



# *The Christmas Bells*

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

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PLEASE PURCHASE

*...What's  
So Great*

*About*

## *CHRISTMAS?*

## The Christmas Bells

### ...What's So Great About Christmas?



Three fast talking siblings base their bell ringing station at your church. The Bell family hatches a dastardly plan to rob your folks.

Little do they know it's almost time for the Christmas program and everyone from the tiniest baby to the oldest adult is in a generous Christmas mood. As they enter the church, they take time to talk to the Bells and offer assistance.

*Do the Bells get what they want  
or what they really need?*

*Find out as your gang presents  
'THE CHRISTMAS BELLS  
...What's So Great About Christmas?'*



## Index

Introduction and Index.....1-3  
 The Christmas Bells Director.....4-5  
 At A Glance.....6

Adapting The Christmas Bells.....7  
 Christmas Music.....8  
 Stage and Props.....9

Costumes.....10-11  
 Publicity.....12  
 Teachers.....13-14

Main Characters~The Christmas Bells.....15  
 Prelude/Procession.....16

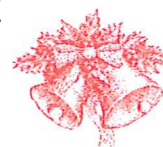
Act I~The Christmas Bells Arrive.....17-18  
 Nursery~Sleepy Time.....19-20  
 Preschool~Cover Up.....21-22  
 Kindergarten~Mangers And Pillows.....23-24

Act II~The Christmas Bells' Plan.....25-26  
 Grades One And Two~Wooly Bully.....27-29  
 Grades Three And Four~Angels On The Fly.....30-32  
 Grades Five And Six~Wise Men Still Seek Him.....33-35

Act III~The Christmas Bells Reflect.....36-37  
 Middle School~One Starry Night.....38-41  
 High School~In Search Of Christmas.....42-44  
 The Bells and The Cop.....45-46  
 Adults~The Price.....47-50

Ring Those Bells Christmas Party.....51-52

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## The Christmas Bells

### ...What's So Great About Christmas?



*The Christmas Bells* is an All Church Christmas program. Feature folks of all ages from Nursery through Adults. Love to laugh? Need a jolt to remember what Christmas really means? This is the Christmas program you will love! Easy to prepare and...NO MEMORIZATION!

*The Christmas Bells* is rehearsed in small groups with their Sunday School teacher/leader. Gather the whole group for a final rehearsal and 'The Christmas Bells' is ready to take to the stage.

*The Christmas Bells* is sprinkled with humor and inspiration. Tell the story of Jesus' birth featuring scam artists who meet your gang, arriving at church for the Christmas program. The Bell family will experience a God-Incidence in their lives due to a series of encounters.

*The Christmas Bells* gives opportunity for the audience to participate as they sing Christmas Carols. Special music is sprinkled throughout the event so everyone becomes part of the fun as the Baby Jesus story unfolds on your stage.

*The Christmas Bells* concludes with a 'Ring Those Bells' party. Decorate, serve delicious desserts or party sandwiches cut in the shape of bells and play Christmas music. It becomes a lasting memory for everyone!

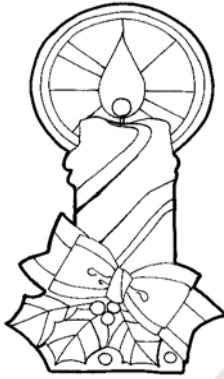
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## The Christmas Bells Director



Organize a humorous, inspirational Christmas celebration. No age limits! Train teams who take charge of their segment.

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 "The Christmas Bells".

*Follow Directions.* Ask team leaders to organize their group complete with props and costumes. Be prepared to help but for the most part the leaders should handle their material. The result is a tremendous reminder of why Jesus entered our pitiful, little world. The story of Bethlehem is powerful and changes lives when it is told.

*Prepare Your Heart.* For some church members, holiday programs presented by your church 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 dishonest family of Christmas Bell ringers. How they are changed by encounters with folks from your church.

*Delegate.* Sunday School teachers and group leaders become involved by preparing their people for the program. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks.



**Practice A Positive Approach.** It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal preparations, party going 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!**

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

**Plan!** Make a program copy and mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt the material. 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 *The Christmas Bells...What's So Great About Christmas?* With more than a month lead time. Assign responsibility for small group practice to each teacher/leader.

**No Memorization!** Some churches enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. Memorization means lead time is longer and intensive rehearsal is essential.

***This is an ALL CHURCH Production!***

***Involve adults and readers,***

***musicians and leaders.***

***Adapt the program to use***

***available number of participants.***



## At A Glance

This is a program sample. Insert favorite 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 double up as desired.



### PRELUDE PROCESSION

#### *ACT I: The Christmas Bells Arrive*

Nursery: Sleepy Time

Preschool: Cover Up

Kindergarten: Mangers And Pillows

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC

#### *ACT II: The Christmas Bells Plan*

Grades One and Two: Wooly Bully

Grades Three and Four: Angels On The Fly

Grades Five and Six: Wise Men Still Seek Him

CHRISTMAS CAROL/SPECIAL MUSIC

#### *ACT III: The Christmas Bells Reflect*

Middle School: One Starry Night

High School: In Search Of Christmas

Adults: The Bells And The Cop

The Price

### CHRISTMAS CAROLS CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

**IT'S TIME FOR A 'RING THOSE BELLS' PARTY!**





## Adapting 'The Christmas Bells'

Adapt the program to fit your church needs. 'The Christmas Bells' lasts between forty five minutes to one hour, depending upon carols and special music. 'Ring Those Bells' Party is not included in time frame.

### Small Church

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts.

For a combined junior/senior high school class, eliminate one presentation and feature your favorite segment. 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

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

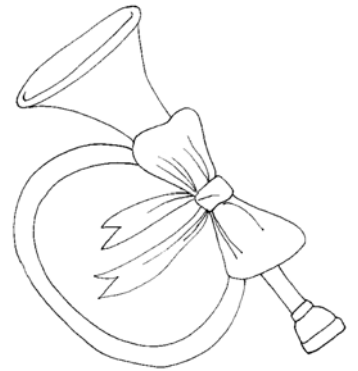
### Ring Those Bells Party

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.





# Christmas Music



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

## Carols

Sing traditional Christmas Carols. Practice during Sunday School Opening three weeks prior to performance. It may be fun to choose contemporary Christmas choruses from music you own and enjoy. The entire audience sings this music.

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## New Music

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).

Sheet music, words only sheets and double channel CD (sample voice + accompaniment only). Call 1-888-236-5433 or order from our website: [www.cemlife.com](http://www.cemlife.com) Listen to the songs in our MUSIC catalog.

## Special Music

Feature 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



The Christmas Bells is a unique presentation using a minimum of props and staging. Each group carries personal props on stage.

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

**Staging.** Make the stage look like the outside of your church. Position one, two or more untrimmed artificial Christmas trees as a background. Artificial snow may be sprinkled on the limbs. Add a false street light and other outdoor items.

If artificial trees are not possible, place a homemade, false street light as the center piece of the stage area.

Add a Salvation Army styled bucket on a tripod. The tripod remains in place throughout the program.

**Bells.** Each of the main characters rings a bell. Provide three bells of any size, shape or sound.

**Seating.** Reserve class seating. Assign assistants to sit with young children.

**Sound System.** Place two or three microphone stands across the stage. If personal microphones are available, attach them to the Bell family. Speakers must be heard clearly. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

**Lighting.** Light the existing decorations in the sanctuary but keep the overhead lights off. Place small spot lights on the floor shining up at each microphone.

