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BED BETHLEHEM & BEYOND

When Heaven Touched Earth

BED

BETHLEHEM

&

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BEYOND!

When Heaven Touched Earth



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BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND!*

When Heaven Touched Earth



Everything is in place for the expected crush of guests at Bethlehem Inn. Located in a small village, our charming inn is owned by a disciplined Innkeeper who expects sheer perfection and gets it. "Customer Satisfaction" is the motto and not one speck of dust or wrinkled sheet gets in the way.

Except...One night our perfect Innkeeper discovers trouble brewing in Bethlehem Inn and his own reputation is at risk in the middle of history. There is a Christmas lesson to be learned from the unknown, much maligned innkeeper. What could it be? Who is this innkeeper?

Engage your children and grown ups in this unique view of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem long ago. Funny yet inspirational, the wonderful story of how God uses ordinary people to accomplish His big plan never grows old. This is a simply prepared, simply presented all church event! Make a Christmas memory! Let us help!

Gather your church family
and discover how God can use
a humble Innkeeper
to complete His plan for the world.

"While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger because there was *no room for them in the inn.*"

Luke 2:6-7



BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND!*

When Heaven Touched Earth



BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND* is an All church/school Christmas program. Feature folks of all ages. Love to laugh? Need a reminder of what makes Christmas special? This is the Christmas program for you! Easy to prepare and...NO MEMORIZATION!

BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND* is rehearsed in small groups with their Sunday School teacher/leader. Gather the whole group for a final rehearsal and the program is ready to take to the stage.

BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND* is sprinkled with humor and inspiration, featuring a humble Bethlehem Innkeeper who only wants guests to feel comfortable in the village inn. Who could have guessed that chaos would reign when Caesar Augustus demanded that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth? With people flooding into tiny Bethlehem, the Inn was filled to capacity. What is an innkeeper to do? Where can more guests squeeze into available space? It's a Christmas dilemma!

BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND* audience sings Christmas Carols. Special music performed by local talent is sprinkled throughout the event (*as the music team desires*) so everyone becomes part of the fun as Jesus' story unfolds on your stage.

BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND* concludes with a Bed & Breakfast Party! Decorate, serve delicious desserts or party foods and play Christmas music. It becomes a lasting memory for everyone!

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THE CHRISTMAS DIRECTOR

Organize this humorous, inspirational Christmas celebration. No age limits! Train leaders who take charge of their individual segments.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

Make program copies and assign segments to Sunday School classes, church committees, small groups of friends and willing individuals who agree to become part of BED, BETHLEHEM & BEYOND.



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FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Leaders organize their small group complete with props and costumes. Be prepared to help but for the most part the leaders should handle their material. The story of Bethlehem is powerful and changes lives every time it is told.

PREPARE YOUR HEART

For some church members, holiday programs comprise most, if not all, of their Christmas celebration. Do it for the Lord! Do it for those folks!

ONE STEP AT A TIME

It is possible that you are thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside and dive into this appealing presentation of Christmas as experienced by a stressed innkeeper. The audience and participants experience the adventure of a lifetime.



DELEGATE

Leaders become involved by preparing their small group. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks.

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH

It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal preparations, parties and travel to make Christmas sparkle.

Statements like, "We can't do it", "We never did it this way", or "No one wants to do it", are inappropriate. If the Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

PRAY!

Take details before the Lord and then-RELAX! Carry out the tasks at hand. God is in control!

PLAN!

Print a program copy (*Do NOT write on master copy!*) and mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt as needed. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide parts and combine parts when necessary. Give teachers and participants copies of their segment in a colorful folder.

PREPARE!

Hopefully you have ordered **BED, BETHLEHEM & BEYOND** with more than a month lead time. Assign responsibility for small group practice to each teacher/leader.

NO MEMORIZATION!

Some groups enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. Memorization requires longer lead time and intensive rehearsal.

This is an ALL CHURCH Production!
Involve adults as readers, musicians and leaders.
Adapt the program using available number of participants.



AT A GLANCE



This is a program sample. Insert Christmas Carols and Special Music wherever it is appropriate for your group. Consider the total time as you plan music options. Adapt segments depending on the number of participants. Eliminate or combine segments as needed.

PRELUDE
PROCESSION

ACT 1: BED ...Room In The Inn

NARRATOR
THE INNKEEPER

Nursery: Sleepy Time

Preschool: Pillows

Sing: "Pillow Prayer" Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle")

Kindergarten: Baby, It's Cold Outside!

Sing: "Ten Little Travelers" Tune: "Ten Little Indians")

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC
INTERMISSION: ANNOUNCEMENTS/OFFERING



ACT 2: BETHLEHEM ...Manger

NARRATOR

THE INNKEEPER, MARY, JOSEPH

Grades One and Two: Angels Aware

Grades Three and Four: Shepherd Pie

Grades Five and Six: Wise Men Still Seek Him

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC

ACT 3: BEYOND

...When Heaven Touched Earth

NARRATOR

THE INNKEEPER

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Teens: Beyond Eternity

Adults: Beyond All Names

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INNKEEPER CONCLUSION

AUDIENCE CONCLUSION:

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

CLOSING PRAYER

IT'S TIME FOR A FANTASTIC
BED AND BREAKFAST CHRISTMAS PARTY!



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ADAPTATIONS

Bed Bethlehem & BEYOND...When Heaven Touched Earth lasts forty five minutes to one hour depending upon carols and special music. The 'Bed & Breakfast' Party is not included in the time frame. Adapt the program to fit your needs.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

Small Church

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts. Feature your favorite segments.

OR, use the same few students to present both segments. Teens and adults are crucial to the small church presentation. Some people participate several times.

Medium Church

Adaptations take the form of personal preference. Choose segments you like best. The goal is to tell the Christmas story so don't leave out anything important!

Large Church

Involve as many people as possible. Organize snack makers, servers, prop masters, sound/lighting staff and other who make the program visually exciting.

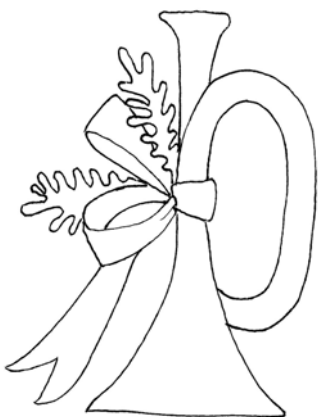
Bed & Breakfast Party

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or group of friends to complete party plans. They decorate, plan and prepare food and clean up. This is a fun option. If time does not allow for a gathering, plan a great program and eliminate the party!



CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Coordinate music with music director, organist/pianist. Choose favorite Christmas Carols. Include lyrics in a printed program or on a screen.



CAROLS

Sing traditional Christmas Carols. Choose a few contemporary Christmas songs from music in your personal church collection. The entire audience sings this music. Insert Carols wherever appropriate.

NEW MUSIC: BED, BETHLEHEM & BEYOND MELODIES! CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES is pleased to present three original Christmas songs composed by Jonathan Miller, GLORY SOUND STUDIOS! Use the songs as desired (solo, group, audience).

