T'S A BOY!

AND....I SN'T HE WONDERFUL?

a Christmas Sunday School Celebration



IT'S A BOY! is an easy to prepare and easy to present Christmas Sunday School celebration. Rehearsals occur in separate Sunday School classes during the weeks preceding the program. Bring the group together for a final dress rehearsal and the celebration is set to go.

IT'S A BOY! is a 45-60 minutes old fashioned Christmas Sunday School presentation featuring a traditional peek into the stable in Bethlehem.

IT'S A BOY! involves Nursery-Adult Sunday School students who present the story of the night of Jesus' birth in Holy Land costume. The audiences sings Christmas Carols.

IT'S A BOY! challenges the congregation to enter into the real celebration of the season by remembering that first night so long ago.

IT'S A BOY! concludes with an all church REASON FOR THE SEASON fellowship time.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Make as many copies as needed for local church use. Give interested folks our order form, mailing address and toll free telephone number (1-888-CEM-LIFE). Your cooperation allows CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES to continue production of exciting, inspiring, positive Christian programs at a low cost to churches across the nation. Copyright-All Rights Reserved protected.

DEAR CHRISTMAS DIRECTOR



It's the time of year when the call goes forth for children across the nation to offer a charming Christmas performance for the church. It is also the busiest season for families and churches. For some of your church members, the holiday programs presented by your local congregation comprise most, if not all, of their Christmas celebration. It is very possible that as you are reading this you are thinking, "Why me? I can't do this. I don't have time. Oooo, I feel so guilty!" Well, put those feelings aside and dive into this charming presentation of the Nativity scene with a minimum of hassle.

DELEGATE. Sunday School teachers must be involved in preparing their classes for the program. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Never apologize when asking people to help.

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH. The Christmas season is always busy but also fun, exciting and meaningful. It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal family preparations, party going and travel. Simple preparations will be appreciated by everyone involved. Statements like "We can't do it", "We never did it this way" and "No one wants to do it", have no place in this program. If the Christmas Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully.

PRAY! Pray for the staff, the students and the set up. Take the details before the Lord and then–RELAX!

PLAN! Read this workbook and note areas requiring special attention. List details you will handle personally.

ADAPT! If it is necessary to adapt IT'S A BOY! to accommodate your local church, avoid staff confusion by making changes during preliminary planning.

PREPARATION TIME. Hopefully you have ordered IT'S A BOY! with more than a month lead time. Copy materials for individual classes and turn the responsibility for small group practice over to the teacher. Some students 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 rehearsal will be necessary.

This is an All Sunday School production. Involve the adult classes. They may choose representatives to participate as singers and readers.

ALL teachers must be willing to cooperate with the general theme and be willing to practice with their students. Meet with the teaching staff to be sure they understand how IT'S A BOY! will be prepared and presented. Each teacher will have a speaking part incorporated into their class presentation.

MUSIC. Traditional Christmas carols and choruses are suggested in the program. If desired, change the songs. To learn the songs, classes must have Sunday School time to practice. If your Sunday School as an opening time, practice the music for 3-4 weeks. Discuss music options with your music team.

SET UP. The church sanctuary will be decorated for the Christmas season. Leave those items in place. If there are decorations (like banks of poinsettias) that need to be moved, assign a team. Simple nativity props are used.

Seat classes and teachers together. Reserve seating for participants before the audience enters the area for the program. Make pew signs or drape the ends of the pews with rope. Assign adult/teen assistants to handle younger children during the program.

USE A MICROPHONE! Be sure students can be heard clearly as they say their part. It may make the difference between a frustrating experience for the audience and a successful program. Do not neglect this detail.

PUBLICITY



Publicize IT'S A BOY! through all normal church communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter,

the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

CHURCH BULLETI N. Begin informing the congregation about this special Christmas Sunday celebration at the beginning of December.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER. Print an announcement in November and December newsletters. If you plan special *REASON FOR THE SEASON* fellowship time food, let people know there will be an enjoyable Christmas fellowship following the program.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER. Include announcements for IT'S A BOY! Along with other holiday programming of the church.

TELEVISION. Consider advertising this special event on your local cable advertising channel. Often spots are available to churches at little or no cost. Check it out! It may be one more avenue of publicity.

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



TEACHERS!



PREPARING FOR IT'S A BOY!



Involve as many students as possible. If there are more students than parts, decide what the extra students will do to participate. Assign them the jobs of holding visuals, carrying props and dressing in costume. It is impossible to provide the correct number of speaking parts for all size churches. Consider dividing some of the speaking parts so more than one student can speak. If there are less students than parts, double up and allow students to say two or three parts. Adapt the program to fit the needs of your church.

Highlight individual parts. Decide if your students will memorize their parts or read them. Scripture verses may be memorized by all students. If students read their parts, back the copies with colorful construction paper, glitter and Christmas stickers. The copies must remain in good shape throughout practice and performance.

Practice with your class. In the weeks preceding the Christmas program, rehearse during Sunday School and discuss costuming. If there is a visual suggested for your class, consider taking class time to make it together.



Communicate with parents of your students. Let them know when the program will be held, invite them to attend and be sure they know what items or costuming (if any) their child is responsible to bring with them the day of the program.

DURING IT'S A BOY!