## Costumes

*The Christmas Bells...What's So Great About Christmas?* requires simple costuming. When costuming a large group, ask each participant to prepare their attire. Parents of young students may be willing to supply necessary clothing. Follow specific directions for each program segment.



*We're cheating!* For this program, groups are supposedly arriving at church to present the Christmas pageant. Normally, they would wear coats and hats. However, any participant dressed in Holy Land attire should not wear a coat. Follow costume instructions in each segment.

### *The Bell Family*

These three main characters wear oversized coats, sweat pants, slouch hats and patched clothing. They look very poor. Smudges on faces and messy hair add to the effect of world weariness.

### *Holy Land Pattern Suggestions*

***Pillow Cases:*** Cut a neck hole in the top of the pillowcase. Cut the front to the neck hole. Cut arm holes. This makes a long vest. Plaid or striped flannel pillowcases work great for little shepherds and wise men. Don't worry about hemming anything!

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

***Head Wraps:*** A fabric square over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the head makes a headpiece. Large scrunchies (like girls wear around pony tails) hold the fabric tightly.



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

**Angels:** Use white cotton or silver lame/ fabric. Angels may wear 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. Angels may wear face/hair glitter for that "extra sparkle"! Bare feet or sandals!

## *Student Ushers*

Once everyone is costumed to perfection, recruit angels, shepherds and wise men ushers who distribute programs and help seat people.

Place students at each door and coach them to say, "Welcome to The Christmas Bells. May I show you to your seat?" Or, "Where would you like to sit?" It is an added personal touch that is much appreciated by many audience members.

Meet with ushers to explain how to greet guests, especially if students have never done this. Assign a team of two to a specific door.

## *After The Show*

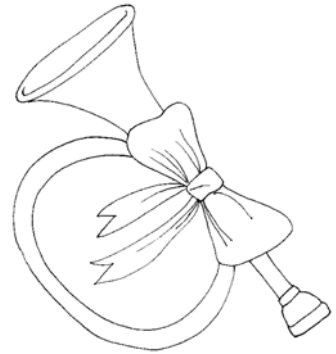
Ask participants to remain in costume for the 'Ring Those Bells' Party. They serve beverages, greet guests and wander through the party area while people eat and talk.





## Publicity

Publicize 'The Christmas Bells' through all church communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.



### *Church Bulletin And Newsletter*

Place an announcement in November and December newsletters. If you plan the 'Ring Those Bells' Party, let people know there will be a Christmas party, including food, following the program.

### *Local Newspaper*

Include an announcement with church holiday programming publicity. Talk to a reporter to see if a feature article is possible. Include pictures!

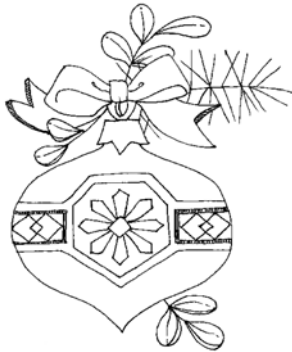
### *Television And Radio*

Advertise on your television cable channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service. It may be one more avenue of great publicity. Check it out!

### *Christmas Card Invitations*

Christmas Card invitations are effective for families who send their children to Sunday School but are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.





## Teachers

**Pray! Prepare! Present!**

**Adapt 'The Christmas Bells'**

**To Fit Your Group Needs**

### *Involve As Many Students As Possible*

More students than speaking parts? Divide existing parts. Less students than speaking parts? Combine existing parts. Assign specific people the tasks of holding visuals, carrying props and costuming.

### *Highlight Individual Parts*

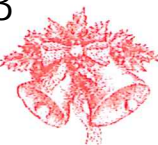
Do you desire to have students memorize speaking parts or read them? If reading, print scripts on white copy paper. Highlight the parts using a colorful highlighter.

### *Practice With Your Small Group*

Use the first few minutes of Sunday School class each week to practice and discuss costuming and props. Assign specific parts and tasks. Adapt the segment to fit your group. Use the people available by adjusting the parts to fit the size of the group.

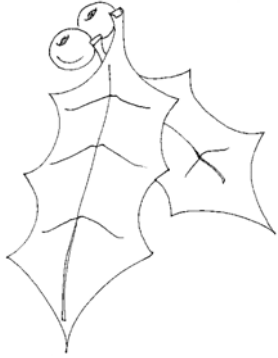
### *Communicate With Parents*

Let parents know when to have their children at rehearsals. Invite parents to attend the performance and be sure they know what their child must bring. Collect props and store them in the classroom.



*More For Teachers --*

## *Your Leadership Is Valued!*



### *Show Up With A Smile*

Meet your small group. Dress in appropriate costumes, 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*

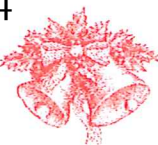
Stay for the 'Ring Those Bells' Party. Collect props and materials before attending the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle and enjoy the experience with your students and their families.

### *If You Need Help*

The Program Director is available. 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 adults. Take time to enjoy your small part of the bigger picture. The Bethlehem Story is classic and life changing. The spiritual experience is amazing!



## Main Characters -



# The Christmas Bells

The Bells can be male or female of any age. The only requirement is that they all have 'attitude'.

## How To Be A Christmas Bell

Lively, cheerful and underhanded, the Bells lead groups on and off stage for each segment. As the groups tell the story of Jesus' birth, the Bells begin to change. Their understanding of the real meaning of Christmas is the foundation of the program.

The Bells are funny, sarcastic, full of crazy talk and scams and yet they treat each small group with respect. Questions are asked and answered. Life begins to change because of these spur of the moment encounters.

*Liberty Bell*

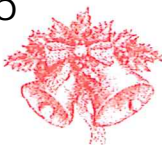
*Silver Bell*

*Taco Bell*

## What To Wear

Have fun being disheveled. The more pathetic the outfit, the better the effect. Wear a slouchy hat, sweat pants or old jeans, ripped jacket, gloves, boots. If the clothing is too big, that's fine!

Because the Bells are trying to be 'Christmas-y', wrap garland around the neck as a scarf, wear a big poinsettia in a button hole, attach red bows and ornaments to clothing.







## *The Christmas Bells* *...What's So Great About Christmas?*

### *The Prelude*

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

If using our original music, consider having the same songs played so the audience hears the melodies and become familiar with the choruses.



### *The Procession*

Gather 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 or the group may sing the theme song if you have purchased it.



## Act I

# The Christmas Bells Arrive!



Three people enter from the back of the room. They enter slowly, shuffling their feet and walk onto the stage. Once there, they arrange themselves around a large container with printed message. They start to ring bells. The hand printed sign reads:

CHRISTMAS IS GREAT!  
GIVE TO THE POOR!  
FEEL GREAT!

(Cash/All Major Credit Cards Accepted)

LIBERTY BELL: Hurry up! Get in place. I see people coming. We'll never make a bucket of money if we don't get our act together.

SILVER BELL: I'm going as fast as I care to go, Liberty Bell. You're not the boss of me!

TACO BELL: Oh yes he is, Silver Bell. Mom said he's the boss and that makes him the boss of you and me.

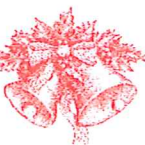
SILVER: Well, I don't have to like it one little bit, Taco Bell. Just because Liberty's the oldest doesn't mean he can tell us what to do.

