



A SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!

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# CHAIN REACTION

"THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS. . ."

# CHAIN REACTION



# A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



# CHAIN REACTION

This year make Christmas meaningful!

What better way to show  
the true meaning of a baby boy  
born in ancient Bethlehem  
than to learn how His Names  
tell the story of His life!

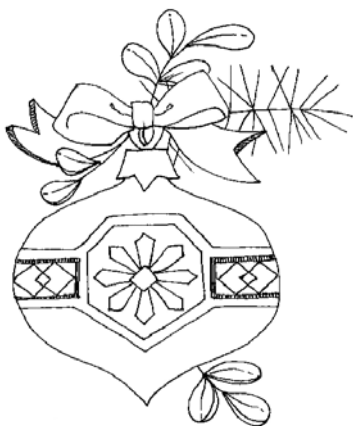
Build an impressive silver chain  
before the eyes of your audience  
and watch their eyes open  
as they begin to understand  
how much God really loved His people.

*“For unto you is born this day,  
in the City of David,  
a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”*

*Luke 2:11*



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# CHAIN REACTION

## A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

**CHAIN REACTION** is an inter-generational All Church Christmas program. Feature everyone, Nursery through Adults. Need a reminder of what Christmas really means? This is the Christmas program for you! **Quick to prepare and...NO MEMORIZATION!**

**CHAIN REACTION** is rehearsed in small groups with their Sunday School teacher/leader. Gather the group for a final rehearsal and the program is ready to perform. **Easy!**

**CHAIN REACTION** presents the Bethlehem story through the meaning of Jesus' Names. Construct a huge silver chain with links featuring those names. Add special music from local talent. The audience joins the fun and sings Christmas Carols. **Celebrate Together!**

**CHAIN REACTION** concludes with an all church *Birthday Party for Jesus*. Decorate, serve delicious desserts or party sandwiches and play Christmas music. **Make a Memory!**

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## DEAR CHRISTMAS DIRECTOR....

*Don't panic! There is just about a 100% survival rate for Christmas Directors. You will survive and you will feel great satisfaction as you meet the challenge of producing an exciting holiday program for your church.*

Christmas is extremely important in the life of the church. Children are wide eyed. Even "Bah-Humbug" folks get a glimmer in their eyes as Christmas approaches.



**Prepare Your Heart.** For some folks, holiday programs presented by your church comprise most, if not all, of their Christmas celebration. Prepare a program that reverently presents Christ's story in such a way as to capture the imagination of all those present.

**Follow Directions.** Ask team leaders to organize their group complete with props and costumes. Be prepared to help but for the most part leaders should handle their group's material. The story of Bethlehem comes alive and changes lives when it is told.

**Delegate.** Sunday School teachers and group leaders become involved by preparing their people for the program. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Never apologize when asking people to help.

**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” and “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. List details you will handle personally.

If it is necessary to adapt CHAIN REACTION to accommodate your local church, avoid staff confusion by completing changes during preliminary planning.

**PREPARE!** Hopefully you have ordered CHAIN REACTION with more than a month lead time. Copy materials and turn the responsibility for small group practice over to each small group leader.

**No Memorization!** Some groups enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. If you desire memorization, lead time must be longer and more rehearsal is necessary.

**MUSIC.** Traditional Christmas carols are suggested for audience participation. If desired, change or eliminate the songs. Discuss music options with music staff. Add several special musical pieces wherever desired by local talent.



**SET UP.** The church sanctuary will be decorated for the Christmas season. Leave all the beautiful holiday lighting and decor in place. No other set decoration is needed.

*Seat classes and teachers together. Reserve seating for participants. Assign adult/teen assistants to handle younger children during the program.*

**USE A MICROPHONE!** Be sure everyone can be heard clearly. It may make the difference between a frustrating experience for the audience and a successful program. Do not neglect this detail.

This is an ALL CHURCH Production!

Involve adults as readers,  
musicians and leaders.

Adapt the program to use  
available number of participants.

**Notes:**







# PUBLICITY!

Publicize CHAIN REACTION through all normal communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

## CHURCH BULLETIN

Begin informing the congregation of this special Christmas celebration at the beginning of December.

## CHURCH NEWSLETTER

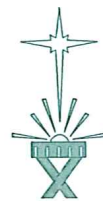
Print an announcement in the church newsletter. If you plan a special *Birthday Party For Jesus*, let people know there will be a Christmas party following the formal program.

## LOCAL MEDIA

Include announcements for CHAIN REACTION along with other church holiday programming. Talk to a local reporter/photographer to see if a feature article is possible. Advertise on your television cable channel. Radio stations often have free community service spots which may be one more avenue of great publicity. Check it out! Don't forget your local church website!

## INVITATIONS

Send family invitations home with students one-two weeks before the program. This is especially effective for families who send their children to your Sunday School but are not involved themselves.



# TO ALL TEACHERS



## Involve As Many People As Possible

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

## Highlight Individual Parts

Do you desire to have people 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 (*if required*) and store them in the classroom.



## Show Up With A Smile

Meet your small group the day of the program. Dress in appropriate costumes, line up and enter the sanctuary as directed. Sit with your group in a designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your speaking part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly. Stage fright is not uncommon!

## After The Program

Stay for the *Birthday Party For Jesus*. Collect props and materials. 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 story of Jesus' birth is classic and life changing. The spiritual experience is amazing!

# Your Leadership Is Valued!





## Adapting 'Chain Reaction'

Adapt this Christmas program to fit your church needs. 'Chain Reaction' lasts between forty five minutes to one hour, depending upon carols and special music. *Birthday Party For Jesus* is not included in the time frame.

### Small Church

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

For a combined age group/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 by creating drama in addition to what is offered in the existing program.

## Birthday Party For Jesus

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or group of friends to complete party plans. They decorate, plan and prepare food and then arrange for clean up.





# CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Coordinate music with music director, organist/pianist. Choose local favorite Christmas Carols the entire audience sings or follow our suggestions. Include words in a printed program or display them on a screen. Add special musical numbers throughout the program as desired. Use the talent your church has from small child to oldest adult.

## Carols

Sing traditional Christmas Carols that YOUR audience will enjoy. It is an opportunity to include everyone. It is also fun to choose contemporary Christmas choruses from music you own and enjoy that everyone can sing.

## 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. Sprinkle the special music anywhere in the program.

VOCAL SOLO  
VOCAL GROUP  
CHILD/ADULT CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE  
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR  
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO



# STAGE AND PROPS

'Chain Reaction' is a unique yet simple Christmas presentation using a minimum of props and staging. Each group carries personal props on stage as needed.

## Set Up

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

## Staging

Because the program is based on building the large silver chain, the only items really needed on stages are microphones and lighting to feature the small groups.

## Seating

Reserve group seating for program participants. Assign helpers to sit with young children. No one waits back stage to perform. This is a great feature for small churches who don't want to lose half their audience.

## Sound System

Place two or three microphone stands across the stage. Speakers must be heard clearly. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

## Lighting

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





# COSTUMES

*Chain Reaction* 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.

## Holy Land Pattern Suggestions

### Pillow Cases

Cut a neck hold 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 tied around the head makes a headpiece. Add a large, jeweled pin for wise men head wraps.

### Bathrobes

Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for head wraps 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 make great angel foot wear.