Piano and lyric sheets and double channel CD (sample voice + accompaniment only tracks). Call 1-888-236-5433 or order from our website: www.cemlife.com Listen to the songs in our online MUSIC catalog. This is an option for all groups desiring extra special music.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Feature local church talent. These musical options are NOT in the existing program. Choose music from your own collection. Consider time limitations during planning stages.

VOCAL SOLO
VOCAL GROUP
CHILDREN/ADULT CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO



STAGE AND PROPS

Bed, Bethlehem & BEYOND is a unique presentation using a minimum of props and staging. Each small group carries personal props on stage.



Set Up

Christmas trees, Nativity, twinkle lights, poinsettias and candles in the sanctuary add to the festive atmosphere. Leave them in place.

Staging

The stage is an empty stable. Include manger, bench for Mary, animal figures, hay, lighting. One corner becomes a small desk/podium for greeting Inn guests in an 'ancient hotel lobby'.

Seating

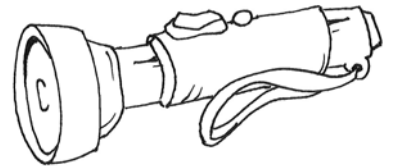
Reserve class/group seating. Assign assistants to sit with young children. Participants sit in the audience and come to the stage to present their short segment. Some remain on stage and others return to their seats to watch the entire program.

Sound System

Place several microphone stands across the stage. Attach personal microphones to the Innkeeper and main characters as desired. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

Lighting

Light existing decorations in the sanctuary. Turn off overhead lights. Place dramatic spot lights on the floor shining on the stable.



COSTUMES

Students become specific Bethlehem people. Follow our suggestions for Holy Land costuming or create your own costumes for each participant.

When costuming a large group, one solution is to ask each participant to prepare their attire. Parents of young students may be willing to supply the necessary clothing.



Costume Suggestions

Pillow Cases: For small children, cut a neck hole in the pillowcase. Cut up the front to the neck hole. Cut arm holes in the sides. This makes a long, vest type costume. Sometimes plaid or striped flannel pillowcases are available and work great for shepherds and wise men.

Fabric: Two wide strips of fabric (one over each shoulder) crossed across the back and front of the person, tied with a sash makes a great costume.

Head Wraps: A square of fabric over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the top of the head makes a headpiece. If you make large scrunchies (like girls wear around pony tails) and put them over the square fabric around the head, it holds the fabric tightly.

Bathrobes: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for headdresses and sashes to complete the costume.



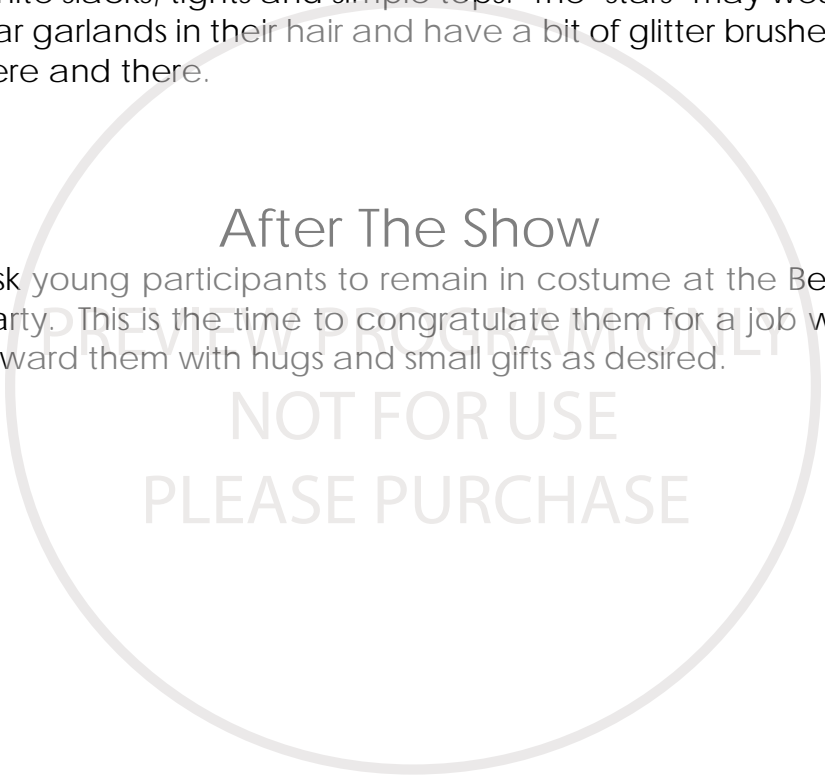
Angels: Dress angels in white cotton or silver lame' found in most fabric stores. Angels may wear cardboard wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel garland taped in a circle on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Bare feet or sandals work great. Angels may wear face/hair glitter for that "extra sparkle"!

Stars: Dress 'stars' using a posterboard, glittered star draped over their neck. They can dress simply in black or white slacks, tights and simple tops. The 'stars' may wear star garlands in their hair and have a bit of glitter brushed here and there.



After The Show

Ask young participants to remain in costume at the Bed & Breakfast Party. This is the time to congratulate them for a job well done and reward them with hugs and small gifts as desired.



Publicity

Publicize this program through all normal church/school communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Bulletin And Newsletter

Inform the congregation/parents about this special Christmas event.

Print an announcement in November and December newsletters. If planning The Bed & Breakfast Party, let people know there will be a Christmas celebration including food following the program.

Local Newspaper

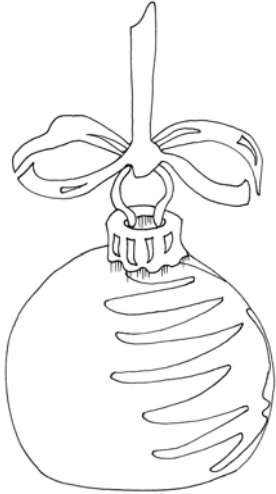
Include an announcement with other holiday programming publicity. Talk to a reporter and photographer to see if a feature article is possible. Be prepared to be interviewed.

Television And Radio

Consider advertising on your local television cable advertising channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service.

Christmas Card Invitations

Send family invitations home with students. This is effective for families who send their children to Sunday School but are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside. Children could make paper Christmas cards as a project and attach the invitation inside to be placed in their take home papers or backpack.



Teachers!

Pray! Prepare! Present!

“When you play with puppies, expect puppy tricks!”



Involve As Many Students As Possible

Dress each participant in Holy Land costume and add appropriate props for their character.

Highlight Individual Parts

Be sure written material is prepared in an easily readable format.

Practice With Your Small Group

When assigned to a small group, take charge of their costumes, practice music and prepare them for the big event. Make changes as needed.

Communicate With Parents

Let parents know when to have their children at formal rehearsals and the performance. Invite them to attend and be sure they know what props or costuming their child is responsible to bring. It may be a good idea to collect items and store them in the classroom before performance day.



Smile and Help!