LIBERTY: 'Waa, Waa'. What a couple of babies. You're happy enough to grab your part of the Christmas Bells 'take'. We stand here an hour, look sad and take home a pile of dough, moo-la, green stuff, money!

TACO: Yeah, we know the Bell family motto: "What's so great about Christmas?"

LIBERTY, SILVER, TACO: (In Unison) It's all about the money!

LIBERTY: We ARE the Bells. Don't forget, our grandmother, **Clara Bell**, started the 'What's So Great About Christmas' scam. Then grandad,



**Rusty Bell**, joined up as a bell ringer. Boy, the money they made those first years was a sight to behold. We could swim in that cash. Remember the big, old Cadillac he bought? Smooth ride! Sweet!

SILVER: We can only hope to become stellar bell ringers like our mom, **Coral Bell** and her sisters, **Crystal Bell** and **Bonnie Blue Bell**. Those gals could steal money with the wink of an eye.

TACO: Don't forget our cute cousins, **Tinker Bell** and **Golden Bell**. They are famous for grabbing cash by crying for the 'poor people' in Africa. Then they took the money home to their bedroom which had the sign 'Africa' printed on the door.

LIBERTY: (Laughing...) I forgot about that! We're still collecting money for the poor people in Africa. Don't forget that part.

SILVER: Do you remember silly old **Cow Bell**? He refused to join the family business. Said it wasn't a family business he could be proud of. Said he wanted to preserve his integrity. What a ding-a-ling!

LIBERTY: He said, "I rue the day we marry up with the Whistle family over on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Can you imagine that wedding announcement? "Next week come to the wedding of the Bells and Whistles."

TACO: Old Cow Bell used to ask, "What's so great about Christmas". I don't imagine it meant much once he got 'old timers' disease. Made me think that maybe Cow knew something I don't know. Have you ever heard anything about Christmas?

LIBERTY: I ring this bell every Christmas. I snitch money from every person who walks by my bucket. That's all I need to know about Christmas. Don't confuse me with right and wrong and 'integrity'. What's so great about Christmas? Nothin'!

SILVER: Here they come! Get ready! Remember what daddy always used to say: "Ring those bells, Bells! It's time for Christmas!"



## Nursery Sleepy Time

Teacher, parents and Nursery children arrive on stage. Nursery children are dressed in their pajamas, carrying baby dolls or stuffed animals. Teacher carries a thermos bottle. Divide parts between available participants.

THE BELLS: (Ringing bells, singing....) "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh...."

TEACHER: Look everyone! Bell ringers! And right outside our church!

LIBERTY: (Politely...) Good evening, ma'am! We're the Bells. I'm Liberty. Here's my sister Silver and my brother Taco. We're here out of the goodness of our Bell hearts, collecting cash for poor people all over the world.

TACO: (Laughing a little...) Yeah, especially in Africa.

PARENT (carrying child): See sweetheart, there ARE good people who care about needy folks. I wish I had brought my purse!

SILVER: No problem! We take personal or business checks and all major credit cards. Which do you prefer?

PARENT: (carrying child): How did you know so many people would be passing this way? We are on the way to our Church Christmas pageant. See? Our little ones are in their pajamas. They are going to get on stage and wave at the whole audience to wish them a Merry Christmas. We get to talk too. Our part is called "Sleepy Time".

PARENT: (carrying child): We'll remind everyone that Jesus was once a little boy who got very sleepy just like our babies.

TEACHER: We do not have money but you are such sincere Bell ringers





that we would like to show our appreciation and Christian love. In the name of Baby Jesus, accept this thermos bottle of hot chocolate. It should warm your spirits as well as your tummies.

PARENT (carrying child): Oh, please accept our gift. My little one doesn't get to see such honest, giving people very often.

TACO: We-I-ll, if you insist. Are you sure you don't have any bit of change in your pockets? How about the children's pockets? I bet their grandpa slipped in a quarter or two for a surprise. We are collecting for a very good cause.

TEACHER: No, just this delicious hot chocolate. I'm sure God will bless your efforts. Others are coming along behind us.

PARENT (carrying child): Would you hold my baby for a moment? I can check my pockets? Sometimes I leave a dollar or two for emergencies.

LIBERTY: (taking baby reluctantly) Well now, isn't this a cute baby? You said his name is Jesus?

TEACHER: Oh no, his name is ... Baby Jesus is God's Son. You know, Jesus who was born in Bethlehem and became our Savior when He died on the Cross.

PARENT: ...And rose from the grave. That's at Easter.

LIBERTY: (Confused, embarrassed) Oh, THAT Baby Jesus. Sure, I've heard of that Jesus. Nice guy. Lived over on Tenth Street?

PARENT: (Taking back baby...) Sorry, no money. Just hot chocolate. We have to go! Merry Christmas! Ring those Bells!

TEACHER: (Hand thermos to Liberty) God bless you. I'm sure God will provide. After all, that's what is so great about Christmas!

GROUP WAVES AS THEY EXIT THE STAGE.



## Preschool Cover Up



Teacher and Preschool children walk on stage carrying their favorite small blankets from home. Students also carry small bells to ring. Teacher carries 3 neatly folded afghans or blankets.

**Use available children. No special costuming.**

**Preschool bells:** Gather bells of all kinds for children to carry and ring as they sing their little Christian version of "Jingle Bells". If you prefer, make each child a bracelet of small jingle bells or purchase them.

**ORIENTAL TRADING:**

Jingle Bell bracelets. IN-4/1762

\$14.99 per dozen (Price May Change)

Purchase at [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)

BELLS: (Ringing bells, singing...) "Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells..."

TEACHER: (Interrupting....) Merry Christmas! How wonderful to see such dedicated givers. Children, let's sing along with these dear folks.

CHILDREN: (Sing enthusiastically.)

**NOTE CHANGE OF LYRICS!**

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way.  
Oh what fun it is to sing of Jesus' first birthday.  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, jingle all the way.  
Oh what fun it is to sing of Jesus' first birthday.

TEACHER: We're jingling our way to the Christmas pageant. Children, what are we going to talk about in the show?

CHILDREN: Baby blankets!!!

SILVER BELL: Baby blankets? Your baby blankets look especially nice but I cannot imagine what that has to do with Christmas? Aren't you getting to big to be carrying 'blankys'?



TEACHER: You are never too old to enjoy a comfortable blanket. Look how much we can do with them? We can: (Ask children to follow your instructions.)

\*\*\*\*\*Put them on our heads to keep our ears warm.

\*\*\*\*\*Wrap up in them to keep our clothes clean.

\*\*\*\*\*Hold them up in front of us so no one can see us

SILVER: You got any money for the bucket?

TEACHER: No money! We have a gift to cover you up in this cold weather. Children give our gift to these fine folks.

(Hand one small blanket to hand to each Bell.)

(Bells wrap themselves in the blankets.)

Once you are covered in a warm blanket, it's like being covered in God's love. God sent Jesus to cover us with forgiveness. We'll practice our jingle birthday song for you one more time.

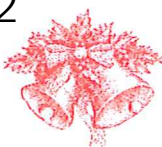
CHILDREN: (Sing "Jingle Bells" Birthday version)

SILVER: You people sure talk about this 'Jesus' a lot. These are cute kids, ring a 'mean' bell- and the blankets are cozy but we need money in the bucket. We're helping kids in Africa....and 'Africa' is closer than you think!

TEACHER: We're too young to carry money but we know children in Africa need to know Jesus. Enjoy the cover ups! Don't forget that Jesus was born in Bethlehem to cover up our sins! That is what's so great about Christmas!