Meet your class on the day of the program to prepare for the processional. Dress them in costume, line up according to the Director's instruction and enter the sanctuary quietly. Sit with your class in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your own part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they have problems speaking their parts.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Plan to stay for the REASON FOR THE SEASON fellowship time. Collect all visuals and program copies from your students before they attend the party.

IF YOU NEED HELP....

The Christmas Director is available if you need help but you will be responsible to have your students ready to participate. The program will come together at the last moment.

ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE...

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch the lives of children and adults. Take time to enjoy your part of the bigger picture. The story is classic, the experience will be amazing.





IT'S A BOY! AT A GLANCE

PRELUDE:

Piano and organ prelude of familiar Christmas Carols.

PROCESSIONAL:

Classes enter the sanctuary in small costumed groups whispering,
"It's a Boy! It's a Boy!"

Song: "It's A Boy!"

INTRODUCTION: READ ME A STORY

Dad and Child

Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus

NURSERY: PAJAMA GAME

Students dress in pajamas and slippers.

Song: "Jesus Loves Me"

PRESCHOOL: THE STARS

Students hold large stars

Song: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Christmas Star"

KINDERGARTEN: ANIMAL CRACKERS

Students hand out Animal Crackers in sample bags

Song: "Away In A Manger"

MEANWHILE...BACK TO THE STORY

Dad and Child

GRADE ONE: WONDERS GREAT AND SMALL Students dress in Holy Land costume Song: "Silent Night, Holy Night"

GRADE TWO: HURRY, HURRY, HURRY Students dress as angels Song: "Go Tell I t On the Mountain"

GRADE THREE: THE AMAZING NIGHT
Students dress as shepherds
Song: "Joy To the World"

GRADE FOUR: DO YOU HAVE A PLACE, JUST A LITTLE SPACE?

Students dress as Holy Land travelers Song: "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

MEANWHILE...BACK TO THE STORY

Dad and Child

GRADE FIVE: HOLY LAND KIDS
Students dress as Holy Land kids
Song: "I t's A Boy!"

GRADE SIX: PARADE OF THE KINGS Students dress as the wise men Song: "We Three Kings of Orient Are"

GRADES SEVEN-NINE: MY GIFT FOR THE KING Students dress in modern day clothing Attach hearts to walls and pews GRADES TEN-TWELVE: HEAVEN'S DAWN
Students dress in modern day clothing

COMBINED ADULT CLASSES: 'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME Adults dress in modern day clothing

MEANWHILE...BACK TO THE STORY

Dad and Child

CONCLUSION: RECESSIONAL

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

NOT FOR USE

PLEASE PURCHASE

STAGE AND PROPS

IT'S A BOY! is a traditional presentation of the night of Jesus' birth. Fashion the stage area as simply as possible in ancient Holy Land style. The real focus should be on the people and their costumes. Retain all existing Christmas decorations in the sanctuary and add only what is needed for the nativity scene.



Lighting: Turn off overhead lighting and sanctuary lighting. Light Christmas trees, candles and other mood lighting as desired. Place a small spot light on the floor directly in front of the manger. Place another spot light in front of the present day father and child.

Manger: Place a manger front and center stage. This can be made from a wooden crate or cardboard box. Place hay in the manger and cover the hay with white baby blankets. If desired, sprinkle or spray glitter onto the blankets so that the manger glistens in the spot lighting.



Seating: Place a wooden bench just to the rear of the manger. Only Mary will sit while on stage. Arrange a large, comfortable, modern chair at the edge of the stage for the *present day* father and child.

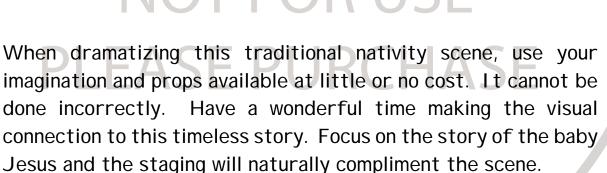
Palm trees: If available, place two large palm tree plants just to the outside rear of Mary and Joseph. These can be made from cardboard tubing with construction paper leaves attached or can be borrowed or rented from floral shops.

> Animals: Some students will represent animals with simple costuming but add a few cardboard animals for effect. These can be drawn on cardboard, painted and cut with box cutters.

Sound System: Use your existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place one or more microphones within easy reach of teachers and students. If a traveling microphone is available, place it on the *present day* father who will narrate the nativity scene.

Holy Land Costumes: An important feature of the traditional nativity presentation is the recreation of the clothing worn at the time of Jesus' birth.. When costuming a large group, the best solution is to ask each participant to devise individual outfits. There may be a few main characters who need extra help from the staff. For example, drape Mary in a white or blue and white gown and head covering. Design large capes for the parade of the kings. Make shepherd staffs from plywood or dowel rods.

Make suggestions for the use of bathrobes, sandals, sheets, long t shirts with rope belts, bare feet, simple caftans and head wraps. Some jewelry may be used as appropriate.



A Sunday School Program List Al Boys!

IT'S A BOY! Gay Mix







NOT FOR USE PLEASE PURCHASE

THE PROCESSIONAL

Gather IT'S A BOY participants in an outer room before the program begins. The classes enter together with teachers. Dim sanctuary lights making sure that all holiday lights are burning. Leave a few stage lights on so students and teachers can read their parts.



MUSIC: Ask the organist to play "It's A Boy!" softly as students enter whispering "It's a Boy, It's a Boy, It's a Boy!". Once everyone is in place, have all participants sing the chorus "It's A Boy!" The music is included with this program.