The Christmas Director values your leadership! Meet your small group for their entrance. Dress in appropriate costumes in a back room, line up according to specific instructions and enter the performance area as directed.

Sit with your class in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your own part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they need help.

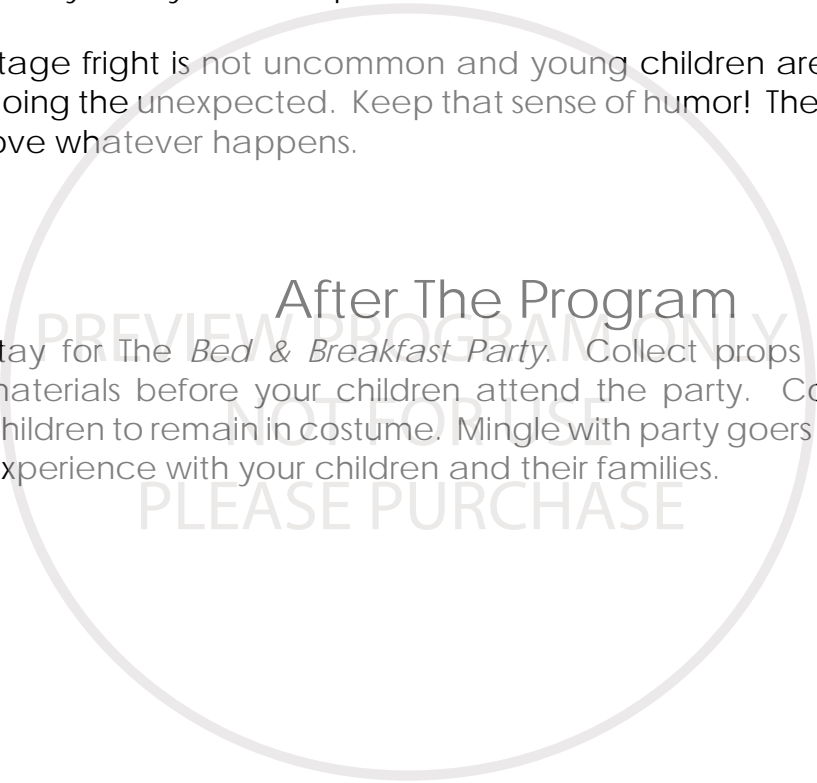
Stage fright is not uncommon and young children are notorious for doing the unexpected. Keep that sense of humor! The audience will love whatever happens.

After The Program

Stay for The *Bed & Breakfast Party*. Collect props and program materials before your children attend the party. Consider asking children to remain in costume. Mingle with party goers and enjoy the experience with your children and their families.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined area for writing thoughts.



More For Teachers ~ Your Leadership Is Valued!

Show Up With A Smile!



Meet your small group. Dress in appropriate costume, line up and enter the sanctuary as directed. Sit with your group in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your speaking part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they have problems. Stage fright is not uncommon!

After The Program

Stay for the *Bed & Breakfast Party*. Collect props and materials before attending the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle and enjoy the experience with your students and their families.

If You Need Help

The Christmas Director is available but you are responsible to have your group ready to participate. The program comes together with little formal large group rehearsal.

Enjoy The Experience

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch the lives of children and grown ups. Take time to enjoy your small part of the bigger picture. The Bethlehem Story is classic and life changing. The spiritual experience is amazing!



Just A Word About Memorization!

To Memorize ~

Some groups love the process of rehearsal and memorization. If that is true in your situation, take the time to stage the program and memorize all parts! Consider longer lead time and more rehearsals.

Or Not To Memorize ~

We often mention that memorization is not necessary and that is true. This event is designed to be a full church, inter-generational experience. Base people organization on Sunday School groups but ask children, friends, older adults and people who may not normally participate. It makes the event so much more fun!

If you have a limited amount of time to practice with your group, consider allowing the participants to carry their parts on stage and read them. Practice sufficiently in small group settings so that everyone is familiar with their part and can speak with enthusiasm even though reading it.

Carry printed materials on stage in creative ways. Depending on which segments are being performed, scripts can be backed with colorful paper, decorated with appropriate images.

Or, make copies of the parts that each person can hold on regular paper. After a few minutes, the audience does not notice and it does not affect the quality of the program at all.

Whatever presentation method you choose,
this is a great Christmas experience.
Have fun!

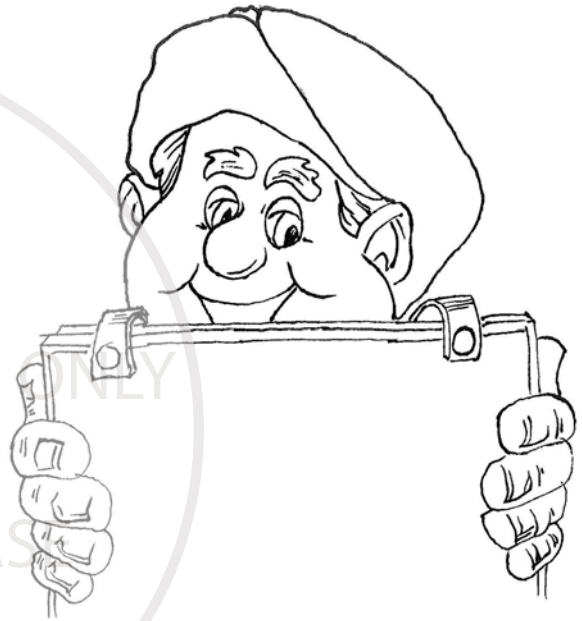


Main Characters ~

The Bethlehem Innkeeper

Have fun becoming the much maligned Bethlehem Innkeeper. Written for male or female actor, our Innkeeper is an obliging host with a desire to make EVERYONE happy. Since that is impossible in the crush of many guests, life becomes chaotic. Yet, for one night, Heaven touches earth and a very special baby boy is born at Bethlehem Inn!

What this Innkeeper discovers as the busyness of the Inn overtakes common sense becomes a life changing moment in time. Along the way, the audience experiences Jesus' birth through the eyes of the common person who just wants to get through the day. Will God give grace or will life overtake this everyday worker?



Become The Bethlehem Innkeeper

The Innkeeper greets small groups of guests and guides them for each segment. As small groups tell the story of Jesus' birth, The Innkeeper begins to understand God's plan of salvation and slowly opens heart and home to God's amazing Son.

Costume: Dress in simple Holy Land costume. Caftan tied in the middle and a long scarf around the neck make a perfect Innkeeper look. Sandals and a turban headpiece complete the look. Carry a clipboard with the script attached. This doubles as a humorous modern touch and a 'cheat sheet' (as in 'Hey, did they have clip boards in Bethlehem?') for the entire program!



Mary

Choose a teen or adult to portray Mary. Dress in simple Holy Land costume. Carry a real baby or a wrapped doll to portray Baby Jesus at appropriate times. Carry the script as needed to read speaking parts.

Joseph

Choose a teen or adult to portray Joseph. Dress in simple Holy Land costume. Carry a long staff. Carry the script as needed to read speaking parts.