CHILDREN: Merry Christmas! Jesus Loves You!

GROUP EXITS STAGE AFTER WAVING GOODBYE



## Kindergarten Mangers And Pillows



Teacher and Kindergarten children walk on stage carrying pillows. Teacher carries one pillow in a shopping bag. Children wear jackets and hats.

BELLS: (Ringing bells, singing lazily...) "Jingle Bells, jingle bells..."

TEACHER: (Speaking to children...) We have to hurry. The Christmas program is ready to start. Did you practice our song at home? Maybe we better go over it one more time before we go inside.

CHILDREN: (Sing to the tune: "Rock-A-Bye Baby")

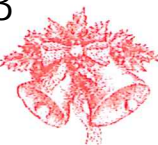
Rock-A-Bye Jesus, Asleep in the hay.  
Sleep in your manger, Sleep there all day.  
When the star shines, the Baby will wake  
Dear Little Jesus, here for our sake.

So hush a bye, hush a bye, nothing to fear.  
Hush a bye, hush a bye, baby so dear.  
The birds in their nest, they all need their rest,  
So hush a bye, hush a bye dear.

TACO: (Sniffing...) Aw, that was sweet. I don't know who this Jesus is but he must be pretty important.

TEACHER: Children, tell this nice bell ringer who Jesus is!

CHILDREN: (In Unison) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)





TACO: Why are these children carrying pillows?

TEACHER: We are reminding people that Jesus was placed in a manger which was a big food dish for animals. He didn't get a comfortable pillow for nap time.

TACO: Lady, we're here to collect money. See our sign? You got any?

TEACHER: I did not come prepared to give money today. Will you be here tomorrow?

TACO: No ma-am. See if the kids have any money on them. We need it bad.

( Children look in their pockets and say, "No money!")

TEACHER: We do have a gift you might use. It's a brand new pillow. Here, take it with you. (Hand pillow to Taco Bell.)

TACO: We don't want a pillow. We want money. I thought church people gave money away all the time. Isn't it supposed to be the "Christian" thing to do, especially at Christmas?

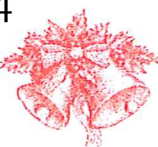
TEACHER: Well, that's mostly true but tonight we are here to celebrate Christmas and Jesus. We didn't know we would need money.

TACO: Well, you might as well move along. You're blocking our spot. You're really a disappointment. You looked rich.

TEACHER: (Looking puzzled....) Ok, we'll get inside where it's warm. We have to tell the people Jesus was born in a manger...without a pillow. That's what is so great about Christmas! Enjoy your pillow!

CHILDREN WAVE AS THEY EXIT.

*AUDIENCE SINGS "Away In A Manger"*  
*OPTION: Special Music*





## Act II

### The Christmas Bells' Plan

LIBERTY BELL: Get over here! How much money is in the bucket?

SILVER BELL: Not one dollar. Not one dime.

TACO BELL: Not one penny!

LIBERTY: This isn't working. We need a new plan. What can we do to take home the mother lode?

SILVER: Well, I have to admit I really like the new pillow and the soft blanket they gave us.

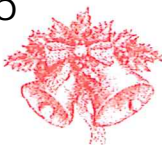
TACO: And the hot chocolate was delicious! Sorry, you didn't get any. I drank it all! But...it WAS good.

LIBERTY: Typical! You two are always looking for comfort. I'm talking cold, hard cash. You know, money we can send to 'Africa'.

SILVER: Oh Liberty. You know we don't send money to the real Africa. We just count the stash in a bedroom with a sign that says 'Africa' on the door.

LIBERTY: Duh, of course I know that. Stick with the story will ya? I can't keep explaining it to you dipsters. And if you tell anybody about where the Africa money goes, I'm gonna...I'm gonna...I'm gonna think of something good to do to you. And I'm gonna do it slow so you don't forget.

TACO: Yeah, yeah, you're all talk. Let's see. We've been here in the freezing cold for about an hour. Our take so far is one empty thermos, one pillow and three blankets. Time to come up with a new plan.



SILVER: Let me think. Each one of those little children kept talking about Jesus. They were so happy to be singing about Him and celebrating His birthday. I'm not much on this Jesus stuff but what would happen if we act more interested in their Christmas story. You know, ask a few questions. Pretend like we really want to be part of the celebration.

LIBERTY: Hey! That just might work. As I remember, the Christmas story includes shepherds and angels and wise men from the east.

TACO: East Tenth Street?

LIBERTY: (Groan) No-o-o! The East. You know the real east. The orient, camels, desert, robes, big tents, rich guys and gold.

SILVER: And a star. I remember something about a star. What was that about a star?

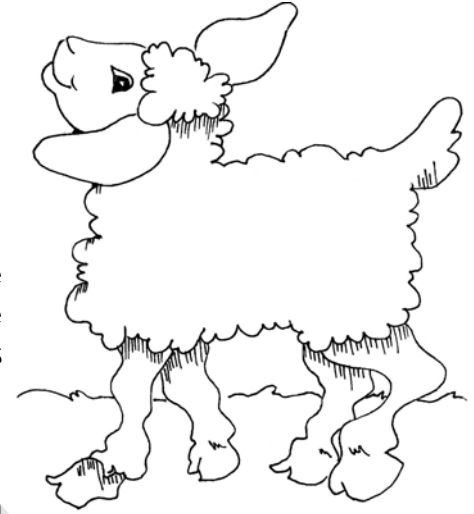
TACO: I was sure wise guys came from East Tenth Street? Have you ever met those guys? Charlie Wise and his brothers Joe and Bruno?

LIBERTY: Look! Here comes another gang. Ring those bells and think of something outstanding to ask them.

BELLS: (Singing enthusiastically....) "Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells...."



## Grades One And Two Woolly Bully



Teacher and students walk onto the stage via the center aisle from the back of the room. They are wearing shepherd costumes, carrying long staffs (when available) and carrying a few sheep.

Divide parts between available students.

**Make sheep from white posterboard. Use the pattern included. Not every student needs to carry a sheep. If stuffed lambs are available, use them as well. See lamb mask pattern. Make masks for each student from sturdy poster board. Cover top with fluffy cotton balls. Place chenille rods (pipe cleaners) on back of mask so it fits like a pair of glasses. Ears and nose can be painted black on some sheep if desired.**

As some students wearing masks walk the aisle, they quietly "Baa-baa", pretending to be voices for the sheep.

LIBERTY BELL: (Faking enthusiasm) Well, look what we have here! Little sheep and their wonderful shepherds. Come over here and let us see how authentic you look in your Bethlehem robes.

TEACHER: And you would be?

LIBERTY: I'm Liberty Bell and these good looking folks are Taco Bell and Silver Bell. We are humbly gathering donations for people who live in 'Africa'. Have you any money to add to our worthy cause?

TEACHER: I'm afraid we do not carry money. We are on our way to tell the Christmas story. We're shepherds and we brought our sheep!

LIBERTY: What's up with the people of your church? Doesn't anyone carry money anymore? How can we be expected to do our good deeds if no one carries money. You have to meet us half way here.





STUDENT #1: Shepherds don't need money. They watch sheep on a hill.

STUDENT #2: They stayed outdoors all night with their sheep.

STUDENT #3: They must have loved those sheep.

STUDENT #4: Or they were really poor and couldn't buy a house.

STUDENT #5: Shepherds visited Baby Jesus when He was born.