COSTUMED PARTICIPANTS: Enter the sanctuary quietly in small class groups. Do not enter in single file. Proceed slowly, chatting with each other in whispers. Try to communicate the message that everyone is wandering into Bethlehem in cozy, friendly groupings. Use all aisles and all entrance openings. Some may enter from the back. Others enter from the front and sides. Assign some people to walk across the stage. The audience should have the happy problem of not knowing where to look because something is happening in every corner of the room.

As the groups enter the sanctuary, the whispering should get louder and more insistent. The audience should be included as the whispers begin to sound more and more like gossip. Whisper it to each other, whisper it to audience members, whisper it in unison. Continue to whisper until everyone is standing at their assigned seats. The Director should then stand in front of everyone to signal one last, loud, joyful shout: IT'S A BOY! At that moment, the music should end abruptly too.

INTRODUCTION: READ ME A STORY

As the IT'S A BOY! participants enter, one man dressed in modern day casual clothing enters with them. He wanders slowly down the aisle with a newspaper tucked under his arm. As the groups whisper and walk, he greets audience members with hand shakes and "hello's" and make his way to a large, comfortable chair placed at one side of the stage.

After sitting in the chair, the man opens the newspaper and reads silently behind it. He is oblivious to the activity going on around him. He is in another time and place. He does not participate in any way.

As soon as the last shout, "It's a Boy!" is finished and the music ends, the INTRODUCTION begins.

The parts may be read instead of memorized.

Learn enough of the lines to make it seem as if this is a live event.

Ask an adult man to portray DAD and choose an older child or an adult pretending to be a child.

DAD: (Sighs....) What a day. I'm so tired. Christmas could be six months from now for all I care. Why look here....the newspaper says if I buy a computer, one of those new scooters and a video entertainment system for my children, they will love me all year long. Yeah, right. Last year I bought the *Zooming Life--Dive Into the Crater of Death Play Station* AND the \$350 silver plated, talking *Robo Dog* and by Christmas afternoon the kids were on my case because I didn't buy the right batteries. This year I just don't care. Let it come, let it go. I'm going to sleep through Christmas. (Lay paper down and close eyes to nap.)

CHILD: (Wear pajamas and slippers, carry a large Christmas Story book, call from a distance, and run down the aisle....) Daddy? Daddy! Daa-ddd-y! Where are you? I've looked all over and I can't find you. (Tip toe to chair,

poking Dad....) Oh, there you are. Hi dad. Hi dad. HI DAD!!!

DAD: (Waking....) Huh? Wha....? Who's there? Whaddya want? I'm asleep.

CHILD: No you're not. I can see your eyes open. See? You can see me. Mom said you should read me a story.

DAD: Forget it.

CHILD: Come on, Dad. Read me a story. Mom says.

DAD: Forget it. I'm sleeping.

CHILD: (Shouting....) MOM!!!!

DAD: (Sitting up quickly....) Hey, be quiet. You're gonna get me in trouble. Okay, get up here on my lap. I'll read you a story. What story did you bring?

CHILD: I want this one. It's the story of when Jesus was born. See? The pictures are great. There are cows and sheep. I see the baby and angels and even some kings. Read it, dad.

DAD: Honey, I'm not in much of a Christmas mood. I sn't there another book we can read? What happened to that KING KONG MEETS POKEMAN book?

CHILD: (Whining....) Da-aad, come on. I want this one. I want to hear about Christmas. MOM, DAD WON'T READ ME MY BOOK!

DAD: Hey, be quiet. Okay, I'll read the book. *(Opening the book–Place script inside book)* Let's see, page one. Oh, see the picture? It shows a big scroll with writing.....

Mary and Joseph were in love,
Carrying a child from God above.
Joseph had to go on a trip to a far away town.
Mary went with him, uphill and down.
The city was crowded, people everywhere,
So Mary and Joseph went to look for a hotel there.

CHILD: Then what happens, Dad? Look at that picture!

DAD: (Begin loudly and then let voice trail off of silence....) Well, let's see. Yes, that is quite a picture. Well, it looks like the story begins in a little town called Nazareth but ends up over here in a stable in Bethlehem...(Stay in seats throughout program.)

PLEASE PURCHASE

MARY AND JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS

Choose two young people to portray Mary and Joseph dressed in Holy Land costume. There are two choices for casting Baby Jesus—use a wrapped doll or "borrow" a live baby complete with wiggles and cries.

Mary (carrying baby) and Joseph enter from the rear of the sanctuary. They walk slowly down the center aisle as they talk:

JOSEPH: Come on Mary, you must sit down. You just had a baby and you need the rest.

MARY: Joseph, I know what to do with a baby. I cannot believe he was born while we are still in Bethlehem. I just want to be home in Nazareth with my mother and sisters to help me. Put that blanket on him for me. That's it. Now he's warm.

JOSEPH: (As they approach the manger....) Put him in the manger. The cows have already eaten and the straw is fresh. It looks like a baby's bed. He'll be able to sleep through the night.

MARY: (Sitting down beside baby and manger....) Joseph, look at those little children. They are dressed so strangely. They seem to want to look at Jesus. Should we let them come close?

JOSEPH: They look harmless. Yes, let's let them look at our baby. They look like they want to sing a lullaby.