## STUDENT USHERS

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

## NOTES:

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# 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 program time as you plan music options. **Adapt segments depending on the number of participants. Eliminate or double up as desired.**

PRELUDE  
PROCESSION

## Part I: Celebrate The Child!

NURSERY: CHILD  
PRESCHOOL: JESUS  
KINDERGARTEN: SON OF GOD  
VIP GUEST: ISAIAH...IMMANUEL  
VIP GUEST: THE STORY TELLER...THE ANT  
GRADE 1: CHRIST  
GRADE 2: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

## Part II: Do You Worship The Babe?

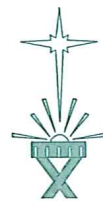
GRADE 3: THE BABY  
GRADE 4: PRINCE OF PEACE  
GRADE 5: GIFT  
GRADE 6: SAVIOR  
GRADE 7-9: THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## Part III: Jesus Is Our Way!

GRADE 10-12: THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE  
WORK MEN: THE KING  
ADULTS: ALPHA AND OMEGA  
ADULTS: THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR  
ADULTS: REDEEMER

CONCLUSION

**IT'S TIME FOR A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS!**



# THE CHAIN

Build a large chain one link at a time made with bendable posterboard links covered in aluminum foil. Each small group adds a chain link to the CHAIN REACTION chain.

Assign two people the task of taping each large link to the previous link. They display the chain during the program.

Use the completed Chain as a table centerpiece at the *Birthday Party For Jesus* following the program.

## HOW TO MAKE CHAIN LINKS

Assign one or two people to make all links so they are uniform in size and appearance. Individual link bases may be made from any pliable material (posterboard, newspaper). Cover each link with aluminum foil and attach one *Name of Jesus* per link. Tape the foil in place to be assured the link holds together.

## Supplies

Posterboard or newspaper to use as foundations for each link, aluminum foil, transparent packing tape, names of Jesus printed on separate pieces of paper, scissors.

## Tape

Clear shipping tape must be used to attach 'names' to individual links and to attach links to each other during the program. Scotch tape is not strong enough and will not hold the weight of the links.



## CHAIN DIRECTIONS

Cut posterboard in half lengthwise.

Tape the halves together.

Cover the entire link with aluminum foil.  
(Front and back.)

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Tape a specific Name of Jesus to the front of one link.

The links are attached together during the program. Tape them securely so they will not fall apart during the program.

Make plain links (*no name*) to place between the name links. This will make the chain longer and allows the names of Jesus to show consistently on the same side.



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CHILD  
JESUS  
SON OF GOD  
IMMANUEL  
CHRIST  
LIGHT OF THE WORLD  
THE BABY  
PRINCE OF PEACE  
THE GIFT  
SAVIOR  
THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
WAY-TRUTH-LIFE  
THE KING  
ALPHA AND OMEGA  
BRIGHT MORNING STAR  
REDEEMER





# PROCESSION

Gather CHAIN REACTION participants in an outer room. The groups enter with leaders. Dim sanctuary lights. Holiday lights stay lit.

## MUSIC

Musicians play softly as students enter and genealogy readers begin their parts. (If a flutist is available to accompany the organ, include it.)

## READERS

As groups enter, two readers begin announcing the genealogy of Jesus from opposite ends of the stage.





# INTRODUCTION

As participants enter, two readers stand at one or two microphones on stage. They read from Matthew 1 announcing the genealogy of Jesus in preparation for His coming.

**READERS:** *Practice reading the names aloud. Highlight your part. If you finish before everyone is in place, stand quietly while they find their seats. If you are still reading when they are seated, continue reading. Take your time!*

READER 1: This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of King David and of Abraham from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter One.

READER 2: Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

READER 1: Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar). Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram.

READER 2: Salmon was the father of Boaz (his mother was Rahab). Later was born to Boaz, Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse;

READER 1: Jesse was the father of David the king, and David was the father of Solomon (his mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

READER 2: Again, as the generations passed, Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob.



READER 1: And to Jacob was born Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

READER 2: Matthew recorded these things to show that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah the Jews had waited for since Old Testament times. Matthew also records many miracles performed by Jesus—healing people, casting out demons, walking on water, multiplying food and calming a storm.

READER 1: The reason Jesus came to earth was to announce a Kingdom that exists beyond earthly governments, a Kingdom whose citizens never die. His amazing life began with an earthly family. His eternal kingdom is Heaven.

READER 2: And we continue to proclaim His Name until that Kingdom comes! New Life in the Name of Christ has been a 'Chain Reaction' that began in Bethlehem and continues to this very day.

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# DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION



Names, names, names...so many names. Our ears perk up when we hear a familiar name on television. Did you hear the latest news about \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_? (Fill in your own current news makers.)

The names we just heard spoken aloud are the names of one family that began with Abraham and continued to Jesus, who is called The **Messiah--The Christ**.

Five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah the Prophet said to the people of Israel, "...*the Lord Himself will give you a sign; behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel--God with us!*" Isaiah 7:14

And...it happened just as Isaiah said. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "*Joseph...do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.*" Matthew 1:20-21

'Immanuel' and 'Jesus' are two names that have come to us through the centuries to tell us who this special baby was. It is time to think about the names of Jesus and how these names describe Him in such a wonderful way.



Before your very eyes we will build a Christmas chain. Our Chain will become a beautiful reminder of the CHAIN REACTION of Love between God and His people.

God loves us so much that He gave....Wait! Maybe I should let others tell you about the Names of Jesus. Keep your eyes on the Chain!

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# NURSERY CHILD

## PREPARATION

Nursery children are led or carried on stage by a parent. Each child is dressed in a Holy Land costume. Vary costumes so there are shepherds, angels, wise men depending on babies available.

*In a small church there may be one or two children so divide the speaking parts as desired between available children and parents. No one needs to memorize. Give each parent a copy of the segment with their part highlighted.*



**Teacher:** Our Nursery children get to start the whole Christmas program this year with our *Chain Reaction* Link. It is an honor to begin the chain with a name we think about all the time- **CHILD**.

**Parent #1:** Do you know how difficult it is to make Holy Land costumes for children this little? I looked all over our house to find the right outfit. But look, this is the perfect CHILD.



**Parent #2:** You think that's hard? Did you try to find a headpiece that fits a little head? I discovered they don't come in CHILD sizes. My CHILD won't wear it for long so we better talk fast!

**PARENT #3:** I have to admit, as hard as it is to find Christmas Nativity costumes, we do have one thing.

**PARENTS #1 AND #2 (Together):** What!

**PARENT #3:** We have the "oo-ah" factor!

**PARENTS #1 AND #2:** Oo-ah!

**TEACHER:** You have done a great job showing what children in Bethlehem may have looked like the night Jesus was born. We are featuring Names of Jesus in this Christmas program. I discovered the perfect name for our group to share—CHILD! *(Show the link labeled CHILD to the audience and hand it to the Chain Team.)*

**PARENT #4:** I love the word CHILD. It describes each little one perfectly. Large or small, boy or girl, infant or toddler. 'Child' is one name that says it all.

**PARENT #5:** Can you imagine what it must have been like to hear the angel's announcement telling people God's Good News, "Unto us a CHILD is born, unto us a Son is given...."



**PARENT #6:** And that CHILD was born in a stable in Bethlehem. It was dirty and smelled bad. Not a very good beginning. Personally, I prefer a hospital, doctor, nurses and bright lights...oh, and cleanliness. My CHILD must be in a place that is clean.

**PARENT #7:** Oh, I don't know. It was dry, warm and private. Maybe that's all any CHILD needs when they are born.

**TEACHER:** Simple needs met by a loving Heavenly Father. I like that. Every CHILD should feel God's comfortable care when they are born.

Let's show off our Holy Land children while every child is still happy!

