withdraws. Sings along to *Fairytale of New York*...

Ba-da-da, ba-da-da, ba-da-da-da-da

INT. LOCATION #4 THE KITCHEN / DINING ROOM. MORNING

KEN, RUTH and the VICAR are dressed formally and eating in the dining room end.

WILL stumbles into the kitchen end without seeing them. He starts singing to his music. As he does so he raids the fridge, drinking out of the milk carton, etc...

WILL

You scumbag

You maggot

You cheap lousy fff...

Closing the fridge, WILL notices KEN, RUTH and VICAR. Shocked. Removes headphones

WILL (CONT'D)

(WILL has a brainwave. Pivots from "Fairytale" to "Deck the Halls", tries to carry it off with style)

Ffffffffaa....la la la laaaa, la la la laaaaa."

KEN

Will! This is Reverend Peters.

WILL offers frozen grin.

RUTH

Won't you join us?

KEN hates the idea. WILL decides he's going all in.

WILL

(Taking his seat)

Yes! Yes! Yes!!

INT. LOCATION #5. BATHROOM. MORNING

CLAIRE is sitting on top of a closed toilet lid looking at a pregnancy test turn positive.

CLAIRE

No! No! No!!

CLAIRE is freaking out. Stares down at the bathroom sink. Stares into bathroom mirror.

CLAIRE

I'm not ready...

...Will is definitely not ready.

INT. LOCATION #4 THE KITCHEN / DINING ROOM. MORNING

Back at the dining table with a mostly naked WILL trying to engage the vicar in theological discussion.

WILL

Course you know why Jesus couldn't have been born in Wales? They couldn't find three wise men or a virgin.

WILL laughs. The VICAR is amused in spite of herself, RUTH smiles, KEN is despairing.

WILL (CONT'D)

What's Claire doing?

KEN

(Dryly)

We're wondering the same thing.

CLAIRE arrives

KEN (CONT'D)

Ah, there you are.

CLAIRE
Sorry everyone.

CLAIRE frowns at WILL in his pants but that conversation will have to wait.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Will, can I borrow you?

CLAIRE takes WILL by the elbow, urging him out the door.

EXT. LOCATION #6. OUTSIDE HOUSE. MORNING

CLAIRE has hustled WILL outside (still wearing only his pants)

CLAIRE
(Wondering whether to say anything about the near-nudity. Thinks again).
I've got something to tell you.

WILL
I've got something to tell you.

CLAIRE
(Frowning)
Really??

Now WILL takes *CLAIRE* by the elbow, down the garden path towards the nativity scene / cabin.

We watch WILL lead *CLAIRE* to the nativity.

WILL and *CLAIRE* come to the door. She's uncertain but he nods her in.

CLAIRE goes through door into the nativity scene / cabin.

EXT. LOCATION #7. NATIVITY CABIN. MORNING

CLAIRE enters gingerly. MARY is walking up and down with the baby Jesus on one shoulder.

CLAIRE
(Totally floored)
Holy...

MARY
Sorry if we disturbed you.

CLAIRE
(Wide-eyed)
No! Why would this be disturbing?

MARY smiles. Nods towards hay bale. CLAIRE sits on it.

MARY
How is your Christmas?

CLAIRE
...Not what I planned.

MARY
(With great empathy, looking at baby the whole time)
We have our plans, then life happens.

CLAIRE nods.

MARY (CONT'D)
Which goes to show our life isn't our plans.

CLAIRE
What is it?

MARY
(Looking at baby, speaking to CLAIRE)
It's what we're given.

CLAIRE
Sounds terrifying.

MARY
(Laughs)
...It is! Hold?

MARY offers JESUS to CLAIRE. CLAIRE receives the baby, stunned.

CLAIRE
...Congratulations by the way!

MARY
(Looking to CLAIRE'S womb)
You too!

EXT. LOCATION #6. OUTSIDE HOUSE, OUTSIDE CABIN. MORNING

CLAIRE emerges from nativity cabin (empty handed). There's something different about her. Will sees it.

WILL
So. Are you ready to share your news?

CLAIRE
I'm ready.

END

EPISODE 3: THE STEP-MOTHER - RUTH'S STORY

INT. LOCATION #1 DINING ROOM. MORNING

RUTH doing up her apron. Resolve written across her face.

Lays the table. Everything has to be perfect.

This is the preparation for the breakfast that WILL gatecrashed in episode 2.