NURSERY: THE PAJAMA GAME

PREPARATION: Dress nursery students (ages birth-age three) in modern day pajamas, bathrobes and slippers. Teacher should wear pajamas, bathrobe and slippers too! After Mary and Joseph acknowledge the class, help them gather around the manger to look at the baby.

TEACHER: I wonder who these people are? Looks to me like they came from afar. Oh children, I know who they are. Hello, Mary and Joseph! Look at baby Jesus. He's so tiny. It wasn't very long ago that you children were that small, and now here you are with permission to stay up late in your pajamas to see the newest baby in the world.

Let's play our PAJAMA GAME for Jesus on this very important night.

PAJAMA FINGER PLAY

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. (Use one arm to make big circle, like clock.)

SONG: Students sing "Jesus Loves Me" to the baby in the manger.

PRESCHOOL: STARS

PREPARATION: No costumes. Practice the scripture verse and song with the students for several weeks. This class will perform 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. Print the words and scripture reference on large stars which the students hold. Print one or two words per star. Follow the instructions for making the large stars or design your own stars. Teacher may wear star pin, earrings, necklace, etc. to feature the theme.

STAR: Draw a large star pattern on newspaper. Transfer the pattern to large pieces of yellow posterboard. (Purchase posterboard sheets inexpensively at K-Mart or Wal Mart.) Cut two holes into each star where students can place their entire arms. Instead of holding the edges of their stars, they will place their arms through them and retain the ability to wave at the audience. After the stars are cut and printed with words, spray or glue gold glitter to

the front of each one.

TEACHER: (To Mary and Joseph....) Mary, Joseph, did you know about the brilliant star that is shining over this place? We saw it and we want you to know we think that God commanded all the heavens celebrate the birth of His Son, Jesus. I have always liked "the bright morning star" as a description of Jesus. It is perhaps the most beautiful name ever given to Him. Did you know it was based in prophecy? "A star shall come forth out of Jacob". (Numbers 24:17) I guess it was inevitable that Christians should remember the words and think of Jesus. My children have brought

twinkling stars to shower your baby with love. Let's listen to their words.

STUDENTS: (Face audience, say scripture verse while wearing printed and glittered stars)

"Jesus said, 'I am the bright morning star." Revelation 22:16b

SONG: Sing with or without piano accompaniment. As the students sing, ask them to wiggle their stars by moving their arms up and down.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE CHRISTMAS STAR

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, CHRISTMAS STAR.

THE SAVIOR'S BORN-CAME FROM AFAR.

BY YOUR GLOWING LIGHT SO STRONG,

WISE MEN MADE THEIR JOURNEY LONG.

'TIL THEY FOUND WHERE CHRIST DID LAY,

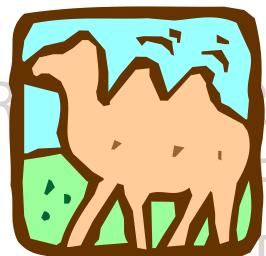
IN A MANGER FILLED WITH HAY.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE BABY BOY,
HEAVEN'S LOVE AND EARTH'S GREAT JOY.
LYING HERE IN YONDER STALL,
DO YOU KNOW HE'S HERE AT ALL?
TWINKLE, TWINKLE CHRISTMAS STAR,
TINY BABY FROM AFAR.

As the students end the song, ask them to smile and wave at the audience through their stars.

KINDERGARTEN: ANIMAL CRACKERS

PREPARATION: Practice student poem and song during the weeks preceding the program. The group may say their part in unison or if the group is small, assign one number and line of the poem to individual students. (Send copies of the poem home for extra practice.) Holy land costumes, wicker baskets, sandwich bags, animal crackers needed. Make individual posters with numbers 1-2-3-4-5 printed on them. Hot glue real



animal crackers on each number. Students hold the numbers as they say their poem. Teacher dresses in costume too!

ANIMAL CRACKERS: Package

clear sandwich bags with 3-4 animal crackers to be given to members of the audience. Students dress in simple Holy Land costume and carry small wicker baskets filled with these small gifts. As part of their presentation, they hand one package to people in the audience. Assign

helpers to accompany the students into the aisles. It is not necessary to provide a package for every person. If you *do* want to have a gift for everyone, prepare a team of older children to hand out packages quickly in the back of the sanctuary.

TEACHER: We think there were donkeys, sheep, horses, goats, cows and maybe even a dog or cat in the stable. Wealthy people had camels and there may have been one or two old humpty back camels standing way in the back of the stable chewing their cud. God created animals to serve mankind and He may have wanted to remind us of humble beginnings. Jesus served people by becoming our salvation after this humble beginning in a stable.

STUDENTS: Say this poem in unison while holding the numbered cards:

ONE IS FOR THE MANGER WHERE BABY JESUS LAY.

TWO IS FOR MARY AND JOSEPH ON THAT CHRISTMAS DAY.

THREE IS FOR THE WISE MEN WHO BROUGHT THREE GIFTS OF LOVE.

FOUR IS FOR THE SHEPHERDS AND ANGEL SONGS ABOVE.

FIVE IS FOR THE ANIMALS WHO STOOD GUARD IN THE SHED

OVER BABY JESUS IN HIS MANGER BED.

SONG: Away In a Manger

TEACHER: Let's help everyone remember the story of the animals and the manger. Hand out the special gifts in your baskets until they are gone.

