

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB!

"...That's My Story
And I'm Sticking To It!"



MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

"That's my story and I'm sticking to it".



"And she brought forth her first born Son
and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes
and laid him in a manger
because there was no room for them in the inn

...For unto you is born this day in the City of David
a Savior Who is Christ the Lord.

From Luke 2

Behold, the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

The Child was born, God's Child, for us.
Thank God!

The Child grew up, for us.
Thank God!

The Child lived and taught and acted
and healed and helped and cared
and suffered and died for us!
Thank God!

The Child, our Savior, rose again, for us.
Thank God!

God, we thank You that Mary had a little Lamb!
~Dennis Haas



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MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB A Preschool Christmas Program



MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB is an easy-to-prepare Christmas program designed exclusively for children ages 3-5. Include younger students as desired. Feature costumed little ones in an appealing display of the story of Jesus' birth.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB is rehearsed during Sunday School or Preschool Day Care with familiar teachers. Gather all preschool children for a final dress rehearsal and this delightful Christmas program is set to go!

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB is a 20 minute presentation sprinkled with humor and inspiration while telling the story of the night Jesus was born. Is there anything sweeter than preschool children in complete Bethlehem costume? Is there a better way to tell the story of Jesus than their grown ups entering into the fun to help them understand God's plan for His very special Lamb? Children become traditional characters in the Nativity scene and hear the story from a very talkative, friendly Bethlehem shepherd named Rachel.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB involves the audience singing Christmas Carols. Teaching simple songs to the little participants helps the program become a charming Christmas presentation completed by the youngest among us!

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB concludes with a playful LITTLE LAMB Party! Serve snacks, play Christmas music and celebrate Jesus!

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Preschool Christmas Director Gentle Shepherd!



This Christmas presentation is designed for preschool children ages 3-5. If you lead a church preschool, day care center, Christian preschool or home school, this is the fun, easy narrated program for you.

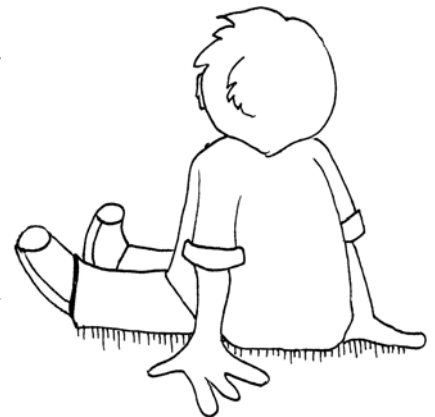
Lead your children into a grand celebration of the Bethlehem story. This is easy when you create well organized leadership teams.

This program is created for preschool children. It is necessary to have enough children to carry out the program. A little 'cheating' on the upper age end is okay. Fill in with Kindergarten students if you need them!

Ask small group leaders or parents to organize their children complete with props or costumes for their participation in the Nativity scene. Be prepared to help the leaders but for the most part they should be able to handle their material. The result will be a precious telling of the Bethlehem story using the youngest among us.

Prepare your heart. Parents, grandparents and guests will be blessed. Mistakes become memories and children will be enthusiastic to participate. Relax and let it happen! If you have a sense of humor, now is the time to bring it out and use it.

Are you are thinking, "*Why me? I cannot do this!*" Put those feelings aside and dive into this charming Christmas drama as seen through the eyes of a talkative Bethlehem shepherd who is an eyewitness to history. She tells the story of Jesus as a true friend with humor and love. Discover how eagerly preschool children hold onto the shepherd and her amazing story of a night she will never forget! Neither will they.



Young students take to the stage in full costume to re-create the Bethlehem Nativity scene. They sing simple songs that you insert as desired. The shepherd helps them speak at appropriate moments.

DELEGATE! Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Never apologize when asking people to help.

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH! This little program for little people is worth extra effort in the midst of personal holiday preparations, party going and travel. Simple planning is appreciated by everyone. Statements like "We can't do it", "We never did it this way", or "No one wants to do it", have no place in this event. If the Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!

PRAY! Pray for the staff, students and set-up. Take all details before the Lord and then-RELAX! God is in control. Carry out tasks at hand.

PLAN! Read the entire program, make a personal copy from the master copy and mark areas requiring special attention.

Adapt material to fit the size of your preschool group. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide parts according to available participants. Combine parts when necessary.

Add preschool songs as desired and don't forget to include special music or Christmas Carols that the audience can sing! We make some musical suggestions and let you make the final decisions.

PREPARE! Hopefully you have ordered **MARYHADALITTLELAMB** with more than one month lead time. Copy materials for individual leaders and assign responsibility for practice to each teacher/leader.

Some groups enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Since this program is based on story telling in the form of a Bethlehem shepherd's personal experience, the actor may read. If you desire memorization, lead time must be longer and more intensive rehearsal is essential.



AT A GLANCE

This is a program sample. Insert favorite Christmas Carols sung by the audience and Special Music performed by guests wherever it is appropriate. Consider the total time as you plan music options.

PRELUDE



THE FLOCK WALK!
FOLLOW
THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD

RACHEL'S
AMAZING NIGHT

CONCLUSION

LITTLE LAMB PARTY!



ADAPTING MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Preview and adapt **MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB** to fit the needs of your preschool. The program is designed to last about 20 minutes depending upon time required for special music. The **LITTLE LAMB** Party is not included in this time frame and is an optional event.

SMALL CHURCH/SCHOOL

If your group is small, remove segments that require more people than available. Combine parts so fewer people are needed. Eliminate what you cannot do. Use children who are younger or older than the target group. Adults are crucial to the small church/school presentation. Ask a variety of teens and adults to participate. Some people may participate several times in various roles.