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*Everyone leaves the stage  
and walks along the aisles  
displaying the children  
in their tiny costumes.*

*Return to the nursery,  
the audience  
or to a group seating area  
for the remainder of the program.*

## CHAIN LINK

HAND YOUR CHAIN LINK TO THE PERSON  
WHO WILL BUILD THE LARGE CHAIN.





# PRESCHOOL JESUS

## PREPARATION

Dress Preschool children in angel costumes. Place halos on their heads. *Christmas garland taped into a circle looks nice and stays on their heads.*

Practice the finger play. Wrap one large baby doll in a blanket that one girl (dressed as Mary) holds while the angel students gather around and say the finger play. Divide speaking parts as desired between available children.

TEACHER: The angel said, "You shall call His name **Jesus**, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Lots of little Jewish boys were named Jesus in those days but this baby boy was very special. While he was on earth, He was known as Jesus of Nazareth, the city where He grew up. *Jesus* is the name his family used when they wanted to call him. "Jesus, dinner's ready! Jesus, mom wants you in the garden! Jesus, get over here and help me carry this water! Jesus, aren't you out of bed yet?"

Listen to our Christmas angels to tell you about Jesus.



## FINGER PLAY

(Repeat two or three times)

Name Him Jesus, Angels say,

(Cup hands to mouth)

Baby Jesus in the hay.

(Rock baby in arms)

Keep Him safe and love Him dear,

(Hug self)

He loves us

(Hug self)

Throughout the year.

(Make huge arm circle)

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## SONG

Students sing "Jesus Loves Me"

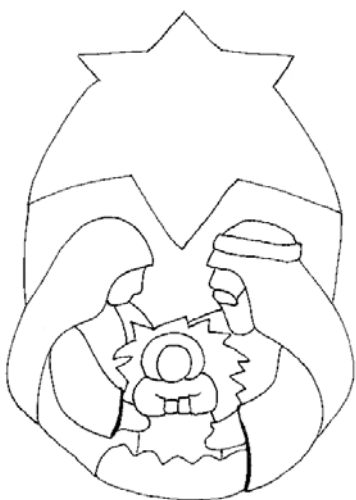
**OPTION:** If your hymnal includes the old hymn "Jesus Is The Sweetest Name I Know", ask the audience to sing it!

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **JESUS** link to the Chain Team.



# KINDERGARTEN SON OF GOD



## PREPARATION

No costumes necessary. Practice John 3:16 with the students. They recite it as a group. Lead them with your voice. Even if they do not remember every word, they will be able to communicate most of it.

**OPTION:** If you have the music to the chorus "For God So Loved The World", teach it to them and let them sing the verse.

*Print the words and reference for John 3:16 on posterboard which the students hold. Print one phrase per card. Students hide the words behind their backs until you give the clues to the audience to guess which verse talks about the **SON OF GOD**.*

**TEACHER:** No peeking! My students are hiding words behind their backs. Try to guess the words. Then you get to help us do our part since we cannot read it ourselves!

**CLUE #1:** There is a wonderful verse in God's Word. People call it "The Gospel in a Nutshell". If we didn't have any other pages of the Bible, we could still believe in the **Son of God** by reading this particular verse.

People who visited the Bethlehem stable 2000 years ago represent the world of people who would not know Jesus if He had not been born that night. God sent His own Son to become our Savior. Jesus is not simply a son of God, he is God's only Son—**THE Son of God**.





**CLUE #2:** No one has ever seen God; God's only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart has made him known. In His love God sent His only Son into the world.

Have I given you enough clues to guess the scripture verse we are going to share? It's one of the very first verses children all over the world memorize and keep in their hearts.

**CLUE #3:** It is the best Christmas verse ever written. Oops, I gave you that third clue for free! Hey kids, show them your verse!

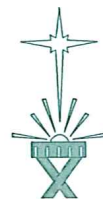
**STUDENTS:** Show cards one at a time

For God  
so loved the world,  
He gave  
His only begotten Son,  
that whosoever  
believes in Him  
should not perish  
but have everlasting life.  
John 3:16

**TEACHER:** We're going to say this verse one more time. Say it with us and try to remember when you first memorized John 3:16.

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **SON OF GOD** link to the Chain Team.



# IMMANUEL



This is a firsthand peek at the reason for the Christmas story, featuring a VIP Guest. An older man is chosen to perform the vignette. If there are not enough people available in a small church situation, it can be eliminated.

**Actor:** *Isaiah, God's Prophet, an older man dressed in Holy Land costume, carrying a rolled scroll (prepare a scroll before the program) walks silently to the front along the center aisle and sits on the edge of the stage. He acts old and tired yet has an important message to tell the group with enthusiasm. The script is taped inside the scroll so it can be read.*

**Isaiah:** Please excuse this old man for sitting to speak. It has been a long journey through the centuries to meet with you. I must rest.

I am Isaiah, God's messenger, foretelling good news for all the people of earth. God speaks to me in a way that most people do not understand. As sure as I am in your presence I tell you my message is true. If it takes 500 years to happen, God is faithful to bring it to pass. Listen carefully to the words God spoke to me. His words change life.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name **Immanuel.**" (Isaiah 7:14)

**Immanuel.** God-With-Us. It is as if God will sent up camp on the earth and will pup tent among His people, the very ones He created and loved with a forever love.



“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

“For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.” (Isaiah 53:2)

I trust the God of all gods and the Lord of all lords, the great the mighty and the awesome God who does not show partiality. He said He would send His son and that is exactly what he did in the smallest of small towns, Bethlehem. He provided a baby, not a full grown king complete with jeweled crown.

The name Immanuel (God with us”) is an affirmation that we are called to be the body of Christ. It’s a reminder that God is always with us, calling us and empowering us to take part in His work in the world.

I invite each of you to seek God with me. No promises of an easy road...just people to walk it with you.

EXIT-WALK SILENTLY BACK THE CENTER AISLE  
WITH SCROLL

**OPTION:** Not included with this material–Michael Card’s song “Immanuel”. This can be found as a video on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) and shown on a large screen. Find the song on CD: “*Joy in the Journey: 10 Years of Greatest Hits by Michael Card*”. It can be sung as a special number or the words can be read aloud by one of the READERS that introduced the program. Omit if necessary.



## IMMANUEL

By: Michael Card

A sign shall be given,  
A virgin will conceive  
A human baby bearing  
undiminished deity.  
The glory of the nations,  
a light for all to see  
That hope for all who will embrace  
His warm reality.

**CHORUS:** Immanuel, Our God is with us  
And if God is with us  
Who could stand against us,  
Our God is with us, Immanuel.

For all those who live in the shadow of death  
A glorious light has dawned  
For all those who stumble in the darkness  
Behold your light has come. CHORUS

So what will be your answer?  
Will you hear the call?  
Of Him who did not spare His son  
But gave Him for us all.  
On earth there is no power  
There is no depth or height  
That could ever separate us  
From the love of God in Christ. CHORUS

## CHAIN LINK

Add IMMANUEL link to the growing Chain!





# The Story Teller

*Choose one VIP GUEST dressed in Holy Land costume to tell this simple story. The person walks slowly down the center aisle.*

I know a man who discovered an ant hill while tending his lawn. He got to thinking that it would be very easy to destroy those ants. But...what if he could warn them to run away? What could he do to tell them they were in danger? He shouted at them, "Run away, ants! I'm going to chop down your home!" The ants didn't run away. In fact, they kept on doing their busy jobs.

He ran into the house and made a little sign. He placed the sign in the dirt at the top of the ant hill. The sign read, "I am about to chop down your ant hill. Please leave your homes immediately and save yourselves. Signed, The Man." Not one ant even tried to read the sign. In fact, a few ants tried to eat it on their way to some delicious cookie crumbs.