Narrator

Choose one teen or adult to narrate the story in modern clothing. This person also guides special music people on and off stage as needed. Read Narrator parts with cheerfulness and instill inspiration throughout the program.

Option: It is often desirable to have more than one Narrator if there are enough participants. If you are blessed with a few willing speakers, divide the Narrator segments between them.

Participants/Students

After reading the full presentation privately, choose segments according to people available in your group. From babies to adults, include as many people as possible. Divide speaking parts between participants. If the segment lists 10-15 speakers and you have 2 people, let them speak back and forth. If there is no one available, eliminate what is necessary. Don't worry about ages. The segments are flexible.

People come from the audience to perform their part and either remain on stage as directed or return to their seats. No one waits behind stage. Everyone becomes the audience!

Choose special music presentations as desired from local talent. From children to adults, make this a fun event that includes music.



Staging

The stage is set up as the Bethlehem Stable.
One small segment is a Holy Land Inn Lobby area.

*The stable area includes a manger,
bench or stool for Mary, green plants, wooden items,
pottery, pillows, woven blankets.*

Scatter life sized cardboard stable animals.

*Light the stable with electric lights placed on the floor
behind props to give a natural glow to the stage.*

Inn Lobby: Cover a podium with fabric all the way to the floor. Tan sheet, burlap, light blanket. Option: Tie in middle with rope or cord. Add one or two large floor plants and indirect lighting to design your registration area.

Add a bit of humor by placing a stack of pillows, sheets, towels neatly and offer these to various guests. Display a rack of tour guide pamphlets near the registration area to resemble what might be seen in a modern motel.

Keep props as simple as possible.

Special Props

Signs: Add individual hand printed signs wherever space allows

TO THE POOL
ROOMS 101-110
ROOMS 201-211
PARK YOUR CAMEL OUT BACK/STABLE IN REAR
SNACK BAR
CHECK OUT TIME: SUNRISE
CHECK IN TIME: SUNSET
LEAVE SANDALS AT THE DOOR



Animals: Enlarge our patterns and place them in the background. Students who become wise men could actually carry a large cardboard camel as their prop.

Sound and Light: Use the existing sound system with microphones, leave Christmas lights on and add low light from the floor.

Accessories: Do not purchase items but collect interesting objects to place on stage. Greenery, baskets, pottery, blankets, pillows and other appropriate items make the scene complete. Decorate as available.







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BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND!*

When Heaven Touched Earth

The Prelude

Church musicians (*organ/piano/keyboard*) play Christmas music as the audience gathers.

If using our original music, consider having those songs played during the prelude. The audience hears the new melodies and becomes familiar with the choruses.

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The Procession

Gather costumed participants in an outer room. Dim sanctuary lights. Existing holiday lights are left burning.

As participants file to their seats, the audience sings a Christmas Carol of your choice. The participants may sing the theme song if you have purchased it.



BED, BETHLEHEM & *BEYOND*

When Heaven Touched Earth

ACT 1: BED ...Room In The Inn

Narrator

According to the Gospel of Luke, "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled...And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city." That's how Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, home of Joseph's ancestors, and Jesus was born in the City of David.

It's not that Caesar Augustus really cared about the thousands of travelers on the roads to their hometowns. They were little more than tax paying units in one of history's most complicated tax systems. Every once in awhile it was permitted to call everyone home to organize those all important tax rolls.

Jesus was born when the world was at peace. It was a Roman peace insured by Roman soldiers. The benefit was that even in the most humble places people had a few luxuries and traveled when and where they wanted. For Rome, it meant they could continue to build their straight roads and soaring aqueducts, marble buildings and spacious public plazas. The financial burden was on the poor living in the far provinces that had been conquered by war and oppression.

That's what sent Joseph and Mary on a 90 mile journey to Bethlehem. And what a journey it was! Our young couple hopped into their brand new Ford convertible, packed a luscious picnic, turned up the latest songs on the radio and headed out for an afternoon of.....

Wait! That doesn't sound right. Let's back up and tell this story the right way. Actually our young couple was about to meet some interesting people and have the adventure of a lifetime.



MEET THE INNKEEPER

Innkeeper enters from the back of the room. Carry a clipboard with full script, a few towels and walk quickly and cheerfully to the stage.



Innkeeper: (Greet a few audience members along with way with a bow...) "Shalom, friend! Staying in town long?" "Come on over to Bethlehem Inn! We are serving the fatted calf as our evening special! Plenty for all! Plenty for all!" "Five shekels for the night and one shekel for the meal!" "Bring the family!"

Narrator: (Whispering....) Oh look, here's comes Bethlehem's Innkeeper. This is a very important person in tiny Bethlehem. The only public inn where travelers can get a good night's rest, a meal and a hot bath is right here.

Innkeeper: (Examining with approval the empty stable and the registration area of the stage...) All appears to be in perfect order. My staff has been working diligently to accommodate many guests this evening. I have one final check list and then we wait for the first people to arrive.

Pillows-Check!
Towels-Check!
Blankets-Check!
Hot Water-Check!
Beds-Check!
Food-Check!

(Grandly....) I proclaim myself....Ready in every way! Oh the money I will make this evening! I am counting it already. It will pay for the finest of treasures. I will hang silk draperies at the windows. I will serve delicate food on silver platters. I will buy slippers for the feet of every guest and place a little piece of chocolate on every soft pillow! Yes, I will! I will be known as the Innkeeper To the Stars! Perfect hotel for every situation, run by the perfect host. That's me! Let the games begin! Thank you Caesar Augustus for your timely census. You make money. I make money. It's a match made in Heaven.



Nursery: Sleepy Time

Babies and parents arrive at the Inn wearing Holy Land garments, appearing weary. Children are carried and led by the hand. Parents speak for the little ones. Divide the speaking parts between the number of available participants.



Parent #1: We're here at last! Is this Bethlehem Inn? We were pointed in this direction from the potter's shop.

Innkeeper: *(Bowing)* Indeed it is. We have many excellent rooms.

Parent #2: We have very sleepy babies with us. Do you have everything we need? Is there a quiet place to feed them? Do you have soft music and cool pillows?

Parent #3: My baby is so sleepy. Please tell us there is room in the Inn.

Innkeeper: Why certainly there is room in the Inn. There is always room in the Inn. Trust me. I have the best baby beds in town. I have little toys they can enjoy. I have the softest of foods for their little tummies.

Parent #4: Thank God for your kindness, Innkeeper. We have traveled from many far places to sign our names and please the Roman government. We are so sleepy and need a place to rest.

Innkeeper: No problem. I sleep like a baby all night.

Parent #5: *(Grumbling and sleepy)* People who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one!

Parent #6: Now, now, no complaining. We promised we would keep smiling until we find a bed and a bath and a good meal. There is a bath, a bed and a good meal here, right?

Innkeeper: Of course, friend. Follow me and these sleepy babies will find rest.

LEAD THE GROUP OFF STAGE



PRESCHOOL: PILLOW TALK

Students dress in Holy Land costume and carry bed pillows on stage. Preschool teacher and helpers guide them on and off stage and speak for them. Teach students to sing the PILLOW PRAYER song. No accompaniment needed.