MEANWHILE... BACK TO THE STORY

DAD: (Reading....)

Beyond the trees and poinsettia,
Beyond the bows and wrapping paper,
Beyond the sounds of carolers and smells of gingerbread,
Beyond the arm loads of gifts
Beyond red suit Santas and tiny angels adorned with aluminum foil halos,
Ever wondered what Christmas was all about?

CHILD: The answer's in the book, Dad:

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

DAD: (Reading....)A couple engaged, but not yet married, traveled to a distant city to pay taxes. Adding to the difficult journey was the woman's condition. She was going to have a baby. She claimed to be a virgin and said the child she carried was the Son of God, not the product of any human relationship.

CHILD: Whatever the people thought, Mary knew the truth. An angel appeared to Joseph one night and told him the child was God's and that Mary was a suitable wife. Together the couple made plans for their new life and for the new baby.

GRADE ONE: WONDERS GREAT AND SMALL



PREPARATION: Students dress in Holy Land costume. Practice student parts during the weeks preceding the program. If there are less students, combine parts, if more, consider asking two or more to say the same sentence in unison. (Send copies of the parts home for extra practice.) Teachers dress in costume too!

GIFT PACKAGES: Wrap small packages and large packages to represent the small and great wonders. After each child says their part, have them leave their package in front of the manger.

TEACHER: Wow! Hey kids, we're really here. Can you believe it? We are in Bethlehem and it is the night of Jesus' birth. How do you do, Mary and Joseph. ...and here is the special arrival himself. He certainly is a good baby. He's so small, just look at those little feet. It is a wonder to behold the Son of God. I've heard that there are wonders great and small.

STUDENT #1: The small wonder of Jesus is that He came into the world as a baby.

STUDENT #2: The great wonder of Jesus is that He stayed in the world to become our Savior.

STUDENT #3: The small wonder of Jesus is that He grew up in a home just

like mine.

STUDENT #4: The great wonder of Jesus is that He left heaven to live in an earthly home just like mine.

STUDENT #5: The small wonder of Jesus is that He became a teacher of God's Word.

STUDENT #6: The great wonder of Jesus is that He changed people's lives forever.

STUDENT #7: The small wonder of Jesus is that He was willing to die for my sin.

STUDENT #8: The great wonder of Jesus is that He rose from the grave and is alive today!

SONG: Silent Night, Holy Night, verse 1

Ask congregation to sing first verse with the students after they have sung it once.

MEANWHILEBACK TO THE STORY

DAD: Without warning, the night sky over Bethlehem came alive. An angel split the night sky, hovering over a pasture filled with shepherds. Fear gripped their hearts, but the heavenly visitor immediately spoke peace.

CHILD: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

DAD: Before they had time to regain their composure, similar creatures literally filled the sky. Angelic praise shattered the typical evening quiet. The shepherds probably didn't think twice. Who would have under the circumstances? Abandoning their flocks, they headed into Bethlehem. They didn't stop until they found the child about whom the angels sang. Then, there in the stable, they worshiped the newborn King.

GRADE TWO: HURRY, HURRY, HURRY



shepherds on the hillside.

PREPARATION: Dress students as angels. White caftans or simple white shirts and dresses work well. Make Christmas garland halos. These simplified halos may rest gently on top of the students' heads. Wings are not necessary but make simple posterboard wings if desired. Teacher dresses as an angel too!

TEACHER: Like any proud father, the infant's Father-God Himself-hurried to announce His Son's birth. Yet unlike any other father, He proclaimed the good news as only God could. He sent hosts of heavenly angels to tell simple

STUDENTS: After the student angels say their parts, ask them to stand on the stage behind Mary, Joseph and the baby for the rest of the program.

CHRI STMAS PRAYER

Robert Louis Stevenson

Oh, God...

Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,

that we may share in the songs of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children.

ANGEL #1: Don't be afraid! You must hurry, hurry, hurry to Bethlehem.

ANGEL #2: We are angels sent from the Father above. Hurry, hurry, hurry!

ANGEL #3: Shepherds, shepherds, wake up, don't be scared! Hurry, hurry, hurry!

ANGEL #4: Do not be afraid, there is good news to be heard! Hurry, hurry, hurry!

ANGEL #5: In Bethlehem, the Savior was born today! Hurry, hurry hurry!

ANGEL #6: You'll find him wrapped in a manger filled with hay! Hurry, hurry, hurry!

ALL ANGELS: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth!

SONG: "Go Tell I t On the Mountain"

GRADE THREE: THE AMAZING NIGHT

 $\label{eq:press} \textbf{PREPARATION:} \ \textit{Dress students in shepherd costumes.} \ \textit{Bathrobes and head}$

coverings work well. Some shepherds may carry staffs and others may carry stuffed lambs (if available). Teacher dresses as a shepherd too!

TEACHER: This is an amazing night! We've just seen angels, real angels, sent from God the Father to announce the birth of Jesus, His Son. Shepherds are common folk. We aren't well thought of around Bethlehem. Sometimes we have been known to be dishonest. A few of our

number have taken things that do not belong to them. All in all, shepherds are people who have imperfections just like anyone else. But God chose us to hear about the birth of Jesus first.

SHEPHERD #1: Come see the baby in swaddling cloth so fine,

SHEPHERD #2: Graceful and sweet, the prince of peace is thine.

SHEPHERD #3: In God's great plan you play your part.