LIBERTY: Babies are born in hospitals with doctors and nurses. I never once heard of a shepherd being involved. Check your pockets. Any bit of change will do. Maybe there are poor shepherds in Africa!

STUDENT #6: Do you know ANYTHING about the Christmas story?

LIBERTY: Sure I do. The way I heard it there was this gang of bullies waiting to beat up Mary and Joseph so they hightailed it out of town. They rode through the mountains in a Mustang to hide in a barn. While they were there they found a baby in the hay. The bullies tried to steal the baby so Mary hid him in a manger. That's an animal food dish. Then a few wise guys showed up from East 10<sup>th</sup> Street with birthday presents. Baby Jesus blew out His birthday candles and went to sleep. It was hard for Him to sleep because there was a big star that shone down into His bedroom. Kept him up all night.

ALL STUDENTS: (In Unison) No!

TEACHER: I think you heard the wrong story, Liberty Bell. These little shepherds represent the Bethlehem shepherds who heard Good News the night Baby Jesus was born. Angels showed up and told them to run into town to see the baby lying in a manger. I never heard about even one bully in the stable that night. Just a mother, a dad and a newborn baby boy. Oh, and shepherds with their woolly sheep.

STUDENT #7: Maybe that's where you went wrong. Woolly and Bully sure sound the same.



LIBERTY: (Cough nervously...) Ahem! Yeah, that must be it.

TEACHER: These little shepherds must get in place for the program. Children give these nice bell ringers one of your sheep to remind them of what really happened in Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born.

LIBERTY: Oh that's okay. We don't want to take your sheep.

TEACHER: It's the least we can do since we don't have money. We insist.

LIBERTY: (Reluctantly...) Well, if you insist.

ALL STUDENTS: (Waving...) Merry Christmas! Goodbye!

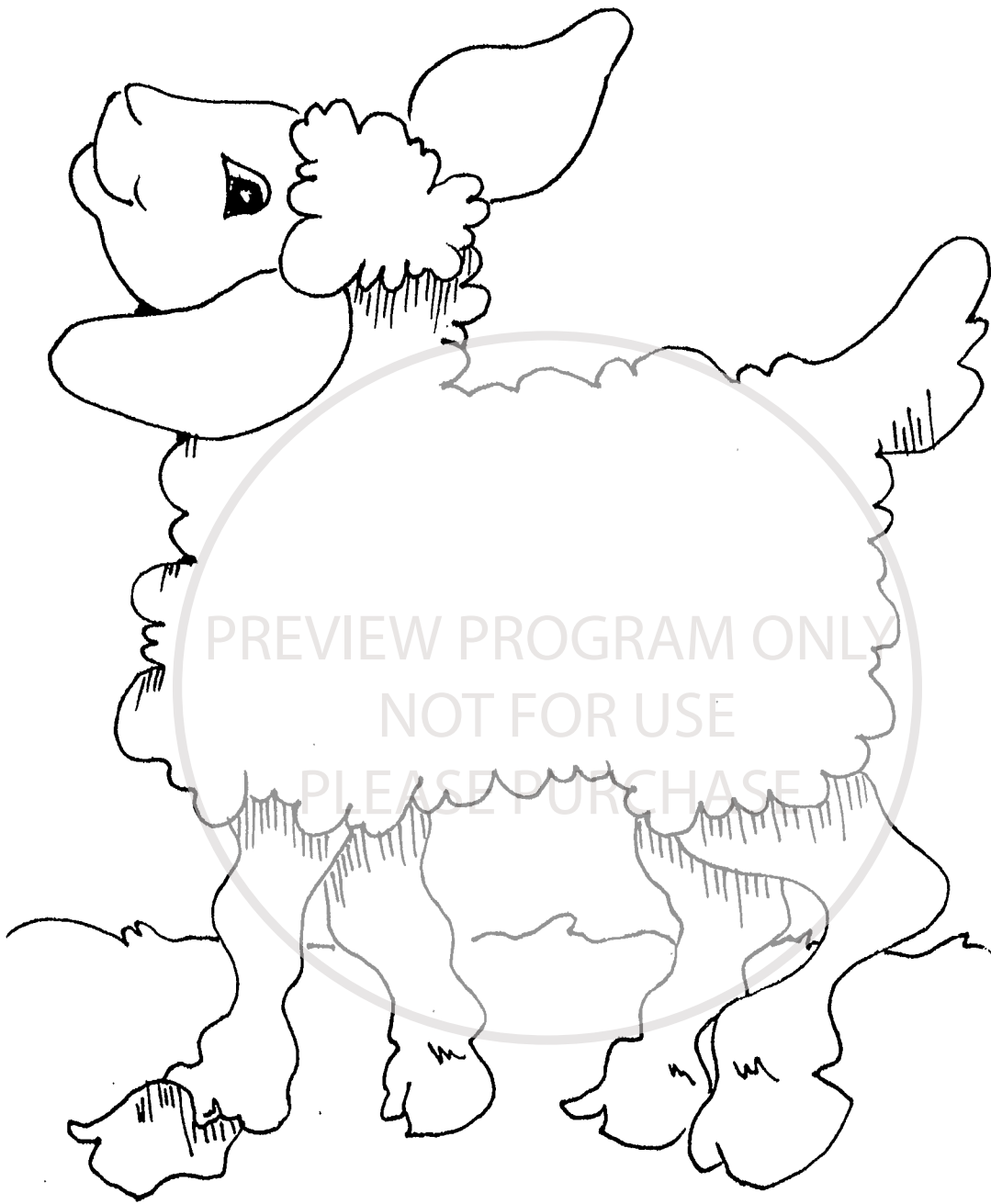
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## Grades Three And Four Angels On The Fly



Students dress as Christmas angels. Wear simple tinsel halos. Costumes may include wings or no wings. Spray glitter each angel so they sparkle in the lights.

Angels pretend to fly to the stage, flapping arms and making whooshing sounds as they move up every aisle. These angels fly in haphazardly and "land" on the stage near the three Bells.

**Divide parts between available students.**

STUDENT #1: Angel Patrol! Landing in formation! All angels present and accounted for. At your service Christmas Bells. (Salute)

STUDENT #2: Do not be afraid! We have been sent from heaven. We see you are asking for donations from the good people of this church. Could it be that you are less than honest in your intentions?

SILVER BELL: Oh come off it, kids. We know what you are doing. You are heading for the church Christmas program and you don't have any money but you have some wonderful thing to give us that will change our lives.

STUDENT #3: Interesting theory but we have been sent by Heavenly Father to check on this little Christmas program.

SILVER: No you haven't.

STUDENT #4: Yes, we have.

SILVER: No you haven't.

STUDENT #5: Yes, we have.





SILVER: Listen, we can do this all night. The real question here is do you have money to put in our bucket to help people in Africa?

STUDENT #6: Heavenly Father says we are to ask, "Where in Africa?"

SILVER: Why, why, anywhere. Maybe we'll give it to people in France! Yeah, that's it. France.

STUDENT #7: Don't mess with Christmas angels. We've been there, done that and got the wings to prove it.

SILVER: Where's your teacher? Don't you have to get inside the church before the program starts?

STUDENT #8: Nope. We are here to talk to you and your family. Angels have been God's messengers for centuries. We are sent in extreme cases. This looks like an extreme case to us.

STUDENT #9: Silver, you have been cheating God's people for a long time. God is not pleased that you pretend to know Him and steal money at Christmas. What can we do to convince you to change your rascally ways?