TEACHER: (Calling...) Shalom! Shalom! Is anybody here? Innkeeper! We need a room!

Where could that innkeeper be? He has left us alone in the inn.

Don't worry. We'll find a place to rest our heads on our pillows. This is Bethlehem's Inn. We just have to find the Innkeeper to register and pay our shekels. Let's see, how many shekels will I need to pay for all of us?

I will count the shekels and you sing our pillow song. It took a long time to get to Bethlehem and we hope for good beds and soft pillows. You brought your very own pillows so that should impress the Innkeeper.

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PILLOW PRAYER

(Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Now I lay me down to sleep
A pillow soft my head to keep.
My Father watches over me,
Sleeping here so tenderly.

Now I lay me down to sleep
A pillow soft my head to keep.

(Rest heads on pillows.)



TEACHER: (To audience) Sshhh, I think they are finally falling asleep. See what a long journey and a soft pillow will do? We think something amazing is going to happen here tonight. There seem to be plenty of rooms if we go that direction. Let's just get ourselves settled and I'll find the Innkeeper. The sign outside says, "Yes, We Have Rooms" so I'm sure there is no problem.

Quietly guide children off stage,
sshhing the audience as they leave.
Encourage them to yawn and act sleepy.

LEAD GROUP OFF STAGE

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KINDERGARTEN: BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!

Students and leaders dress in Holy Land clothing. Divide speaking parts between available participants.



INNKEEPER: (Nervous....) Shalom, friends! Come in from the cold. What can I do for you on this chilly evening? Certainly, you must be on the way to your warm, comfortable homes. No need of my help in any way.

TEACHER: Baby, it's cold outside! We are weary travelers in need a total of 10 comfortable rooms.

STUDENT #1: We are very tired.

TEACHER: We need meals for all of us.

STUDENT #1: We are very hungry!

TEACHER: We need baths and warm robes for all these tired, hungry children.

STUDENT #3: We are clean enough.

INNKEEPER: Ahem! Well, now that's a little problem. I can serve you a meal, if you sit in my very lovely courtyard. But....

TEACHER: But....? But what? We need beds, food and comfort. You are here offering those things. No buts....just point us to the rooms.

INNKEEPER: (Nervously....) Have you noticed the perfect artwork on our ceiling? Did you see the clean floor as you entered? Were you warmly greeted by my staff?

STUDENTS: (Together...crying, whining) We're tired, we're hungry!

TEACHER: See? Now you've made them cry. I see in your eyes you have something to say to us.



INNKEEPER: My whole life is based on hospitality. I want to give you rooms. I want to give you food and help you get comfortable but this is a very busy night in Bethlehem.

TEACHER: No excuses!

INNKEEPER: Very important people have arrived.

TEACHER: No excuses!

INNKEEPER: But...

STUDENTS: (In Unison) NO EXCUSES!

INNKEEPER: (Defeated) The travelers arriving just before you claimed the very last rooms I could offer. There is no room in the inn.

STUDENTS: (Cry loudly....big boo hoo's)

TEACHER: There must be rooms! There must be room in the inn for tired travelers who have come so far. We will smile really big and you'll have to give us space.

STUDENTS: (Everyone smiles really big at the innkeeper.)

INNKEEPER: If I had even one room, I would put all of you traveling smilers in it but I have no room in the inn.

TEACHER: Sing to the innkeeper, children. Show the innkeeper how much we need a room in the inn!

SING: TEN LITTLE TRAVELERS

Tune "Ten Little Indians"

One little, two little, three little travelers

Four little, five little, six little travelers

Seven little, eight little, nine little travelers

Ten little traveling children.



God loves all the tired little travelers
God loves all the tired little travelers
God loves all the tired little travelers
God loves girls and boys.

Let us rest our heads on pillows
Let us rest our heads on pillows
Let us rest our heads on pillows
We want to go to sleep!

We love God. We're good little travelers
We love God. We're good little travelers
We love God. We're good little travelers
We came to Bethlehem.

Is there room for a bed in Bethlehem?
Is there room for a bed in Bethlehem?
Is there room for a bed in Bethlehem?
We need a bed right now! (Shout: WAA!)

TEACHER: Great job, travelers....until you got to the WAA part. We'll forgive you for that because you aretired.....hungry....in need of baths! (To Innkeeper...) What do you say now, Innkeeper? How can you turn these delightful travelers away?

INNKEEPER: (Sadly...) There is the door. I have no room in the inn. May you find rest elsewhere. Shalom.

STUDENTS AND TEACHER WALK BACK THE CENTER AISLE,
HEADS HANGING LOW, DRAGGING THEIR FEET.

EXIT

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL

OPTION: SPECIAL MUSIC

INTERMISSION: ANNOUNCEMENTS/OFFERING



ACT 2: Bethlehem ...Manger

Narrator



It's only half a verse, "and they laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the Inn," but based on that little segment centuries of character assassination have hung. The unnamed innkeeper of Bethlehem is assumed by most to be some heartless person who left the holy family out in the cold.

The Bible tells us there was no room for them in the Inn. Is a crowded Inn any place for a young girl to give birth to a baby? And would it be right for the Innkeeper to send another guest out into the cold to accommodate these latecomers?

Homes and public inns were very different from our modern Holiday Inn, Best Western, Hilton Hotel experiences. Simple and clean, an inn may have been an upper room with animals housed in the lower room.

The Bible doesn't say Mary and Joseph stayed in a barn just that Jesus was laid in a manger. Could it be that they were given a private area where family animals and guest animals stayed and a manger might have been handy?

Maybe instead of accusing the Innkeeper as a heartless person we should commend him as a resourceful person who tried to use what was at hand to help this refugee family in a difficult situation. He gave what he had, including a manger.

Could it be that we have been wrong about the Bethlehem innkeeper all these years?



Innkeeper, Mary and Joseph

Innkeeper: I am here to set the record straight. People who have heard the story have begun to talk. They say I was cruel and unfeeling. But they don't know the whole story. Here comes trouble.

Mary and Joseph walk slowly from back of the room to the stage. They walk slowly, Joseph assisting Mary carrying a wrapped bundle of traveling gear.



Joseph: Shalom, Innkeeper! You are just the person I was hoping to meet this fine evening. We trust all is well in your inn.

Innkeeper: Shalom, stranger! Yes, business is good. I assume you are here to register for the census like all the others. The signing of names is taking place way down the village path. Just turn left and you will see the Roman soldiers. I bid you a good evening. Shalom!

Joseph: Wait! We are in need of a place to stay for the night. We have walked many miles and Mary is about to give birth. She needs a place to rest and I need some sleep. I have the price of the room in my coat pocket. Point us in the right direction of the room and we will not bother you until the morning meal.

Mary: You appear to be a gracious host. We will only stay the night and will be no trouble. A small room will be fine for such a short stay.

Innkeeper: (Pulling Joseph aside, whispering...) When is this child due? I do not want to cause her any distress but I have unhappy news. There is no room in the inn.