INT. LOCATION #2 ENTRY HALL. MORNING

The VICAR arrives. RUTH and KEN receive her. KEN and VICAR laughing. RUTH picking a thread from KEN's jumper.

INT. LOCATION #1 DINING ROOM. MORNING

RUTH, KEN and VICAR enjoying breakfast, though RUTH seems distracted.

WILL arrives (this is the same scene as in Episode 2, now told from RUTH's perspective.) He's nearly naked and comes into the kitchen singing Fairytale of New York. We see RUTH's response.

INT. LOCATION #3 KITCHEN. DAY

RUTH enters kitchen, carrying dirty plates. She puts a pile down. She's struggling with everything.

KEN comes after RUTH carrying dishes himself. CLAIRE enters third, empty handed. She's just caught up on what's happened.

CLAIRE

Ruth, I'm sorry about Will.

RUTH
(Turns around. Shakes head)
...I like Will.

KEN
(Genuinely baffled)
Why?

RUTH
It's not Will. Christmas is just... hard.

RUTH shares a knowing look with KEN.

RUTH (CONT'D)
(Forced smile)
But we do our best.

CLAIRE makes her mind up, steps forward and takes the plates out of RUTH's hands.

CLAIRE
Can I show you something?

EXT. LOCATION #4 OUTSIDE CABIN. MORNING

CLAIRE takes RUTH to cabin/nativity. They go in, CLAIRE first.

INT. LOCATION #5 INSIDE CABIN. MORNING

It's a mess. MARY and JOSEPH absent. JESUS in crib. SHEPHERD on baby-sitting duty.

CLAIRE slips in and stands to one side of the door, RUTH enters.

SHEPHERD never notices CLAIRE but brightens as RUTH enters.

SHEPHERD

Oh good. Relief.

RUTH

Sorry?

RUTH looks to CLAIRE for help. CLAIRE gives reassuring nod.

SHEPHERD

Must be your turn to babysit.

RUTH struggling to take it in. Notices crib.

SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

Mary and Joe have gone into town.

RUTH

And you're babysitting.... him.

SHEPHERD

No. WE are, apparently.

(Stands up to pick up Jesus)

SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

Make yourself useful...

RUTH

Oh, I'm no good with children.

SHEPHERD

He's good as gold.

RUTH

I'm sure. Perhaps I could tidy up a bit.

RUTH begins to clear some of the mess. RUTH picks up a box of something and the bottom falls out. She bends down to pick it up.

SHEPHERD

(Looking around at mess. Smiles)

Fit for a king eh?

SHEPHERD starts gathering up the baby.

RUTH starts brushing up the debris just with her hands. SHEPHERD has brought Jesus round to RUTH.

RUTH

There's a broom in the house, I...

RUTH surprised to see the SHEPHERD standing in front of her, JESUS in hand.

SHEPHERD

(Insistent - holding out the baby)

It's your turn.

RUTH

My hands are...

SHEPHERD

He doesn't seem to mind.

RUTH drops the dustpan, holds JESUS. She's finally still.

END.

EPISODE 4: The Father - Ken's Story

INT. LOCATION #1 LIVING ROOM. DAY

Gift giving. Piles of presents next to each of WILL, CLAIRE, RUTH and KEN. In the middle there's torn wrapping paper in a see-through plastic bin bag.

WILL has a large pile of presents to give next to him. He's also got a list with names and numbers on it - to remember which present is for whom.

WILL gives one to CLAIRE and one to RUTH - similar sized boxes.

WILL

(To Ruth)

It's only small but I want to hear all about what you do with it.

CLAIRE opens her box to discover a gift card within

CLAIRE

(Sarcastically)

Book tokens?! Thanks Will, how did you know?

WILL suddenly realises what went wrong. He turns his list upside down.

WILL

(Reaches towards RUTH)

Oh, no, no, no...!

RUTH pulls out sexy red lingerie and immediately holds it up to herself.

RUTH

Oh! Will, bless you. What a... flattering...colour"

WILL

That's not, I didn't mean that for you.

WILL reaches out to KEN

WILL (CONT'D)

It's not for Ruth.

CLAIRE

But you're right Will, it is only small...

RUTH

And remember, he wants to hear *all* about what I do with it.

Much laughter from CLAIRE and RUTH

WILL

(Recovering slightly from total mortification)

Welllll, you've seen me in mine, it's only fair.