The man was quite upset. He sat down on the grass and studied the tiny creatures and thought, "How can I tell these ants how to be saved?" Finally he realized there was only one way to warn them. He would have to become an ant. Then he could shout in ant language, "run!" Then he could write an ant message in the dust of the ant hill...and they would understand and rush to save their little ant families.

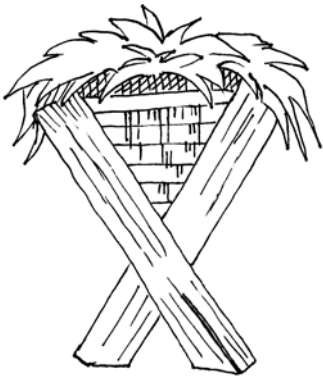
Suddenly it became clear to the man that this is what God did to save humans on earth. He sent Jesus, His only Son, to be "God With Us". Jesus said in human language, "You must be born again." and "I'm going to Heaven to prepare a place for YOU!" That's how important it is that Jesus came to earth to give us God's message in our own language. Jesus was God's perfect messenger, "God With Us".



# GRADE ONE CHRIST

## PREPARATION

Each student wears a wide paper headband with the word CHRIST printed across the front in large letters. Make the headbands as a class project. Allow students to print their own headbands and decorate them with glitter and stickers. Make large posterboard individual letters: C-H-R-I-S-T.



**TEACHER:** It is pure joy to teach a child the story most loved on earth and watch the wonder deepen in his eyes while I explain the **Christ** Child's birth; And while I tell of shepherds and a song, Of gentle, drowsy beasts and fragrant hay on which, during that star lit night in Bethlehem, God's tiny Son and his young mother lay. Life holds no sweeter thing than this—to tell a child, while Christmas candles glow, the story of a Babe whose humble birth became the loveliest of truths we know.

Jesus, who is called **Christ**, came to our earth because He loves us. He wasn't born into a wealthy home. His first bed was a manger of hay that usually fed the stable animals. His family was on a trip to the small town of Bethlehem to sign the government's census and—surprise, surprise, the baby boy was born!



**STUDENTS:** Depending on the number of participants, hand the large letters to individual students or groups of 2 or 3. They describe attributes of Christ matching the letter they hold.

C: CHRIST IS CARING,  
CHRIST IS CHEERFUL,  
CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN!

H: CHRIST IS HOLY,  
CHRIST IS HERE,  
CHRIST IS FROM HEAVEN.

R: CHRIST IS RISEN,  
CHRIST IS REAL,  
CHRIST IS "RIGHT ON"!

I: CHRIST IS INTERESTING,  
CHRIST IS THE GREAT "I AM",  
CHRIST IS IN ME.

S: CHRIST IS SAVIOR,  
CHRIST IS SEEKING US,  
CHRIST IS SO NEAT!

T: CHRIST IS TRUE,  
CHRIST IS MY TEACHER,  
CHRIST IS TERRIFIC!

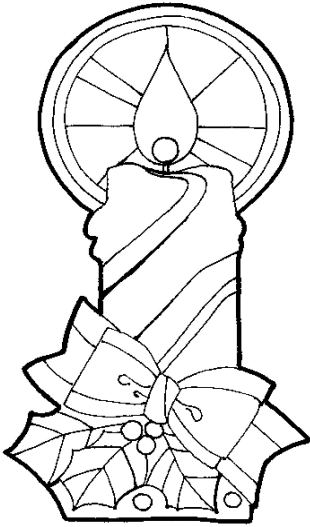
**IN UNISON:** BECAUSE OF CHRIST IT IS CHRISTMAS  
EVERY DAY IN OUR HEARTS!

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **CHRIST** link to the Chain Team.



# GRADE 2 LIGHT OF THE WORLD



## PREPARATION

Students carry candles or small flashlights. Tie a large red bow around each flashlight or candle. Make cardboard circles to put around each candle to catch wax drippings.

*Practice parts during Sunday School in the weeks preceding the program. If real candles are used, it may be helpful to practice holding lit candles carefully away from the paper verses if the verses are going to be read. Be careful! Flashlights pointed upward are much brighter and safer!*

**TEACHER:** Jesus is the one Light that changed the world. Jesus even called Himself the "light of the world". One of the most beautiful symbols of Christmas decoration is light. We put lights in our Christmas trees, lights outside our homes, lights on our dinner tables and lights in every window. Let's face it, we humans love light! We are going to tell you what the Bible says about light.

**STUDENTS:** Give each student one verse to read or recite. Verses may be cut out from a copy of this list and attached to the backs of homemade paper candles. (Enlarge the graphic on this page and color!)





GENESIS 1:3-4 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

JOHN 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; He who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

PSALM 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

PSALM 119:105 Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

ISAIAH 60:1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.



JOHN 12:35 Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you."

JOHN 12:36 While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.

I JOHN 1:7 If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

### CHAIN LINK

One student carries the LIGHT OF THE WORLD link to the Chain Team.

### OPTION

Audience sings "Shine Jesus Shine" (Music not included) or a favorite Christmas Carol.



# GRADE 3

# THE BABY



## PREPARATION

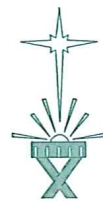
“Borrow” a real baby (1 year or younger) and mother. Place the baby on it’s mother’s lap while the students talk about Jesus, the Baby. Practice the parts during Sunday School in the weeks preceding the program.

**TEACHER:** We have invited a special guest. Our guest is not a very important person—yet! Someday our guest may be a very important person. (He/she) may become the President of the United States, a computer engineer, a librarian, a missionary, a dad/mom, an alligator wrestler, a circus clown, a teacher.....the list could go on but everything begins with being a **BABY!**

**STUDENT #1:** (To the baby....) Just like the angels, shepherds and wise men welcomed Baby Jesus, we welcome you. Come and get to know us. We want to know you.

**STUDENT #2:** (Reading from a Bible) I found something about a baby in Luke 2:11--The angel said, “I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a **BABY** lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!”

**STUDENT #3:** Do you think our baby really wants to get to know us? Maybe we’re a little scary to a baby.



STUDENT #4: Well, he/she is looking at us. I wish he/she could talk so we would know what our baby is thinking.

STUDENT #5: (Reading from a Bible) After the angels left, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger." (From Luke 2:15-16)

STUDENT #6: A baby doesn't stay a baby forever. All of us grow into children and then teenagers and then adults. Someday our baby will be able to walk and talk and do all the things we do. Jesus did too.

STUDENT #7: It would be easy to keep thinking of Jesus as a cute baby and forget all He did for us. Listen to this:

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Do you worship the Babe in the manger  
but reject the Christ of the Cross?

Your redemption comes not from the manger,  
but the Christ who died for your sins.

The Babe in the manger was God's Only Son  
who came to the world to die.

The Babe in the manger could never have done  
the work of His God on high.

The Babe left the manger and went to the Cross  
to pay the wages of sin.

The way of forgiveness is not by the Babe,  
but the Christ Who died for your sin.



TEACHER: You've given us a lot to think about, kids. The world will never be the same because Jesus was born as a baby in Bethlehem. Baby is one name we gladly add to the Chain Reaction Christmas Chain. Let's allow our special baby guest get some rest now. Babies are very special people!

## CHAIN LINK

One student takes the **BABY** link to the Chain Team.