SILVER: Um, nothing? You are just kids. We aren't scared by a bunch of kids in halos. Wait! If you can tell me what you were doing the night Jesus was born, we'll think about changing our "rascally" ways.

STUDENT #10: We angels gathered above the shepherds outside Bethlehem. God's only Son, Jesus, was born that night. Our angel leader said, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." We gave directions for the shepherds to find that baby lying in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes.

STUDENT #11: We sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." Then we disappeared. Is that good enough?

SILVER: That's pretty good. But...anyone could know that. How do I know you're for real.



STUDENT #12: Here, wear this halo and see how you feel. (Place tinsel halo on SILVER BELL'S head.)

SILVER: (Step back.) Whoa, that's pretty powerful! I feel all tingly and Christmas-y inside. Are you sure you aren't regular, everyday kids going to this program?

STUDENT #13: Positive. Now it is up to you to change your ways and serve Heavenly Father in the right way. Let's fly, Angel Patrol. Our work here is done!

**Angels "fly" with arms flapping and voices 'whooshing' back the aisles and disappear out the back of the room.**

SILVER: Wow, did you guys see that?

LIBERTY AND TACO: See what?

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## Grades Five And Six Wise Men Still Seek Him

Students wear crowns and carry wrapped gifts (empty boxes). One student carries a cardboard cutout of a camel (optional).

Print individual parts on rolled up paper to resemble parchment scrolls. Each scripture is divided but rearrange according to the number of students available.

Divide parts between available students.

Oriental Trading:

Prism Crowns \$3.49 per Dozen

[www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)

Price May Change

TACO: Oh no! I don't think I can much more of this. Who are you supposed to be?

STUDENT #1: We're in the church Christmas program and we are the Wise Men, kings from the Orient, who traveled far to see the newborn king. See our crowns?

TACO: I see 'em. I don't suppose you have any money to put in our bucket for Africa?

STUDENT #2: No. Afraid not. We have to rehearse one more time before the program begins. You look like a willing audience.

TACO: (Resigned...) Sure, why not? Everybody else has practiced their parts for us. Meet my family. That's Liberty Bell. That's Silver Bell and I'm Taco.

STUDENT #3: You've got to be kidding. Your name is Taco Bell? You



have got to be kidding!

TACO: You wanna make something of it? I'm not in the mood. Just say your parts and move along.

STUDENT #4: "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.'"

STUDENT #5: "When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teacher so the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born."

STUDENT #6: "'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied. '...for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

STUDENT #7: "Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'"

STUDENT #8: "After they heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."

STUDENT #9: "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and incense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."

Matthew 2:1-12

TACO: Treasures? There were treasures? What kind of treasures?

STUDENT #10: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.



TACO: Gold! Do you have treasures in those boxes?

STUDENT #11: Why yes. We each brought a treasure to give away.

TACO: I LIKE treasures! Could I have one or two or three?

STUDENT #12: You may have ALL our treasures! After all, you are giving generous gifts to Africa.

TACO: Oh yeah, sure. Africa...or France. We haven't decided. We can use all the gold we can get!

AS STUDENTS HAND THEIR WRAPPED GIFTS TO TACO, THEY SAY WHAT'S INSIDE EACH BOX. (Of course, your boxes are fake and just wrapped.)

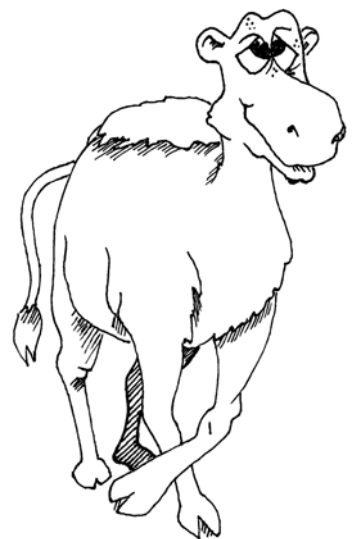
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Mittens  
Toothbrush  
Bible  
Pen  
Small radio  
Roll of Stamps  
T Shirt  
Socks  
Scarf  
Flashlight  
(Add to list as desired)

TACO: No gold? What should we do with all this stuff?  
I thought you brought gold!

STUDENT #13: Sorry! We told you we are WISE MEN!  
Gold is just for Baby Jesus. Merry Christmas!

*Audience Sings:      The First Noel  
                                    We Three Kings*  
*Option/Special Music*







## Act III

# The Christmas Bells Reflect

The Bells move their "station" slowly from one side of the stage to the opposite side. Their attitude is dejected and depressed. Once the area is rearranged, they begin ringing their bells but this time very slowly and lazily.

LIBERTY: We need a change of scenery. Moving to this spot looks much more promising.

SILVER: How much money do we have?

TACO: (Looking into container...) Still empty. Those kids wore me out. I even had a few that claimed they were really Christmas angels. Were those people laughing at us?

SILVER: I don't think so, Taco. They seemed real nice to me. Those little ones were so sincere talking about their Jesus. Almost makes me believe too.

LIBERTY: Buck up, Silver! We're here to do a job and we are not doing it well. You want to tell the family we came up with no money...and on Christmas Eve when everyone in the world is in a giving mood.

TACO: We got stuff. It's just that hot chocolate, blankets, pillows and little gifts isn't what we planned. For a minute I figured we were going to get GOLD! Oh well, keep ringing.

**THE TRIO CONTINUES TO RING THEIR BELLS LOOKING DEJECTED.**

LIBERTY: You don't think this Jesus story is true, do you?



SILVER: Maybe there's something to it, Liberty. The kids said Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem. It was some kind of miracle that angels announced. He was a gift from God.

TACO: And, those angels told the shepherds to look for the baby in Bethlehem. They found that baby just where the angels said to look!

LIBERTY: The Wise Men said Jesus became our King and our Savior. Could that possibly be true?

TACO: I don't know but I think I met real angels on the street.

SILVER: Hey! Here come some more people. Smile! Ring those bells!

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## Middle School One Starry Night

Middle School students walk on stage carrying homemade stars of all shapes and sizes. They can be a variety of bright colors. Make the stars as large as possible from cardboard or poster board. Spray the stars with glitter so they sparkle.

**Divide speaking parts between available students.**

**THE CHRISTMAS STAR:** Dress one student in a white robe or plain outfit. Make 2 huge stars with simple fabric or cardboard "straps" to fit that student's shoulders like an advertising sandwich board.

Mousse the student's hair to stand straight out on end as if electrified. Spray hair with glitter. Make up face with bright cheeks and big eyes. Or design a star to fit the person's face similar to the graphic at the right.

**SMALL STARS:** All other students wear many smaller glittering stars on their clothing. Make the stars and attach with pins or duct tape. Small stars may also spray their hair with glitter and make up their faces.



**LIBERTY:** We can't catch a break. Every time I turn around there's another disgusting batch of cheerful people heading for this Christmas program.

(Fake smile...) Merry Christmas! Welcome to our corner! You all look especially bright this evening. We ring bells to collect money for people in Africa. Have you extra cash to add to this wonderful cause? We'll take any amount, cash or credit card, check or pledge card.



STUDENT #1: Sorry, we are fresh out of cash. I bet you have collected quite a bit on Christmas Eve. Everyone knows folks like to give money at Christmas. You must be very happy.

LIBERTY: Yeah, right. Everybody likes to give at Christmas...EXCEPT ON THIS CORNER! On this corner nobody wants to give it up for those poor, poor people in Africa! What's the matter with you people?

STUDENT #2: We're poor. Can you give something to us?