SHEPHERD #4: Now lets all sing with a joyful heart!

SHEPHERD #5: The song we sing is from heaven above,

SHEPHERD #6: Sent down from the Father, Sent down with love.

SHEPHERD #7: Before we leave thanking God for His gift,

SHEPHERD #8: We will sing for the baby and give him a lift!

SONG: "Joy To the World", verse 1

Ask congregation to sing verse 1 with the shepherds

Shepherds stand and kneel around the manger for the remainder of the program...

MEANWHILEBACK TO THE STORY

DAD: We haven't read about one person in this story yet, the Innkeeper.

CHILD: Yeah, I guess he's the bad guy. He could have given Mary and Joseph a room but he didn't. Now the baby is born and he's lying in a manger with smelly animals all around him!

DAD: Now wait a minute, he gave what he had. In fact, the picture in this book shows that the rooms in village inns were filled with travelers who were dirty, rough and scarey. I don't think Joseph would have felt comfortable having young Mary give birth in a dirty, crowded space filled with gawking strangers.

CHILD: I never thought about it that way. The Innkeeper gave his only PRIVATE space and it was the stable. What a nice guy.

DAD: Let's keep reading.....

GRADE FOUR: DO YOU HAVE A PLACE, JUST A LITTLE SPACE?

PREPARATION: Dress students in Holy Land costume. Bathrobes, head



coverings and simple caftans work well. Place a bit of dirt on each face just before the program. The students represent weary travelers who are spending the night in the innkeeper's inn. The teacher dresses in costume too!

TEACHER: We have traveled all day and now we must find rest. Do *you* have a place, just a little space? We have heard that a special child was born tonight into this weary and worn world. May the world treat him better than it

has treated us. At least we may find a place to lay our heads for this night. He has no place to lay his head. He is resting in an animal's manger. If he was truly God's Son as the shepherds said, wouldn't he be in a palace? Wouldn't he be wearing silk and satin and wouldn't each little finger be adorned with tiny golden rings?

TRAVELER #1: He looks like a special baby to me. Maybe He is a king.

TRAVELER #2: I saw the star resting directly above the stable. That doesn't happen every day. Maybe He's a prince.

TRAVELER #3: I heard the shepherds telling everyone in town about singing angels from heaven. The shepherds said this baby is our Messiah.

TRAVELER #4: Our Messiah? You *are* tired! You can't trust a shepherd. The Messiah will come with great ceremony and wealth. He will conquer our enemies and make our lives wonderful. This is just a baby.

TRAVELER #5: Just a baby....well, I'd like to think that He's special. His parents seem so proud of Him and yet content to let us think what we will.

TRAVELER #6: They know something we don't know. Commoner or King.....Man or Messiah....I will have to think about this for a long time.

TRAVELER #7: All day I 've heard hoof beats crossing the desert sand, just the sounds of an eastern caravan. They said they were on their way to see the newborn King. With a star that bright, with a guiding light, I think a very special King is born tonight.

SONG: O Come, All Ye Faithful, verse 1

Ask the congregation to sing with the students.

After the song, scatter the class on stage to stand near the rear of the action.

PLEASE PURCHASE

GRADE FIVE: HOLY LAND KIDS

PREPARATION: Students dress in Holy Land costumes. Practice their



parts during Sunday School in the weeks preceding the presentation. They may read their individual parts. *Tell the students that after their presentation they should* mingle on stage with the other costumed students behind Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus.

TEACHER: Ohh, look. It's a baby. Do you mind if I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) Sometimes I wonder if the shepherds shyly asked Mary and Joseph, "May I hold the Baby?" Did gentle, gracious

Mary offer her baby to them, asking, "Would you like to hold the baby?"

STUDENT #1: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) It's a boy, a beautiful baby boy. Why did God send His Son into this dangerous place in such a helpless way?

STUDENT #2: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) One of God's gifts to us is that rare moment when we become as thoughtful, tender, generous and loving as God meant for us to be all along. It usually happens when we are holding a baby.

STUDENT #3: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) When we see a baby or hear its cry or it's first laugh, we are surprised at our own tenderness. The words just jump out of us because we truly want to hold the baby.

STUDENT #4: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) Ever since the first human baby was born, babies have needed to be held. They know they are wanted and loved when someone hugs them.

STUDENT #5: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) Even the strongest, mightiest of men had to be held. The strongest could not walk. At one time the most well-spoken could not speak. The most brilliant were innocent in their newborn baby world.

STUDENT #6: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) And now here is Mary's infant. Like all other babies, his tenderness needs a parent's hug and Joseph and Mary are so pleased and proud when others want to hold this Holy Child.

STUDENT #7: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) Hear the Good News! God has come among us in the person of Christ! How can our faith in Jesus ever become dull and boring? The Fashioner of stars, the Creator of the universe, the Seeker of my soul came to lowly Bethlehem to be born in a manger and held in a young woman's arms. Christmas is the most amazing story ever told about God, or man, or babies.

STUDENT #8: May I hold the baby? (Hold Baby Jesus) Hear the Good News again. God has come and dwelt among us. Christ lives in today's world in us. He will speak through our lips. He will walk with our feet. He will perform His works of mercy with our hands. Shall we give Christ that chance? Would YOU like to hold the Baby?

SONG: "It's A Boy"

Sheet music with program

Students blend in with the other actors on stage for the remainder of the program.