Joseph: (Shouting...) NO ROOM IN THE INN?

Mary: (Shouting...) NO ROOM IN THE INN?

Innkeeper: Now, now. Calm down. Hush your voices. Do you want everyone to hear? I am certain there is an inn just as nice down the street.



Joseph: You don't understand, we NEED- A -ROOM!

Mary: We really need a room. Right now!

Innkeeper: Right now? As in... 'the baby is coming', right now?

Mary: YES! RIGHT NOW! GIVE US A ROOM!

Joseph: She's a little upset. Please excuse her for being impatient.

Mary: Joseph, I am usually very patient but I NEED A ROOM RIGHT NOW!

Innkeeper: I get it. Let me think. I don't have any rooms but I do have an empty corner where we keep the animals. My staff just loaded fresh hay into the spot today. We could push the animals to one side and you could...

Mary: WE'LL TAKE IT!

Joseph: We'll take it?

Mary: Joseph, pay the man now! We'll take it.

Innkeeper: I am sorry I cannot offer you more. I will bring fresh bedding and a hot meal right away. Will it be just the two of you for the night?

Mary: Well, yes, two and possibly three by morning.

Innkeeper: Oh my goodness. What trouble have I gotten into this time?

Lead Mary and Joseph to the Nativity Stable
where they take their places in the scene.

Innkeeper Exits



Narrator



And this is where our story gets good. You all know what happens next. Heaven touched earth for a moment in time and a baby boy is born in Bethlehem.

Nothing unusual about the birth. Lots of baby boys are born every day. However, this child is God's only Son, born in a manger, destined to be the Savior of all mankind.

And it started in, of all places, Bethlehem. On that cold, clear night, in an inn filled with many travelers who had come to the city of David to register for Caesar's tax. In Bethlehem, when a woman was with child, it was common for the gossips to whisper, "Is this the child who will be our Messiah?" Everyone knew that God's promised Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Men of God had prophesied this long ago. Every new baby was greeted with awe and wonder.

Most probably, the sight of a very pregnant woman scared the innkeeper. It was too much to take much less invite into the inn. Let someone else worry about all that birthing stuff. There was too much going on to take the time to care.

There were other places of lodging in Bethlehem. But this night was different. With Bethlehem bursting at the seams with travelers, it would be impossible for that couple to find rest and shelter anywhere. Judging by the look on that girl's face, she only had moments to spare before her baby came.

And come he did! He burst into the world with a lusty wail. Joseph scooped him up and wrapped him in soft cloths. He laid him in the nearby manger.

And then there was a procession of visitors such as we have never seen before or since in Bethlehem! Come, watch and see!



Grades One and Two Angels Aware

Dress students as angels. Follow costume suggestions or create your own angel design using materials at hand. Divide parts between available participants.



All angels flutter down the aisle sing file to the stage. They 'fly' using their arms and glide along the aisle, back and forth, giving the impression of arriving on earth by flight. As they stop to speak, they appear to be flying so fast they run into each other one at a time and say their line!

Teacher: (Dressed in Holy Land clothes) Look! Angels! Not only is the Innkeeper an important part of the Jesus story but also angels who came from Heaven to make an important announcement. When Heaven touched earth the good news was, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Student #1: (Skidding to a stop) We're here! Look! There is Mary and Joseph and Jesus.

Student #2: (Bump into first student) Jesus has been born!

Student #3: (Bump into second student) Does anyone on earth know God's Son has arrived?

Student #4: (Bump into third student) I doubt it. I didn't tell anyone. Did you?

Student #5: (Bump into fourth student) No! I was waiting for you to say something.

Student #6: (Bump into fifth student) Who can we tell? I have to tell somebody!



Student #7: (Bump into sixth student) Let's figure out what Heavenly Father wants us to say.

Student #8: (Bump into seventh student) I know what to say, "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Student #9: (Bump into eighth student) And then we'll all praise God!

All Students: (Talk among themselves, nodding...) Sounds good to me! Let's do it. We can do it together!

All: Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men!

Sing Together:

ANGEL DUST

(Tune: Away In A Manger)

The angels from Heaven came down to the earth.
They gathered on hilltops, announcing His birth!
Their wings gave a'flutter, their halos were fit.
When angels sing 'Glory', the whole earth is lit.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed.
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky look down where He lay.
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

Student #10: Let's go find some shepherds. They will listen to us!

Angels stand watching at the edges of the stable for the remainder of the program.



Grades Three and Four Shepherd Pie

Dress students as shepherds. Follow costume suggestions or create your own shepherd design using materials at hand. Divide parts between available participants.

Shepherds show up at the nativity scene on stage. Scatter students through the setting. They will remain in place through the conclusion of the program.

Speakers: Innkeeper, students, Mary, Joseph

Innkeeper: Wait! Wait! You can't go in there! You lowly shepherds should be out in the hills. I won't have your 'kind' in here. You have not paid one shekel to enter my Inn. Don't you know a baby has just been born? This is not a show for nosy shepherds. Out! Out!

Student #1: We are the Bethlehem shepherds. We have important news for Mary and Joseph.

Student #2: Let us worship the king, God's Messiah, and then we will leave.

Student #3: You won't believe it! We saw angels! Angels from Heaven!

Innkeeper: (Sarcastic) Yeah, right. You saw angels. Wait until I talk to my staff. How they ever let you crazy people in here I'll never know!

Mary: Please, innkeeper, let them speak. Look at their faces! They are glowing. Something happened and Joseph and I need to hear it.

Joseph: If there is a cost to their visit, we will pay. Shepherds, tell us what you saw. What happened?

Student #4: It is a beautiful night. Have you seen that bright star? We were gathered around the fire eating dinner and watching that star hanging low over Bethlehem. Look outside you can see it now!



Student #5: I made dinner. It was my famous Shepherd Pie. Mmm, have you ever had it? First you start with....

Innkeeper: Yeah, yeah, we know. You start with potatoes. Hurry up and tell your 'so called story'. Then....you're outta here!

Joseph: Mmm, Shepherd Pie. I am a little hungry. Did you bring any with you?

Student #6: As a matter of fact... we did!

Mary: Joseph, not now! Shepherds, have you seen Jesus? This is the baby God promised.

Student #7: He's beautiful! If you look carefully, he looks like a king!

All Shepherds: (Look at baby in manger....say 'ooo-aaa- as a group.)

Innkeeper: 'Ooo and aaa' all you want. They won't believe your story. No one believes shepherds anymore. Liars, thieves, low class guys who's only job is to watch sheep.

Joseph: Hey! They can hear you. You may be surprised that we WILL believe what happened.

Student #8: We saw angels! Thousands of angels! They covered the sky and the hills and the valleys. They were bright and beautiful.

Student #9:and they sang "Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good will to men." It was the most glorious choir we ever heard. We were in awe.

Student #10: Don't forget the angel 'boss'. There was one beautiful angel who gave us a message. We can't wait to tell everyone we meet!