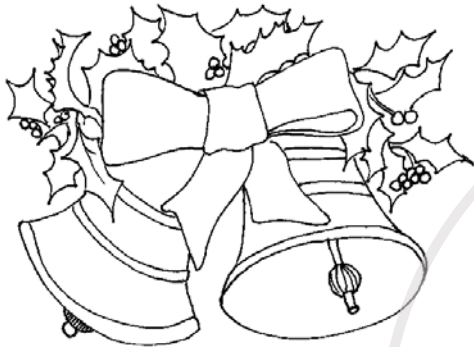
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# GRADE 4

## PRINCE OF PEACE

### PREPARATION



Students read their parts. Divide segments for the number of students available. Make crowns for each student to wear on stage. Get Burger King crowns, spray paint gold, spray glitter each one.

TEACHER: **Prince of Peace** describes Jesus perfectly. He came to bring peace to the world. How peaceful He must have looked sleeping in a manger. Can you imagine Mary trying to keep the animals quiet so Jesus could sleep? "Hush, you old moo cow, my baby needs a nap. We need a little peace here!" This humble family became the family of The **Prince of Peace**. It was a 'God Thing' and **peace** is the real Christmas message.

STUDENT #1: Angels told the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **PEACE** to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14). I am a Christian who is unique in this world. I join millions of Christians who love peacemaking, caring, giving and love. That's the Christmas message!

STUDENT #2: People of the world cannot find **peace**. Many choose greed, envy and hate because they don't know any better. Jesus told his friends, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). That's the Christmas message!



STUDENT #3: Christmas time reminds people to live in peace with each other. Jesus, **The Prince of Peace**, knows we are unhappy unless we experience peace. Paul said, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." (Colossians 3:15) That's the Christmas message!

STUDENT #4: God loves you and wants you to have peace and life. "...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Roman 5:1 –Apostle Paul That's the Christmas message!

STUDENT #5: Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." John 14:27 That's the Christmas message!

STUDENT #6: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7 That's the Christmas message!

STUDENT #7: Jesus **is** The **Prince of Peace**. Isaiah proclaimed, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace...." (Isaiah 52:7) That's the Christmas message!

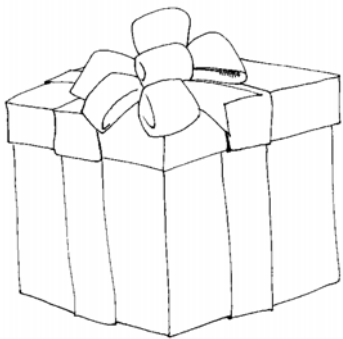
## SONG

**OPTION:** Audience sings: "I Heard the Bells On Christmas Day". from the church hymnal. Or, choose your favorite Christmas Carol.

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **PRINCE OF PEACE** link to the Chain Team.





# GRADE 5

# THE GIFT

## PREPARATION

Practice parts in the weeks preceding the program. Divide speaking parts between available participants.

**OPTION:** Attach student parts to heavy paper with colorful candy canes that face the audience. The candy canes can be made of paper or can be real canes.

**PROP:** Wrap a box with Christmas wrapping and fancy bow.

**Surprise Option:** *Fill the box with candy canes before the program and ask students to distribute them. If you decide to do this, wrap the box with a separate top so it can be easily opened to fill at the last minute and to empty.*

Place the gift on a small table on stage.  
The class gathers around the gift as they speak.

TEACHER: Isn't Christmas exciting? Decorations, parties and gifts hidden everywhere. Let's think of the very first Christmas **Gift**. It was given a long time ago and in a far away land. That first gift wasn't wrapped in beautiful ribbon and paper. It didn't take hours of shopping, wrapping or wondering. It was such a simple gift—a small baby wrapped in plain cloth and lying in a manger.





STUDENT #1: I saw our link in the Christmas Chain and I must admit, I never saw anywhere in the Bible where Jesus is called the **Gift**.

STUDENT #2: Why didn't we get a big, important 'Jesus Name' like The Door, The Vine or even Bread of Life?

STUDENT #3: Yeah, we never get anything good!

TEACHER: We get to present the most important name. Jesus was the greatest **Gift** ever given to all people, no matter what size, color or age. Jesus was the perfect gift of love given to us by God.

STUDENT #4: God's **Gift** is the real reason we give each other Christmas presents. The simple gifts we give each other remind us of the great **Gift** God gave us when He sent Jesus to live and die and rise again for us.

STUDENT #5: I found a poem called **The First Gift of Christmas**.

The first Christmas Gift ever given  
Wasn't bought in a mart or a shop.  
And it wasn't encased in pretty wrapping  
With a bright ribbon bow on the top.

The first gift of Christmas was given  
In a manger lowly and bare,  
And a blanket was the lone wrapping  
of this gift so priceless and fair.  
God gave the first Gift of Christmas,  
A most Holy and Wonderful One,  
When He looked down in mercy and goodness  
And gave us the Gift of His Son! –John Gilbert



STUDENT #6: (Praying....) Dear God, thank you for the wonderful gift of Jesus and the love you sent to us through him. May the gifts we give to others this year be gifts of love and kindness. Amen.

STUDENT #3: Maybe we did get the best 'Jesus Name' after all!

### OPTION

As a surprise, open the gift box and discover it is filled with candy canes—enough for everyone in the audience! Ask students to hand them out as they return to their seats.

### CHAIN LINK

One student carries the GIFT link to the Chain Team.

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# GRADE 6 SAVIOR



## PREPARATION

Students wear angel costumes, telling the angel choir story as a group. Divide speaking parts between available participants. Consider white sheets, sandals, rope belts, tinsel halos.

*Place students all around the audience. They speak from the aisles, in the back, on stage, along the walls. Angels seem to appear out of nowhere.*

TEACHER: There was a choir that night. Wouldn't it have been wonderful to have been on that hillside with the shepherds hearing for the first time about a **Savior**?

STUDENT #1: "And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them....

STUDENT #2: Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people;

STUDENT #3: For today in the City of David there has been born for you a **Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.

STUDENT #4: And this will be a sign for you; You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.



TEACHER: And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying....

ALL STUDENTS: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.'

STUDENT #5: And it came about that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.'

STUDENT #6: And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as He lay in the manger."

STUDENT #7: He came to be our **Savior!**

TEACHER: No Name of Jesus is more dear and precious to the Christian than the name **Savior**. Jesus came into the world when salvation was the deepest desire of the hearts of men.

The years before Jesus was born had been a period of uninterrupted misery. It was the time of harsh rulers who boasted that they could do what they liked and do it to anyone. Men believed that their fate was settled by the stars and that there was no escape from failure and helplessness. Men hated their sins but could not leave them. They knew they were sinners but there was no cure for sin.

STUDENT #8: People were searching for a **Savior**. In fact, any ruler who could bring any kind of peace and safety and security received the title Savior. When Jesus came, He was our true Savior. The message of the angel was that his **name** was to be called "Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)



STUDENT #9: Through Jesus Christ, man is no longer a slave to his own sin. There is a way to victorious living and victory over temptation. Jesus is indeed the Savior for whom men were desperately searching and for whom a world was waiting and whom the world still needs.

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the SAVIOR link to the Chain Team.

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# GRADES 7-9 THE GOOD SHEPHERD



## PREPARATION

Students dress as shepherds in bathrobes, headdresses, rope belts and sandals. Some may carry long wooden staffs.

*Seat and stand students casually on various levels. They look like they are resting on a hillside. Group them in two's and three's. Divide speaking parts between available participants.*

TEACHER: I see you found shepherd costumes. Come here. You sit here and you stand here. Our part of CHAIN REACTION will start soon and I don't want any of you to embarrass me. You know how I get all---- "twitter pated"!

ENTIRE GROUP: Twitter pated?!?