KEN

(Fed up. Stands)

Need more firewood.

CLAIRE nudges WILL and gives him eyes: *now is the time, go on.*
WILL sighs and gets up

WILL

I'll help.

KEN and WILL leave. RUTH and CLAIRE swap their presents. In the background we hear:

RUTH

He's got good taste actually...

EXT. LOCATION #2 BACK GARDEN. DAY

WILL and KEN walking to shed to pick up firewood. WILL struggles to keep up with KEN's pace.

WILL

Ken, I've, um. I've been seeing your daughter for a couple of years now. And I guess you could describe our relationship as serious.

KEN starts to pile wood into WILL's arms.

KEN

'Serious' and you don't really go together do they Will?

WILL

Well, I think that's a little unfair.

KEN raises eyebrows.

WILL

Not unfair. Unbalanced.

KEN

Unbalanced??

KEN slams a heavy log into WILL's arms.

WILL

No. I just. What I want to say is. Claire and I.... well, I think the time has come to...

KEN

Split up!

WILL

What?

KEN

You need to split up these loges. They're too large.

WILL

Oh

KEN

I'll need to get the axe from the workshop. Wait here.

WILL

Alright

KEN turns towards the workshop. Suddenly WILL clocks what it is KEN will encounter in the workshop.

WILL (CONT'D)

Oh, Ken. The workshop won't be... It won't be what you expect.

KEN stops.

KEN

What have you done to it?

WILL

Nothing, no. Don't worry. You'll find what you need.

Withering frown from KEN. He goes to workshop. WILL left holding the logs, faint smile.

INT. LOCATION #3 WORKSHOP. DAY

JOSEPH is in the cabin/workshop, wooden mallet in hand, figuring out his woodwork - a crib.

KEN enters. Doesn't spot JOSEPH. Mutters to self.

KEN
Glory be, where does she find them?

JOSEPH
(Looking intently at his woodwork)
Where does she find what?

KEN stares at JOE incredulous. Begins to mouth "Who?"

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Joe. Just fixing something up for the boy.. What did I miss?

KEN
About 2000 years?

JOSEPH
What?

KEN
Mm? ... Ach, it's my... my potential son in law.
Good grief, to say it out loud!

JOSEPH
(Continuing to work on the crib)
You don't like him?

KEN
Like is not the point. Ready is the point. And that boy is not ready for responsibility.

JOSEPH
(Looking at KEN for the first time)
Do you think anyone's ready? Were you?

KEN

(Can't answer. Changes tack)

I just think she needs to take her time. Maybe move back in here and reconsider. You know?

JOSEPH

You have a kid and they grow up in a dangerous world.

JOSEPH hammers in some nails.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You can't hold onto them, you've got to let go.

KEN

Sounds like death

JOSEPH

It's LIFE. Cos they were never yours. They were a gift.

JOSEPH puts last finishing touch on the crib.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

And maybe you can trust the giver?.

KEN

Can you?

JOSEPH hands KEN the crib. The ends have a cross shape.

JOSEPH

What do you reckon?

KEN looks at him, then the crib.

KEN

What's this?

JOSEPH

You're gonna need it.

KEN begins to twig about CLAIRE's pregnancy. (And therefore why WILL might be propositioning)

One year later

INT. LOCATION #4 ENTRY HALL. NIGHT

RUTH looks out front window.

RUTH

They're here!

KEN comes in from kitchen with an apron on. He begins taking it off.

KEN

If he's wearing another ridiculous Christmas hat,
I'll...

RUTH

(Poking KEN's face into a smile)

Oh lighten up Ken. It's Christmas.

There's a new tenderness and unity about them. RUTH opens the door.

RUTH and KEN

Welcome!

CLAIRE and WILL come in. WILL is wearing the new baby in a harness.

They take the baby out. The *baby* has a ridiculous Christmas hat. Hugs all round and holding of the new baby.

WILL has forgotten the baby's bottle. He must return to the car. We follow him out front

EXT. LOCATION #5 FRONT ENTRANCE OF HOUSE. NIGHT

WILL gets bottle from car. Emerges from car again and looks up to see the star from episode 1, above the house. WILL smiles.

Beat.

Then WILL looks over the next door neighbour's house. There's a star there too.

(Via a drone shot), the camera pulls back and rises up above the home. We now see across suburbia there are stars over every house.

END