Innkeeper: Yeah, yeah, we know. Angels. Glory. Bright light. Give us the scoop. What's their message?



Student #11: The angel said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

Student #12: We left our sheep on the hill and came into town to search for the Savior. Here he is! In a stable! In a manger!

Mary: Indeed. This is Jesus. An angel told me He would be born. I thank God that Joseph believed me when I told him an angel visited me! You, dear shepherds, have confirmed God's plan is in motion.

Joseph: ...and we were to name him Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. The Messiah. God's promise is right here. Thank you, shepherds. Hang around awhile. Bring out your Shepherd Pie and we'll celebrate this amazing night.

Shepherd: We'll stay for awhile to praise God with you. Then we have to run. You know....sheep in field....people who need to hear the Messiah has been born!

Innkeeper

(To audience...) Could this be true? God's promised Messiah born right here in my inn? Nah, these are just nasty field shepherds. How would they know the words of God Almighty?

Angels...right! This cannot be true. Look at that baby. He looks like every other baby born in Bethlehem. Savior....no way! If this was God's Messiah, He would be born as a king, in a palace. Horsemen would announce the birth throughout the land.

I have been an innkeeper for a long time. You can't pull the wool over my eyes. I know truth when I see it and this baby is just a baby. Now, I wonder if there's any of that Shepherd Pie left. Those shepherds are great cooks!

EXIT



Grades Five and Six

Wise Men Still Seek Him



Dress students as wise men. Follow costume suggestions or create your own wise man designs using materials at hand. Divide parts between available participants.

Wise men walk single file from back to front. They carry three gifts. Scatter wise men, kneeling, through the setting. They remain in place through the conclusion of the program.

Speakers: Wise Men, Innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, Shepherd

Student #1: We have followed the star all the way from a far place in the east. It has been a long journey filled with many dangers. We have come in search of the king. We carry gifts for the king.

Student #2: Is there a king here? Any king? If you are a king, speak up!

Innkeeper: Sigh....Welcome to my humble inn. No kings here. Look around. We have a poor couple....

Joseph: Hey! I work hard. I earn money. You don't have to be rude.

Mary: I'm proud of you, dear. You do the best you can.

Innkeeper: We have low class shepherds from the fields. They left their sheep to come to my stable. Some would say that is just not being responsible. Poor things, all alone out there. Probably baa-ing and crying by now. Shouldn't you be getting back pretty soon?

Shepherd: Hey! We're starting to get offended here. We're good guys.

Student #3: Did you all forget someone? Look around and you will find a king in the very middle of your stable.



Innkeeper: He's a Jewish baby like all the rest born around Bethlehem.

Student #4: He's more than a simple Jewish boy. We have come from the East to worship this king. God guided us with a very bright star.

Student #5: We never saw a star like it. It is so bright that it nearly shouts, "Follow me"!

Student #6: I bring a valuable gift for this baby king, the gift of gold. Use it wisely. Use it as God intends.

Innkeeper: Gold! On second thought, I might be a king. I remember a story my grandfather told one night....

Student #7: Don't even 'go there', Innkeeper. We're worshiping the baby in the manger, the real king of kings and Lord of Lords. I bring a fragrant gift of Frankincense. Usually give to a priest. This baby, Jesus, will be our High Priest. Use my gift well as God intends.

Student #8: I bring yet another gift. My gift is Myrrh. It is a strange gift to give a child. Myrrh is usually given to someone who is going to die. This king will give His very life to be the Savior of the world. Let us worship God's greatest gift to the people He lovingly created.

All kings bow before the manger and remain on stage, in place until the program's conclusion.

Innkeeper

(To audience...) I *could* have been a king. I feel like a king. Look at this collection of people in my stable. Poor, lowly, wealthy, wise. Could it be that God has visited this place, on this night, in my tiny Bethlehem village? The prophets foretold "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)



INNKEEPER EXITS

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL

OPTION: SPECIAL MUSIC



ACT 3: BEYOND!

...When Heaven Touched Earth



Narrator

And so the world got it's Savior, it's King, it's Messiah! That night, as you can see, was filled with God's glory. No doubt Bethlehem was filled with people coming and going, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking. It may have seemed to everyone else like nothing special was happening.

But... for a few chosen people, the world tilted as Heaven touched earth and Jesus arrived, "...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory...." (John 1:14) I wonder how the rest of their lives were affected by that night.

We know Mary and Joseph ran for their lives. King Herod was angry and murderous. He was on the hunt for the little king who threatened his power. They lived in Egypt with little Jesus until it was safe to return to Nazareth where Jesus grew in stature and wisdom.

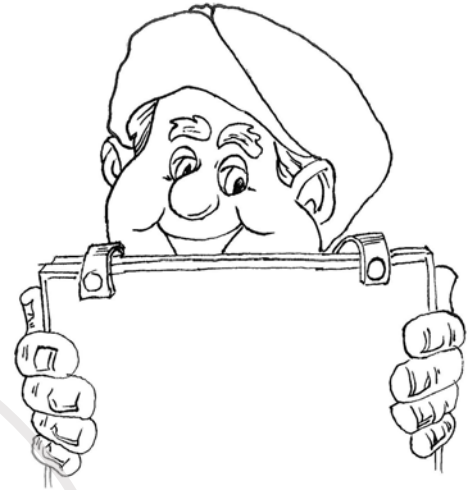
The shepherds told everyone they met about this Gospel good news. God's Messiah has come! Eventually they too returned to normal life among their sheep. Can you imagine the stories they told around late night campfires? Angels. Running to Bethlehem. The Inn. The stable. The baby boy. Their lives changed forever.

The wise men, we're told, returned home by another route. You see, they were truly wise and even clever King Herod could not fool them into believing he too wanted to worship the baby king after being warned in a dream of his treachery. One can only imagine what they told the people in the East. Did they proclaim that the God of Israel had indeed made Himself known and they followed the amazing star to see it for themselves? Did they confess to leaving behind expensive gifts at the cradle of a king? We'll never know this side of Heaven.



Innkeeper

Don't forget me! I was changed the night Jesus was born too! You probably don't believe me. Everybody hates me. I'm the person who didn't have room in the inn. I am the person who almost let Heaven touch earth without me. I am the person who could only offer a humble stable, clean hay and a wooden manger for a baby king. If I had known he was God's Son, I would have given him my bed, my house, my business, my treasures.



Who am I? I am YOU. I am every one of you who has said, "I don't have room for Jesus right now. Maybe another day my schedule will be less packed, my house will be clean, my family will be grown and gone. Then I will have room for Jesus."

Don't be quite so cocky about how you feel about me. Do you see yourself in me?

Mary and Joseph left my inn after awhile and I never saw them again. Rumor has it that they escaped the wicked leaders by living in Egypt where Moses and the Israelites found refuge for several generations.

What I do know is that something happened to me that night. I don't care what you or anyone else thinks about what I did and didn't do on the night Jesus was born. I gave what I could. My attitude may have been begrudging but God used me anyway...and He will use you too...if you let Him.