GRADE SIX: PARADE OF THE KINGS

PREPARATION: Since this class will parade down all aisles of the church,



practice placing students in the back of the sanctuary and allow them to walk slowly in time with the music and kneel across the front facing the manger. students as kings but only the three who carry the gifts wear large capes. The capes should drag behind them on the floor. As they kneel and present their gifts, ask other student kings to spread the three capes across the front of the nativity scene. Practice parts with the student kings. Teacher dresses as a king too!

CAPE I DEAS: Make three capes as grand as time and budget allow. Use simple materials like bed sheets, muslin, sale fabrics in metallic and velvet or other appropriate fabrics. Glue faux fur and feather boas to the edges of each cape. Attach strings to the neck area and tie the cape onto the student. Hot glue, sew or pin silver and gold baubles, chains and gems to the backs of each cape. Make them sparkle!

THREE GIFTS: Make three containers for gold, frankincense and myrrh. Use your imagination and use anything appropriate for the theme.

THE STAR: Make a large cardboard star. Cover it with aluminum foil and hang it from a long dowel rod with yarn, string or jute. Twist tinsel around the dowel rod. The first student down the aisle should solemnly carry the star. Hold the star over the heads of the nativity family as the kings enter the scene.

PARADE ITEMS: Each student should carry something for the parade. Make banners on poles, flags, large jewelry boxes, streamers on sticks to wave or other items to make the parade of the kings special.

TEACHER: (From the back of the sanctuary....) 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.' When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod sent the kings 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'. After they heard the king, they went on their way and the star they saw in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the child they were overjoyed. Prepare for the entrance of the kings! Give honor due these magi for they have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.

MUSIC: Ask the pianist and organist to play "We Three Kings of Orient Are" slowly and majestically as the parade moves through the aisles to the front of the church. End the music when the last of the kings is at the manger.

STUDENT WITH STAR: Solemnly carry the large star down the aisle. Walk onto the stage, stand behind the nativity family and hold the star over them throughout the remainder of the program.

THREE STUDENT KINGS: Wear large capes, process slowly carrying containers for gold, frankincense and myrrh. Hold the gifts straight in front of you and slightly raised so the audience can see each gift. Walk single file in time with the music. Kneel before the manger presenting your gifts. Remain in place while other students spread your capes across the front of the scene. Do not speak. Other student kings will present the speaking parts.

STUDENT KINGS: Wear brightly colored costumes (bathrobes or caftans) with lots of jewelry and sparkle. Wear colorful scarf turbans and sandals. Walk slowly in time with the music. Use middle and side aisles. Stand facing the audience on either side of the three kneeling kings.

STUDENT KING #1: We have seen the child with his mother Mary and we bow and worship him.

STUDENT KING #2: We have opened our treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

STUDENT KING #3: We bring the gift of gold. The earth abounds with gold in Raamah and Sheba. The temple in Jerusalem is filled with the precious ore. It is worth much and will serve the King of the Jews well. We present gold as our tribute to a King.

STUDENT KING #4: We bring the gift of frankincense. It's wonderful aroma rises as sacred incense for the Temple service. It is made from a tree in Arabia. We present frankincense with its odor sweet in tribute for a Priest. This child will be our High Priest.

STUDENT KING #5: We bring the gift of myrrh which is a precious gum from a low thorny tree found only in Arabia. It is one of the ingredients of holy ointment. It is used in medicine and as a perfume and as a burying perfume. This child will sacrifice his life and we honor his life with a gift that reminds us of death.

STUDENT #6: Gold honored Jesus as a king, frankincense honored Jesus as God and myrrh was a sign that Jesus was a man and would die. Honor Him now with the gift of your heart.

SONG: We Three Kings of Orient Are, verse 1

Invite the congregation to sing the first verse

Students remain in place through the remainder of the program..

GRADES SEVEN, EIGHT and NINE:

MY GIFT FOR THE KING



PREPARATION: Students dress in modern day clothing. They do NOT become part of the nativity scene. Practice parts in the weeks preceding the program. Make large hearts from cardboard and sprinkle with glitter. These hearts will be attached (with strong tape) to the end of each pew or other areas of the

sanctuary as determined by the class.

TEACHER: You see before you a representation of the most important event in human history. God came to earth as a baby but He remained on earth to become our Savior through His words, His death and His resurrection.

STUDENT #1: In return for the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, Jesus has given us a gift, just one gift, but it represents life. That gift is Salvation.

STUDENT #2: It is a free gift from God. "For by grace are you saved through faith, it is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9)

STUDENT #3: God loves us so much that.... He sent a baby. "For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

STUDENT #4: All the presents in the world won't matter if you spend eternity in hell. Don't put it off....you don't know what tomorrow may bring. Do you know what you would say if you died and they asked you at heaven's door, "Why should we let you in?"

STUDENT #5: Believe me, the long list of all the good things you did isn't enough. Because nothing of your own merit will get you to heaven...the only way is by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior.

STUDENT #6: So, what is the gift we give Jesus on this remembrance of the night of His birth? It's our heart. It must be given individually since God has no grandchildren. It must be given with faith and trust and joy. Our hearts must be given because the baby in Bethlehem didn't remain a baby.

STUDENT #7:

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

Your redemption comes not through the manger,
but the Christ who died for your sin

but the Christ who died for your sin.

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.

TAPE THE HEARTS TO PEWS AND WALLS AS YOU RETURN TO YOUR SEATS.