STUDENT #1: I wonder if shepherds in the days of Jesus really dressed this way or if they had other fashion ideas. I can't believe I have to wear this thing for the Christmas program. I wanted to be an angel.

STUDENT #2: Yeah, your halo is slipping!



STUDENT #3: Shows what you know. Shepherds didn't wear halos, they carried staffs and camped on hillsides with their animals—the sheep!

STUDENT #4: Why do we have to do this program? I hate getting up in front of people. I have to imagine the audience is in their pajamas to get through it.

TEACHER: Now, now, calm down. Just read the parts I gave you and you'll all survive. Here we go! The lights are coming up. Smile! There's a pizza party in it if you do this well. *(Slip away to the front pew as students begin their formal parts.)*

STUDENT #5: (To the audience....) Merry Christmas! We are here to tell you that Jesus called Himself the **Good Shepherd**. In John 10:11 He tells us, "I am the Good Shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep."

STUDENT #6: The Bethlehem shepherds were faithful to their sheep. They were in the fields watching over them at night when the angel choir appeared.

STUDENT #7: I heard someplace that shepherds in those days were not the nicest people. They were on the lower end of the people scale. There must have been something special about them since God made them part of the Christmas story.

STUDENT #8: Maybe they were common, everyday folks who got up in the morning, did their job and wanted a happy life. I try to imagine the shepherds entering the stable in Bethlehem. They were probably dirty and sweaty and smelled of animals. Mary looks at one of them and says, "Do you want to hold the baby?" Can you imagine how that shepherd felt? She wanted him to hold her baby! The baby angels announced!



STUDENT #9: Shepherds were definitely faithful to their sheep. Jesus knew the people He spoke to would understand that He was faithful to those who believed in Him to the point of giving His own life, just like a shepherd on a dark and stormy night looking for a wayward lamb.

STUDENT #10: That baby in the manger only lived thirty three years and did give His life on the Cross of Calvary. He wasn't only the **Good Shepherd**, He was the Great Shepherd. He did it for you and for me. It makes every problem we face worthwhile to be one of His sheep. Now that makes a Merry Christmas!

TEACHER: (Standing up quickly....) That's it! That's a wrap! You did great. Hand over our Chain Reaction link. Next stop, Pizza Heaven!

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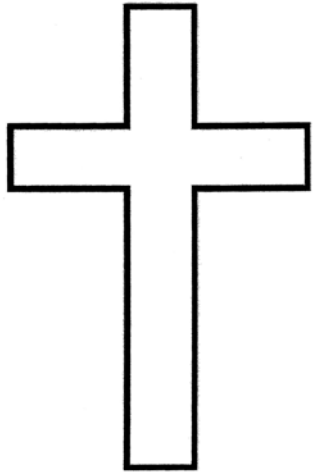
### CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **GOOD SHEPHERD** link to the Chain Team.

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# GRADES 10-12

## THE WAY THE TRUTH THE LIFE

### PREPARATION

Practice parts as needed. No costumes necessary. Seat the students casually on stage in chairs, on stools and on the floor. Every student should have their part inside an open Bible. Divide speaking parts between available participants.

TEACHER: (Speaking to students with back to audience....) I thought it would be a good thing to go over some information about Jesus claiming to be **"The Way, the Truth and the Life"** before we participate in this year's Christmas program. It's best to do these things privately before making any public statements, so....

STUDENT #1: (Tapping teacher on shoulder or knee)....uhhh, Mr.\_\_\_\_\_, maybe you should take a look behind you. There seems to be an audience here.



TEACHER: Oh, oh. I was afraid of that. Well, I guess we'll have to "wing" it. I'm just begging you....think before you speak. Our **name** for Jesus is important. To say that Jesus is **the Way, the Truth and the Life** is the most comprehensive of all claims. We find it in John 14:6. It can be translated, "I am the true and living way". To a Jew every word would be full of promise.

STUDENT #1: Jesus said, "I am the **Way**". Centuries before the Psalmist prayed: "Teach me thy **way**, O Lord" (Psalm 27:11). Moses said men must not turn to the right or to the left but must walk in the **way** which the Lord their God had commanded them. (Deut. 5:32-33)

STUDENT #2: Again and again wise men spoke of the **way** or the path of life. "The wise man's path leads upward to life" (Proverbs 10:17), Philo called philosophy 'The Royal Way', and Confucius called his teaching 'Tao', the way. And by the way, weren't the first Christians called Followers of The **Way**?

TEACHER: The claim of Jesus goes beyond any of these sayings. Jesus did not say "I show you the way" or "I open for you the way", He said, "**I Am the Way**".

STUDENT #3: Jesus also said "I am the **Truth**". It's like a wedding vow, "I will be true to you." I've thought a lot about truth since I got caught cheating on my chemistry test. I discovered it means to be faithful, reliable, trustworthy. By the way, I had to write the definition of **truth** 100 times after the chemistry teacher caught me! Merry Christmas to me.

TEACHER: I have a feeling you will never do that again! We can say with assurance that Jesus is totally reliable. We can completely and without reservation trust Him. He is the One we can trust knowing we shall never be failed or disappointed.



STUDENT #4: But what about “I am the **Life**”? That is quite a claim to make to people who are dying every day.

STUDENT #5: “All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. (John 1:3-4) It’s talking about Jesus! Jesus is the creator of life and Jesus is the re-creator of life. He brought life in the beginning and he came to make life new.

STUDENT #6: Hmm, eternal life. I’ve often thought about what that means. It’s one of the great Bible themes. What is Jesus offering us when He offers eternal life? It must be more than life which exists forever. An extension of life would be more of a curse than a blessing.

TEACHER: Jesus offers life eternal that includes quality as well as quantity. Jesus gives us hope. He knows how tough life can be. His offer came with one requirement—“No one comes to the Father but by me”. Through him people enter into the life of God.

STUDENT #7: I finally found my Christmas part stuck in my Bible. Should I read it?

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Without the way, no journey can be taken. Without the truth, no truth can be known. Without the life, no life can be believed. I am the **Way** which must be followed; I am the **Truth** which must be believed; I am the **Life** for which man must hope.

TEACHER: And with that we conclude our class. Next week you guys teach. My brain hurts.

## CHAIN LINK

One student carries the **WAY, TRUTH, LIFE** link to the Chain Team.





# WORK MEN THE KING

## PREPARATION

Three men dressed in jeans and work shirts gather on stage, walking from different parts of the church.

WORKER #1: Hey guys, am I glad to see you. I promised to show up for the Christmas program and then had to work late. Are we supposed to be the 'Wise Guys'?

WORKER #2: Wise Guys? Oh, you mean the three Wise Men. I guess so. I don't know much about them but I can give it a try.

WORKER #3: (Walking down main aisle...) Hi! Am I late? I got really hungry after work and stopped for a burger. My wife made me do this. Let's get this going.

WORKER #1: Let's see. My paper says here that we add a link to a big chain. It's supposed to say **THE KING**. Anybody got it?

WORKER #2: Here it is. **THE KING**. That makes sense. Three Kings from the east followed a star to find and worship **The King** of the Jews.

WORKER #3: Even when Jesus was born, God presented Him as **King**. It's hard to understand how those foreign kings put the star and the story of the King together and made that long journey.



WORKER #1: Do you think you'd be brave enough to face down King Herod with the story of another king being born in his kingdom? From what I heard, Herod was a really bad dude.

WORKER #2: Evidently everybody was waiting for this King to arrive. Herod grabbed his religious guys and asked where the Messiah was supposed to be born. It was a well known story at the time and Herod wasn't taking any chances. He pointed the Wise Men toward Bethlehem and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

WORKER #1: Do you think they believed him?