STUDENT #3: Don't believe her. We're just kidding. If we look, I'm sure we can come up with a little something to add to your cause.

LIBERTY: So far we have seen Shepherds, angels and Wise Men pass us. Who are you smart alecks supposed to be.

STUDENT #4: (Dressed as the Christmas Star) I'm the Christmas Star and these are all my star friends.

STUDENT #5: We tell about the strange star that moved through the sky. The Wise Men followed it until it rested over the place where Jesus lay.

STUDENT #6: It was the original Global Positioning System. God knew those guys would never stop to ask for directions so He set up a GPS that they couldn't miss. I guess it was GOD'S POINTING STAR. Get it? GPS?

LIBERTY: Very funny. Hey Christmas Star....you got any money?

STUDENT #4: (CHRISTMAS STAR) If I do, I can't reach it in this costume. I've been practicing my part. Wanna hear it?

LIBERTY: No.

STUDENT #4: (CHRISTMAS STAR) Boy, you sure are grouchy. Get a little Christmas spirit.



STUDENT #7: It's not every day you get to speak to the Christmas Star. One of the most famous symbols of Christmas is the Star. You can find the star on top of Christmas trees, on cards and in homes and streets.

STUDENT #8: The star is also known as the Star of Bethlehem. It led the Three Wise Men to the birthplace of Jesus.

LIBERTY: You're just gonna tell me about this no matter what, aren't you?

STUDENT #9: Yep. After the Wise Men found Jesus and gave their gifts, they were smart enough to get out of town fast after a warning dream. They never did go back to tell Herod where the baby was. Herod was really mad he had been tricked. He ordered the killing of all boy babies in the area. Now that's an evil man.

STUDENT #10: People want facts about that Christmas Star. That's why we fixed up our own star. The real thing is hard to figure. There were no super novae or exploding stars reported during that time.

LIBERTY: Money! M-O-N-E-Y! Are you hard of hearing? You got it. I need it!

STUDENT #11: Comets meant 'doom' so it couldn't have been that. It could have been an unusual grouping of planets which were reported during that time. It was so cool! Jupiter and Venus both quite bright, came very close to each other and looked like a single star. No one knows for sure but it is really interesting.

LIBERTY: Stop it! I don't want to hear about babies, shepherds, angels, wise men, exploding comets or stars. I just want to go home and put my feet up with a tuna fish sandwich in my hands.

STUDENT #4: (CHRISTMAS STAR) My part is to make sure the audience understands that the Christmas Star symbolizes the light of the world, Christ Himself. The light from that star will never dim or fall. Every year the Star of Bethlehem reminds us of that wonderful night and gives mankind hope and happiness.





LIBERTY: I give up. I don't want your money. Move along.

STUDENT #4: (CHRISTMAS STAR) You don't want our gifts?

LIBERTY: (Perking up...) You have gifts? Sure! Put them in the bucket!

**ALL STUDENTS PLACE THEIR STARS IN THE BUCKET,  
SAYING 'MERRY CHRISTMAS'  
AND WAVING AS THEY LEAVE.**

LIBERTY: (Shaking head...) I should have known. I should have known.

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## High School In Search Of Christmas



Divide the High School group into two teams. Each team selects one person who carries a large bag. The teams have been on a Christmas Scavenger Hunt. No special costuming.

Divide parts between available students.

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS ARE RINGING.  
TWO TEAMS RUSH ONTO STAGE FROM OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

**TEAM ONE/STUDENT:** I found it. We win! Give to me. I got it first!

**TEAM TWO/STUDENT:** No you didn't. I found it. I saw it from across the street. Our team wins.

**TEAM TWO:** (In Unison) Yea, We win!!!

**TEAM ONE:** (In Unison) You did not!

**TEAM ONE/STUDENT:** You can't win until you find every single item on your list. We're still in the middle of this and we better hurry. The Christmas program is about to begin and we'll be late.

**TEAM TWO/STUDENT:** Well, somebody better give us one of those bells. We'll never get this over with.

**SILVER:** Oh no! You don't get our bells. We paid good money for these bells and no one gets them without a fight. We didn't steal your bags!

**TEAM ONE/STUDENT:** We aren't going to rob you. We're on a scavenger hunt and the losing team has to serve coffee and cookies at the end of the program tonight.



TEAM TWO/STUDENT: Could we BORROW your bells? We've been searching for 'Christmas' and we're getting tired.

SILVER: Say that again? YOU are searching for Christmas? Aren't you from this church? Shouldn't you know where to find Christmas?

TEAM ONE/STUDENT: (Laughing) Oh we don't mean the real Christmas. We know the real Christmas is found in each of our hearts when we accept Jesus as our Savior. We mean the symbols of Christmas. Our Sunday School teacher gave us a list of scavenger items to find.

TEAM TWO/STUDENT: So far we found an ornament, a red bow, a pine bough from a Christmas tree, a Christmas cookie, a wrapped gift....

TEAM ONE/STUDENT: You found a wrapped gift? Oh-oh, we're behind by one item. It's important that we borrow your bells for a little while.

SILVER: No way! We can't trust you. You're just a bunch of teenagers. Why, you might steal our bells and run away. (Thoughtfully...) It's a terrible thing to do...stealing.

TEAM TWO/STUDENT: And it's not in the Christmas spirit either. Don't worry, we'll find bells somewhere else. By the way, by any chance to you have an empty thermos bottle?

SILVER: Why yes, we happen to have one you can have. (Hand thermos to students.)

TEAM ONE/STUDENT: We need a small blanket. Got one of those?

SILVER: (Hand student the blanket.)

TEAM TWO/STUDENT: Wow! You guys are great. I need a pillow. Do you have one we could carry?

SILVER: (Hand student the pillow.)

TEAM ONE/STUDENT: I hate to ask, and I know you won't have this...do you have a sheep?



SILVER: (Hand over sheep.)

TEAM TWO/STUDENT: Any halos in that bucket?

SILVER: (Hand student the tinsel halo.)

TEAM ONE/STUDENT: Well, we're still looking for a wrapped gift. Got one of those in there?

SILVER: (Hand student a wrapped gift.)

TEAM TWO/STUDENT: One of the best symbols of Christmas is a star. Each teams needs one of those.

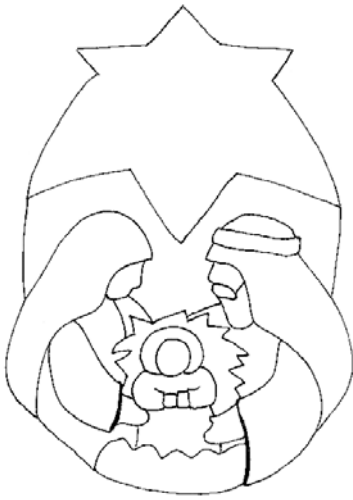
SILVER: (Hand stars to students.) That's it. You have every single thing we collected tonight. There is nothing left to give.

(Praying) I give up Lord. I can see You want us Bells to understand the real meaning of Christmas. It isn't in getting what we can by any means we can. It's about Jesus. It's about that Baby born in Bethlehem. I surrender my life to You. Help me live my days making up for stealing from good people. Amen.

**BOTH TEAMS LEAVE FROM OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE STAGE,  
WAVING AND WISHING THE BELLS MERRY CHRISTMAS.**



## The Bells and The Cop



One adult portrays Captain Ryan, a police officer. Dress in uniform if possible. If not possible, this police officer can be considered "undercover".