EXIT



Teens: Beyond Eternity ...A View From Heaven



Teens dress as if they are everyday saints in Heaven. Wear white clothing. They may wear glitter in their hair and on faces. Divide speaking parts between available participants.

They stand spread out in the aisles carrying their script and candles or flashlights or twinkle lights to give them a Heavenly glow. Some may stand on ladders on stage behind the nativity scene as if watching from above. Some may stand in the choir loft or on the balcony.

Student #1: Look! We're getting a glimpse of God's glory. It's Bethlehem. It's the night Jesus was born.

Student #2: Who knew God would let us see from Heaven what He is doing on earth.

Student #3: When Heaven touches earth, time stands still. We can catch the light of the star if we look above the manger.

Student #4: The people look pretty ordinary to me. They look like us. Will Heaven ever look brighter than this night?

Student #5: I think it will. Someday that baby will become the Savior the world hoped for, longed for. He will carry our sins on Himself. He will live and die being fully God and fully man.

Student #6: Beyond time. Beyond what people could ever dream stands Jesus, the man who would die for us all.



Student #7: (Sniff...) That did it. Now you made me cry. Why would the very people He came to save let Him die?

Student #8: Uh-uh, remember there are no tears in Heaven. Turn that frown upside down! Smile that Jesus was born, smile that Jesus lived, smile that Jesus died.

Student #9: Smile that God's plan included something beyond Christmas. His plan included conquering sin and death. Jesus rose from death to live again.

Student #10: I believe He did. I believe my place in Heaven was secured for time beyond eternity when Jesus was born, lived, died and rose from the grave.

Student #11: It is a privilege to 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'.

Student #12: I wish there was some way we could tell everyone how wonderful God's fulfilled promise is.

Student #13: We cannot speak to them. Our view is from Heaven. These people must come to God on His terms and God said to each living person, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

EXIT



ADULTS: Beyond All Names

Choose several adults to conclude the program. They dress in modern clothing and stand across the front of the living nativity scene stage. Divide speaking parts between available participants.

If available, choose to sing the worship chorus "Jesus, Name Above All Names" with the audience, or solo or small group. (This song is not in printed material but can be found in most praise and worship song books or online.)

Speaker #1: "Jesus, Name above all Names, Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord. Emmanuel, God is with us. Blessed Redeemer, Living Word."



When I see the Bethlehem story brought to life on stage, I am amazed that God would care about people this much. We live and work and die on this planet with a daily life that seems common, ordinary. Heaven never seems to touch earth in our dreary lives. But....that's not true. God made the decision to rescue us from sin before Eve ever took a bite of the forbidden fruit in Eden.

Speaker #2: God took all the horrible sins of mankind and rolled them around until He made a way of escape through this baby in a manger. Look at that baby! So pure, so innocent. Every year we celebrate the birthday of the king and many of us never 'get' it. We don't really understand why God did this.

Speaker #3: So we hide the real story of BED, BETHLEHEM & BEYOND behind tradition. Wonderful tradition to be sure but the lights and trees, the gifts and feasts, the gatherings and traveling are not what God intended to be our focus. God's focus is on that Child. His purpose is to remind us year after year that BEYOND a BED in a little village called BETHLEHEM is more, much more.



Speaker #4: BEYOND BETHLEHEM is a Risen Savior, a coming King, the Lord of Lords. Someone once said the name Immanuel means that God came and 'camped' among us. He 'pup tented' with us for awhile in the form of Jesus, His one and only Son. I like that picture. God wasn't too important to come to me. He left His place in Glory and lowered Himself to become just like me...only He lived the perfect life to show me how to do it.

Speaker #5: We get to enter Heaven because God thought up BED, BETHLEHEM & BEYOND. We get to participate in more than we deserve. We get to follow that baby king right through the Gates of Heaven and into eternity.

Speaker #6: As we leave this stage, look one more time through the eyes of our young people at what it might have looked like in an overcrowded, common inn in Bethlehem on a night when no one else was paying attention. God Himself came to earth in the form of a baby and we will never be the same.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
EXIT
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE



CONCLUSION

Innkeeper

Are you seeing BEYOND the baby BED and the little town of BETHLEHEM? It got a little crowded in my inn. Animal sheds aren't designed for a large amount of foot traffic. It was too noisy for a newborn baby. Somehow we all got through it.



Look at that manger. It's pretty simple to make. I do it all the time. Look at those tired parents. They need a good sleep. Why don't all those other people just leave? Don't they have homes of their own?

I never did benefit from the notoriety of having a baby king born here. Jesus kind of slipped off everyone's radar, for, what? Thirty years? Thirty three years? Something like that.

I got some mileage out of telling the story about the crazy couple who rented my animal shed, and the visitors and the angels and the weird star that never seemed to stop shining, but mostly I told it to friends.

Then, just as I'm about to retire, someone tells me of this hippie preacher in Jerusalem who got in trouble with the Romans. I say, hey, I think I know that guy. I think he got born in my shed. And then, well. You know what the Romans did to him. Which, by the way, I told them not to do. Romans, humph.

Well, I sold the inn to my nephew and retired to Joppa. By the time Jesus became really famous I was out of the game and then my nephew sold the inn and they put that church there. You know the one, Church of the Nativity. It's nice. I liked the inn better, of course.

You know, I should have comped Joseph the crib but when you think of it, that song, 'Away In the Manger', wouldn't have sounded so good.

EXIT BACK THE CENTER AISLE



AUDIENCE CONCLUSION

Sing a favorite selection
of Christmas Carols.

Ask the pastor
to lead an inspiring
Candle Lighting
Ceremony.

Close In Prayer.

Dismiss audience to the
Bed & Breakfast Party!



Bed & Breakfast Party!



Assign party planning to one small group. This may be a few men and women hand picked for this purpose or an adult Sunday School class or women's group.

Offer delicious food, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.

Preparations Before Party Day

Menu: Plan the menu. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share. Provide a variety of beverages.

If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with doughnuts, orange juice, coffee and tea.

Seating: Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the anticipated gathering. Position tables and chairs and serve buffet style with guests standing and moving around the room to chat. Place a few chairs in small circles throughout the area for small group conversation.

Music: Fill the room with Christmas music. This could be live music performed by local church musicians or favorite CD performances.

Centerpieces: Cover tables as desired. Christmas centerpieces should be featured on each table.



Gather a collection of nativity pieces and scatter them on the tables. Since each table will have different pieces, encourage the guests to walk from table to table to enjoy each small vignette.

Preparations On Party Day

Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on the stove to boil while the program is in progress. Set out desserts, cream and sugar. Make your favorite Christmas Punch and place on a nearby serving table.

During The Party

Assign people to cut and serve desserts, pour beverages and refill creamers and sugar bowls as needed. Greet guests cordially as they come through the serving line. Move about the group to be sure everyone feels welcome. Find seats for those who may not be familiar with your church. Introduce people. Enjoy the program participants as they mingle with the guests.

After The Party

Don't forget the party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

*Go Home To Keep Christmas With Your Family
Knowing you have been a good and faithful servant!
Merry Christmas!*