WORKER #2: Nah, they were warned in a dream not to report back to Herod. After they found Jesus, Mary and Joseph, they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen and returned to their own country.

WORKER #3: The Kings took super birthday presents to Jesus. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Unless I miss my guess, those gifts were worth a lot of money. I would have added a new car.

WORKER #1: Enough money to keep Mary, Joseph and their little **King** alive for a couple of years in...say....Egypt?

WORKER #2: That would be my guess, friend. Who would think to look for them in Egypt? The family escaped before Herod sent his men to kill all the babies in Bethlehem.

WORKER #3: Now that was a tragedy. God's plan was in motion and the King was born. Nothing would stop God now; not even a wicked King Herod.

WORKER #1: Whew, I'm glad to hear Jesus' story had a good ending.



WORKER #2: Eventually His story had a good ending but the name **KING** took on a sad tone when Jesus was crucified. Pilate said to Jesus, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the Truth. Every one who is of the Truth hears My voice." (John 18:37) The Romans nailed a sign over His head printed in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

WORKER #3: They were making fun of Him, weren't they?

WORKER #1: I'm afraid so. The Jews were looking for a royal king who would free them from Rome, feed them and make them rich. They didn't understand King Jesus had a much better kingdom prepared for them.

WORKER #2: Well, the three kings were on to something when they visited that baby king. I wonder if they ever realized who He really was?

WORKER #3: Don't know. Don't care. I'm hungry again. Hey, anybody up for another burger? I could go with you.

WORKER #1: I heard they have cookies in the church kitchen. We could beat this gang over there in a snap. Come on! (Run off stage and out of the room.)

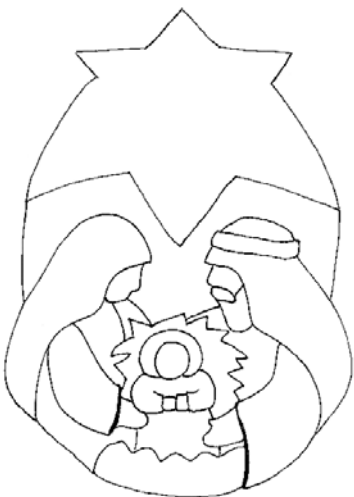
WORKER #2: Wait up! Who do you think you are, King of the Cookies? (Run off stage and out of the room.)

WORKER #3: Yeah, that's right. Nobody worry about me. I'll just stick around here and help build the Chain Reaction Chain.

## CHAIN LINK

Worker #3 carries **The King** link to the Chain Team.





# ADULTS

## ALPHA AND OMEGA

### PREPARATION

Ask several individual adults or a small group of friends to participate in this segment. This segment can be done by two people or more.

TEACHER: Alpha and Omega—"Don't be afraid! I am the Alpha and Omega (the first and the last). I am the Living One! I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever." Revelation 1:17-18

STUDENT #1: Our Chain Reaction name for Jesus seems far from Bethlehem. **Alpha and Omega** are letters from the Greek language. They describe Jesus well. He is the A and the Z. He is the beginning and the end. He is all we will ever need.

STUDENT #2: As we face our busy lives, Christmas is the one time in the year we should consider the place of this Christmas Child in our lives.

STUDENT #3: God became a human. He could have come as a full grown, impressive adult but He chose to be born as other humans begin their lives. Babies add joy to our lives. They are warm. They smile and love us in spite of ourselves.

STUDENT #4: Jesus must have given joy to Mary and Joseph. We know He was a good child—except for that escapade during Passover in Jerusalem when He disappeared into the Temple for a few days.



STUDENT #5: Jesus didn't stay a baby. It may sound strange but I am so glad He willingly followed His calling and became sin for us.

STUDENT #6: Even the end of His life was just the beginning. He is in Heaven right now interceding for us when we sin.

STUDENT #7: Jesus is the **Alpha and Omega** of our lives. Celebrate His birth with us as we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

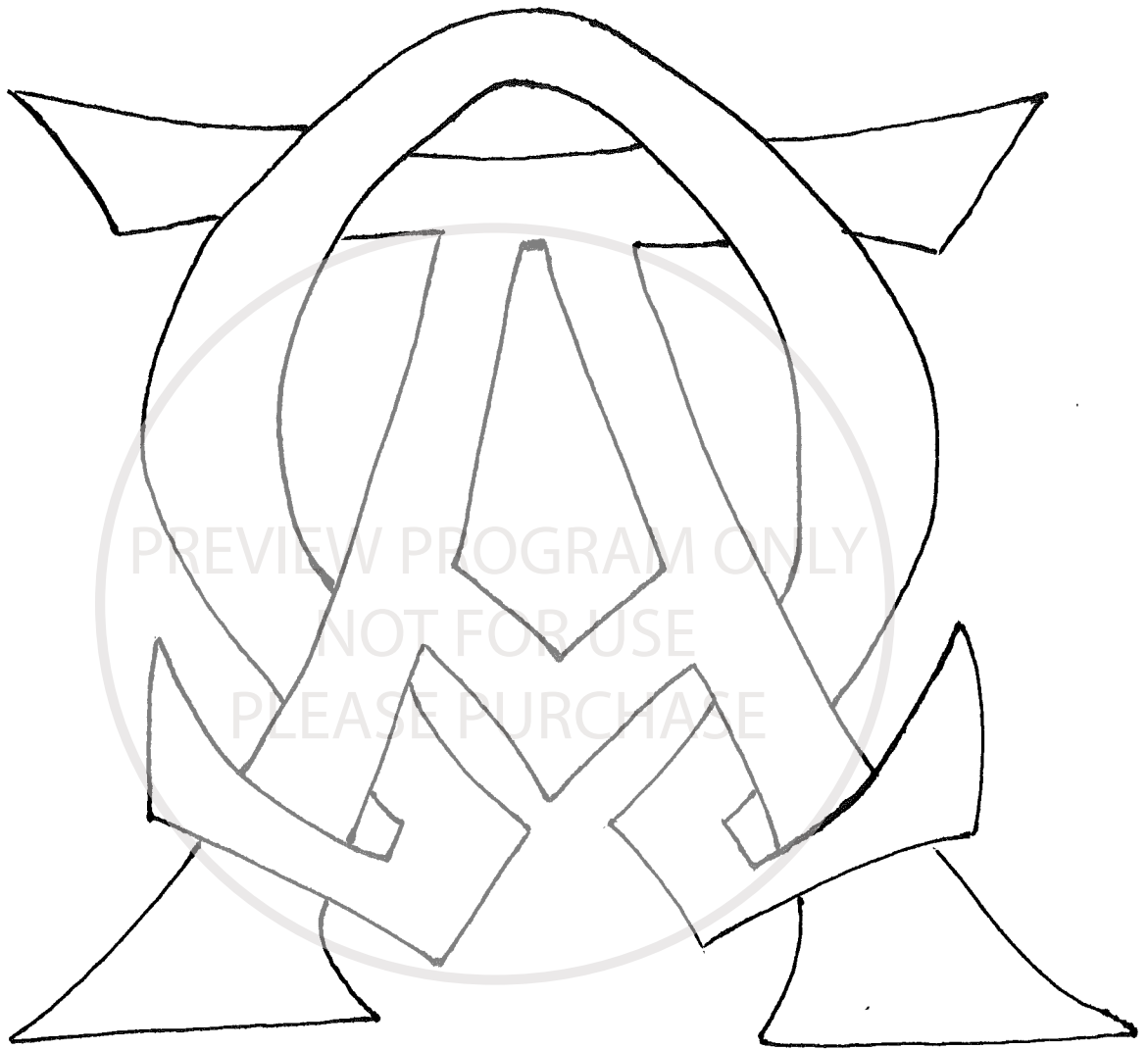
### CHAIN LINK

One person carries the **ALPHA AND OMEGA** link to the Chain Team.