PLEASE PURCHASE

GRADES TEN, ELEVEN and TWELVE: HEAVEN'S DAWN

PREPARATION: Students dress in modern day dress and do NOT become a part of the nativity scene. Practice the parts in the weeks preceding the program.



TEACHER: Then came the time when the little gathering had to leave the stable and return to the world. Life goes on, so they say. Let's remember for a moment what those who were nearest to the Christ Child and His family said in response to His birth.

STUDENT #1: When John, the cousin of Jesus, was born, Zacharias surprised the crowd by speaking for the first time since his son was born. And this is what he said; "Blessed be the Lord God of I srael, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us....and you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (From Luke 1)

STUDENT #2: Mary said, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bond slave; For behold from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. (From Luke 1)

STUDENT #3: The words of Joseph are not recorded but we do have the record of his deeds. An angel came to doubtful Joseph in a dream. Joseph considered giving up the life he and Mary planned. The angel explained the situation and Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife. (From Luke 1)

STUDENT #4: Even the angels had something to say. Gabriel said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

STUDENT #5: Five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet I saiah said, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God, let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (I s. 40:3-5)

STUDENTS RETURN TO YOUR SEATS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM.

COMBINED ADULT CLASSES: TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME

PREPARATION: Choose representatives from each of the adult classes. They dress in modern day dress and do not become a part of the nativity scene.

TEACHER: The Christmas story is a promise. Just as He came the first time to Bethlehem, He is coming again. Jesus says, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come,' and let the one who hears say, 'Come,' and let the

one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost....He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen.

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME

SPEAKER #1: 'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house

Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.

Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care

In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

SPEAKER #2: The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

SPEAKER #3: When out of the East there arose such a clatter, I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

SPEAKER #4: When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be The Day!

SPEAKER #5: The light of His face made me cover my head It was Jesus! Returning just like He had said. And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

SPEAKER #6: In the Book of Life which He held in His hand
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said, "I t's not here", my head hung in shame.

SPEAKER #7: The people whose names had been written with love He gathered to take to His Father above.

With those who were ready He rose without a sound While all the rest were left standing around.

SPEAKER #8: I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and this sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

SPEAKER #9: In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life and when comes the last call
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

MEANWHILEBACK TO THE STORY

DAD: (Closing the book....)Well, dear, that's the end of the story. The baby came, the people came and Christmas came.

CHILD: What a great book, Dad. I never knew how much God loved me. He sent me Jesus and He sent me you!

DAD: (Hugging child....) I think I will enjoy Christmas a lot more this year.

DAD AND CHILD GET UP AND WALK BACK THE CENTER AI SLE....

CHILD: I have to tell mom....

DAD: Oh come on, I read you the story. Don't get me in trouble.

CHILD: I have to tell mom....MERRY CHRISTMAS!

CONCLUSION

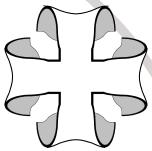


Sing a few Christmas Carols together, take the offering and have the participants leave the sanctuary in small groups. Mary, Joseph and the baby should be the last to leave.

Ask everyone to remove their costumes before the REASON FOR THE SEASON Fellowship time.

REASON FOR THE SEASONFELLOWSHIP TIME

Assign a small group the responsibility of preparing the fellowship time. This could be a few men and women handpicked for this purpose or an individual adult Sunday School class. REASON FOR THE SEASON should offer enjoyable desserts, background music and casual fellowship time.



PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE DAY:



Menu: Plan the menu and prepare a Christmas cake. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Christmas desserts. Buy paper products—plates, cups, tableware, napkins. Purchase beverages—coffee, tea, Christmas punch, cream, sugar.

Seating: Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the group.

Set up tables and chairs

Of

Be informal with folks standing and moving around the room to chat

O

Place chairs in small circles throughout the room for easy seating and talking



Music: Prepare background Christmas music. This can be live music performed by local musicians or taped/CD Christmas music.

Centerpieces: If tables are used, cover with white paper and place Christmas centerpieces on each table. These may be as simple as one poinsettia in a vase or more elaborate decorations designed by the committee. If there is only one serving table, decorate it with beautiful candles, Christmas flowers and ornaments.

PREPARATIONS THE DAY OF THE PROGRAM:

Decorate the serving table and other tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put the water on to boil for tea during the program. Set out the desserts, cream and sugar. Make and place a Christmas punch (your favorite recipe) on a nearby serving table.

DURING THE FELLOWSHIP TIME:

Assign people to cut and serve desserts, pour punch and refill creamers and sugar bowls. Greet everyone cordially as they come through the serving line. Refill coffee, tea and punch as needed.



AFTER THE FELLOWSHIP TIME:

Don't forget! The job is not done until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, taking down tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! YOU DESERVE A GRAND CELEBRATION!

CONSIDER USING SOME OF THE FOLLOWING PATTERNS AS PROGRAM PROPS. THEY MAY BE PLACED ON STAGE, ALONG THE WALLS OR IN THE ENTRANCE HALL. HAVE FUN WITH THE ACCESSORIES!

(Enlarge each pattern by making transparencies on your church copier. Place the transparency on an overhead projector. Trace the outline onto cardboard or poster board and color or paint.)



Outline the basic animal and make the final product simple.



IT'S A BOY!

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

A Sunday School Christmas Program for All Ages