Officer Ryan strides down the aisle whistling or humming a Christmas Carol. Cheerfully tipping his hat to folks here and there in the audience, he calls out a "Merry Christmas", "Have a great holiday" and other greetings at random.

TACO: Oh, oh! Quick, hide the bucket. Put the bells on the ground. Act innocent.

SILVER: What's going on? Should we run?

LIBERTY: Calm down. We haven't done anything wrong. Just act friendly.

CAPTAIN RYAN: Well, well, well. What have we here? If it isn't the Bell family, as I live and breathe. Now, why did I know I would find you here on this fine Christmas Eve? Lots of people, church kids, and maybe a bunch of soft touches.

LIBERTY: Good evening, Cappy! Nothing to see here. We're just enjoying the holiday like everybody else. You know, "jingle, jingle" and all that.

CAPPY: They didn't make me Captain Ryan for no reason. You rascals always show up during Christmas with your bells and your bucket. Still collecting money for the poor people of Africa?

TACO: Now that you mention it, we are involved in that good endeavor. Have you any money to add to the excellent cause? Just think of those poor, poor people in Africa?





SILVER: That's right Cappy. You can be the very first to donate to a cause greater than yourself. It's big you know...Africa. Lots of people. Lots of....you know...poor-ness.

CAPPY: Fine, fine, fine. Show me your permit to solicit funds on the streets of this fine city.

LIBERTY: (Ahem) Permit? We didn't know we needed a permit.

CAPPY: Well, isn't that interesting. No permit. Maybe you better come with me.

TACO: Oh not that! Anything but that! Don't make me go! I wouldn't be good in jail. I don't look good in stripes. I need air. I need air!

CAPPY: Calm down. I'm not arresting you. I'm going to collect that permit money. Either pay the \$25 or spend the night in the cooler.

SILVER: Oh, the cooler. Well, as long as it's not jail I'm okay with it.

LIBERTY: Be quiet, Silver. He IS talking about jail. The cooler is jail...you dimwit. Let me do the talking. (To Cappy) I'm afraid we don't have \$25. We'll just move along and get out of your way. Our bad! Our mistake! So sorry. Goodnight Captain Ryan. You're a good man. The city can be proud that you are on the beat keeping everyone safe.

CAPPY: Wait one moment. I didn't say you could leave. I must uphold the law and you must pay the price. We can do this hard or easy. Just pay the \$25 and we can all be on our way.

TACO: (Looking in empty bucket) We didn't collect one dollar, Cappy. Not one dollar. Not one dime.

SILVER: Not one penny. We don't have any money to pay for the permit.

CAPPY: Follow me. I have a nice warm jail cell for each of you.

LIBERTY, SILVER, TACO: (In Unison) Oh No!



## Adults The Price



A small group of adults (all ages) wearing coats and hats, heading for the church program approach the stage. They listen with interest to the conversation between The Bells and Captain Ryan.

**Divide speaking parts between available participants.**

ADULT #1: Good evening Captain Ryan. Is everything okay here?

CAPPY: I have these rascals under control. They cannot pay \$25 for the required street vending permit. I'm getting ready to cart them off to jail.

TACO: Oh, not jail! Anything but jail. I wouldn't be good in jail. I need my freedom. I need fresh air.

ADULT #2: Cappy, We know these bell ringers. They come to our corner every Christmas Eve. You might say they are our friends.

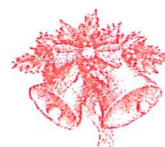
CAPPY: Your friends? These are the sad sacks that steal your money every year. Surely you don't believe their "We're giving to the poor people in Africa" scam!

ADULT #3: Never believed it. Never will.

LIBERTY, SILVER, TACO: (Amazed...In Unison) What?

ADULT #4: Nope, we heard their cousins, Tinker Bell and Golden Bell started that sad story years ago. Those silly girls put a sign on their bedroom that said, "Africa". We always thought it was kind of a hoot.

LIBERTY: You knew?



ADULT #5: Of course we knew. We all thought it was kind of funny but we wanted your family to have a good Christmas so we kept a smile on our face and put money in the pot. Didn't hurt us a bit to give you a little of our extra cash. It's what Jesus would have done.

ADULT #6: And there's something to be said for good bell ringing. You don't hear much of it anymore. We appreciate your musical talent.

SILVER: All these years. You knew. You didn't turn us in.

ADULT #7: God knows I've been given lots of chances in this life to change for the better. Our church folks have been praying for the Christmas Bell family for a long time.

CAPPY: That doesn't change the fact that I have to haul these yahoos off to the hoosegow. Now where are my handcuffs?

TACO: Handcuffs! Oh no, anything but handcuffs! I wouldn't look good in handcuffs.

ADULT #8: Taco is right. Handcuffs are very unbecoming on Christmas Eve. Give us a moment to have a committee meeting.

**The adults gather around each other in a circle.  
Much whispering and gesturing takes place.**

CAPPY: Hey, I don't have all night. Some of us want to have Christmas with our families.

ADULT #9: We came up with a plan. Cough it up everybody.

**Everyone takes money out of their pocket  
handing it to ADULT #9  
who counts it aloud to a total of \$25.00.**

There! That ought to cover the street vending permit, Cappy. Count it again if you need to. Our friends, The Christmas Bells, need to come into the church to see the Nativity scene our kids create. It's something to behold and they need to get warm.



**The group surrounds The Bells.  
Speak as everyone walks back the center aisle.**

ADULT #10: Have you ever seen angels fly? Why, our angels fly so good you'll think they are real. This Christmas program is a doozy. You don't want to miss this show. It's almost time for it to start.

ADULT #11: ...and there's a party. It's the "Ring Those Bells" Party this year. Hey, that kind of matches what you do! You'll love this party!

LIBERTY: (In wonder...) You all knew we were stealing your money and you never made us stop.

SILVER: You paid the price so we could go free.

TACO: Thank you! I wouldn't do well in jail. You saved my life.

ADULT #12: Come with us! We'll tell you an amazing story. It's about Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. He was God's only Son and grew up to pay the price for our sin so we could go free. He saved our lives. You're gonna love it.

**Cappy stands alone on the stage  
to complete the program.**

CAPPY: (Scratching head...) I've never seen anything like this Christmas Eve. Who forgives people who steal from them year after year? Not only do they forgive them but they pay their bill.

Christians are certainly strange folk. The Christmas Bell Family doesn't know how lucky they are to meet up with this church gang.

Well, it's dinner time for this street cop. I have a little time. Maybe I'll just mosey on into that church and watch those angels fly. I can't remember the last time I heard the old story of Baby Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem. Maybe it's time for me to get to know Him all over again.

**Cappy leaves the stage and exits along the center aisle.**



*Audience Sings "Angels We Have Heard On High"  
"Joy To The World"*

## Conclusion

If desired, conclude the entire event with a candle lighting ceremony. Every audience member lights a candle as the light is passed through the group. Sing familiar Christmas Carols while holding candles.

*Audience Sings "We Wish You A Merry Christmas"  
while the Bell Family plays their bells on stage.*

*Close In Prayer.*

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## Ring Those Bells Christmas 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 and prepare a Christmas Birthday cake. 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.

Carry the bell theme into the party. Old and new bells of all sizes make interesting visuals. Place nativity figurines near the bells on each table. Since each table has a slightly different appearance, be sure to encourage guests to walk from table to table admiring the decor.

## *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.

## *AFTER THE PARTY*

Don't forget the RING THOSE BELLS 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!*