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# ADULTS THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR



## PREPARATION

Ask several adults to participate. No costuming required.

TEACHER: I have always liked "The Bright and Morning Star" as a name for Jesus. In Revelation, Jesus says, "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to announce these things to you in the churches. I am the **Bright Morning Star.**" (Revelation 22:16) It is perhaps the most beautiful name ever given to Him and it is often used in poetry.

For the Jews the Star was a Messianic name. It was based in the prophecy of Balaam: "A star shall come forth out of Jacob". (Numbers 24:17) It was inevitable that the Christians should take over the name and apply it to Jesus.

STUDENT #1: I imagine the use of the name was made easier by the Christmas story of the star which rose in the east and led the Wise Men to the place where He was born.

STUDENT #2: The morning star is the brightest of all stars and this sets Jesus in the forefront of splendor. Other stars pale compared with the morning star just as other teachers and leaders pale in comparison with Jesus Christ. This gives Him His place as the supreme light of the world.



STUDENT #3: To us **Bright Morning Star** seems poetic but in Old Testament times, the star was the title for a prince, for one highest in royalty and power. This name enthrones Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

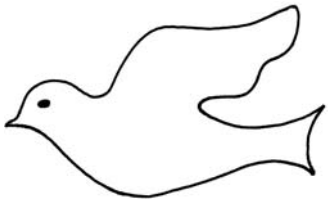
STUDENT #4: It is the function and the glory of the morning star to be the herald of the dawn. When the morning star rises, the full blaze of day is not far behind. So with Jesus there came the light which puts the darkness to flight.

STUDENT #5: A star is not something which any nation can keep to itself. A star is something which any man, woman or child can look up can see and whose light and guidance any person can enjoy. So, the name **Bright Morning Star** sets Jesus forth as the Savior of all mankind.

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One person carries the **BRIGHT MORNING STAR** link to the Chain Team.





# ADULTS REDEEMER

## PREPARATION

Ask two or more people, any age, to participate. No costuming required.

TEACHER: Another name for Jesus is **REDEEMER**, a wonderful Old Testament word to describe him. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth". (Job 19:25)

Did you know that Moses was called a redeemer because as God's prophet he was instrumental in leading the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Naomi called Boaz "one of our redeemers" because his family position gave him the right to restore family property. Naomi also called baby Obed a redeemer because he delivered her from her disgrace.

STUDENT #1: The New Testament writers took up the cry for a Redeemer. Redemption was associated with the idea of ransom.

Jesus paid the ransom to God and truly became our **Redeemer** by rising from the grave and returning to His Father in heaven. His resurrection—the overcoming of death itself—proved the truth of his words and actions.



STUDENT #2: We, who are unable to save ourselves, are saved by Jesus Christ, who perfectly satisfied the demands of the law by giving His own life as a sacrifice. I can hear the familiar melody of the old hymn "I Will Sing of My Redeemer". It was written long ago but then, as now, people knew that Jesus is our **Redeemer**.

STUDENT #3: Those who have believed in Jesus are safe in Him because He has redeemed them and saved them for Heaven. Saving me from sin and promising me a home in Heaven is everything I want from my **Redeemer**. He is my hope forever. I am so glad He was born!

STUDENT #4: Aren't you glad, too? There is no better time to accept Christ as your Savior than now. There is no better place than here. Why not make the most important decision of your life at the time of the year when everyone is celebrating the birth of our Savior-Redeemer? Young or old, rich or poor, the invitation to receive Christ is for you!

One person carries the REDEEMER link to the Chain Team.

### SONG

Congregation sings "I Will Sing of My Redeemer", "Redeemed How I Love to Proclaim It" or any hymn of your choice about our Redeemer.



# CONCLUSION

## CHAIN REACTION DIRECTOR

We have heard many of the names which the Bethlehem Baby has been called. These names are precious to us. There are many other names for Jesus but this Christmas Day we remember Him as:



Child  
Jesus  
Immanuel  
Christ  
The Light of the World  
The Baby  
The Prince of Peace  
Gift  
Savior  
The Good Shepherd  
The Way, The Truth, The Life  
The King  
Alpha and Omega  
The Bright Morning Star  
Redeemer

As the Christmas Chain travels around us, we want a CHAIN REACTION to occur within our church. Because we know Him our reaction must be to follow Him. The CHAIN REACTION will move through our families. The CHAIN REACTION will continue to travel through the generations. In the decades to come we will worship the Babe in the Manger and we will also worship the Christ of the Cross.



## SONG

Sing a Christmas Carol—Your choice!

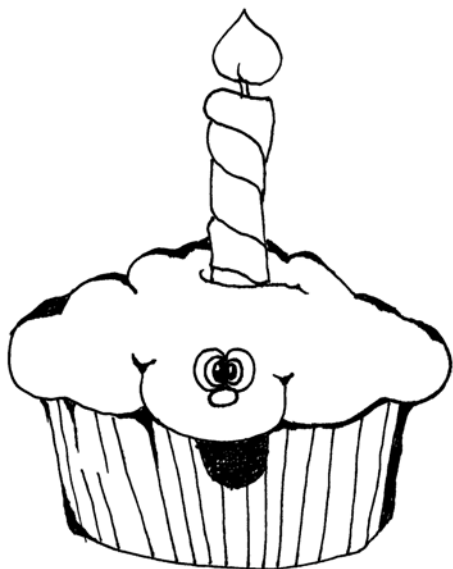
As the Christmas Carol is sung, the Chain Team carries the completed chain slowly through the aisles. Carry it high so everyone can see the names of Jesus and remember His story.

Dismiss the congregation to a cake and coffee celebration of the Birthday of Jesus.

Display the completed chain  
on or near the serving table.

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# BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

Assign party planning to one small group. This could be a few men and women hand picked for this purpose, an adult Sunday School class or women's group. The **Birthday Party for Jesus** is a fellowship time with Birthday cake, coffee, tea and punch.

Provide delicious food, background Christmas music and casual fellowship at the conclusion of **Chain Reaction**.

## 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 with doughnuts, orange juice, coffee and tea.

*Decide who will make or buy the cake. If there is someone who decorates cakes in your church, ask them to create a Christmas cake. If not plan to purchase a large sheet cake at a local bakery. Print "Happy Birthday Jesus" on the cake. Provide angel food cake and fruit for diabetics and dieters.*





**SEATING:** Decide the best arrangement for seating based 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.

**CENTERPIECES:** Cover tables as desired. Christmas centerpieces should be featured on each table. Carry the *Chain Reaction* theme into the party. Make small silver chains for tables and display the large chain built during the program as the serving table centerpiece. Place nativity figurines on each table. Since the tables will have slightly different appearances, encourage guests to walk from table to table admiring the decor.



## PREPARATIONS ON PARTY DAY

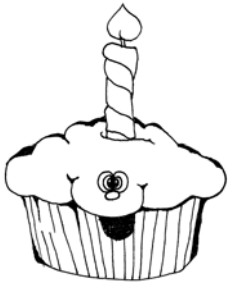
Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on the stove to boil while the program is in progress. Set out desserts, cream and sugar. Make your favorite Christmas punch and place on a nearby serving table.



## DURING THE BIRTHDAY 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 BIRTHDAY PARTY

Don't forget the BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS 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!