MEDIUM CHURCH/SCHOOL

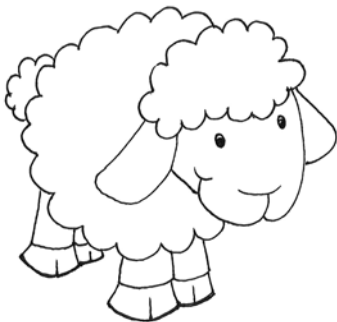
Adaptations take the form of personal preference. Choose presentations you personally like and eliminate the rest. Tell the Christmas story but don't leave out anything important!

LARGE CHURCH/SCHOOL

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

LITTLE LAMB PARTY

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or loving parents to take responsibility for the party. They decorate, plan, prepare food and arrange clean up. The **LITTLE LAMB** Party is a wonderful conclusion for little ones to show off their costumes. It is definitely a fun option. If time does not allow for a party, the program will be complete without it.



CHRISTMAS MUSIC!



Choose familiar Christmas Carols to be sung by the audience. Include the words in a printed program or use a power point presentation. Coordinate music with church or school musicians.

Christmas Carols

Sing traditional Christmas Carols. This music is sung by guests and not by the preschool students. Choose Carols you like the best and place them wherever you prefer in the program.

Preschool Music

We have included lyric suggestions that may work well. These are words only! Choose several short songs. We found a collection of nursery rhyme melodies with Christmas words. There are many more songs than needed but we include them all for your enjoyment and a large selection for many group sizes.

Sorry-no piano music or CD available from our end!

Teach the preschool children the words in the weeks before the program. Place the songs of your choice anywhere you desire in the program. No piano accompaniment is required. You may choose to eliminate preschool songs if time is an issue.

Special Music

Feature local church and community talent. These musical options are NOT in the existing program but may be inserted where desired. Think about time limits during planning stages.

VOCAL SOLO

VOCAL GROUP (DUET-TRIO-QUARTET)

CHILDREN/ADULT CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE

HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL SOLO





Preschool Christmas Songs

If you do not have favorite preschool Christmas songs, consider teaching your little ones new words to familiar melodies. No piano is needed. Let them sing a capella in all their 'little voice' glory. We provide the words but we do not provide piano sheet music or CD accompaniment.

When choosing extra material for the program, consider how much time preschool children can sit still and be quiet. Shorter is better but you know your group best.

THREE WISE MEN

(Tune: Three Blind Mice)

Three wise men, three wise men,
Traveling far, See a bright star.
They found the Savior in Bethlehem,
They fell on their knees and they worshiped Him,
Never before has there ever been
A Baby like Him, A Baby like Him.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE STABLE

(Tune: Take Me Out To The Ball game)

Take me out to the stable, out to where Christ was born.
Show me the manger He used for His bed.
Show me the sweet doves who cooed by His head.
And let's look way up at the heavens, look for the star where He lay.
For it's why-we-have Christmas morning,
It's Jesus' Birthday!

J-E-S-U-S

(Tune: B-I-N-G-O)

The Lord above us gave His Son and Jesus was His name-o.
J-E-S-U-S! J-E-S-U-S! J-E-S-U-S!
And Jesus was His name-o.



THE BABY IN THE MANGER

(Tune: The Wheels On The Bus)

The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo
Moo-moo-moo! Moo-moo-moo.
The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo,
All through the night.

The hay on the ground went crunch-crunch-crunch....(repeat)
All through the night.

The Baby in the manger went waa-waa-waa (repeat)
All through the night.
His mother Mary went ssh-ssh-ssh (repeat)
All through the night.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS

(Tune: Happy Birthday)

On the first Christmas Day
From the Father above,
Came the little Lord Jesus,
To show His great love.
Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
I love you dear Jesus,
Happy birthday to you.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

(Tune: Mary Had A Little Lamb)

Choose as many verses as desired.

Mary had a little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.
Mary had a little Lamb, born in Bethlehem.

Jesus was her little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.
Jesus was her little Lamb, wrapped in swaddling clothes.



He was in a manger bed, manger bed, manger bed
He was in a manger bed, Sleeping in the hay.

Shepherds came to see the Lamb, see the Lamb, see the Lamb.
Shepherds came to see the Lamb, Angels sent them there.

Three wise men came very far, very far, very far.
Three wise men came very far, to bow before the Lamb.

The wise men brought him three nice gifts,
three nice gifts, three nice gifts.
The wise men brought him three nice gifts, placed before the Lamb.

Mary had a little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.
Mary had a little Lamb. Savior of the earth.

MARY HAD A BABY

(Tune: The More We Get Together)

Mary had a baby, a baby, a baby.
Mary had a baby, one glorious night.

She named the baby Jesus, dear Jesus, dear Jesus,
She named the baby Jesus,
'Cause God told her too.

The shepherds came to worship, to worship, to worship.
The shepherds came to worship
The newborn King.

The star above was shining, was shining, was shining.
The star above was shining
On Jesus sweet face.

Joseph gave him baby hugs, baby hugs, baby hugs.
Joseph gave him baby hugs
And Jesus was glad.



'TIS CHRISTMAS

(Tune: Away In A Manger)

'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas bells ring.
The birthday of Jesus, Our Savior and King.
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The candles all glow;
The birthday of Jesus, Let everyone know.
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas star shines.

The birthday of Jesus, A glad, happy time!
'Tis Christmas, 'Tis Christmas! Our Bible recalls,
The birthday of Jesus, god's love gift to all.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JESUS

(Tune: Happy Birthday To You)

On the first Christmas Day, From the Father above,
Came the little Lord Jesus, To show us god's love.

Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you.
I love you, dear Jesus. Happy Birthday to you.

JESUS CAME

(Tune: Deep And Wide)

Jesus came, Jesus came, Had a manger for His tiny bed.
Jesus came, Jesus came, Had a manger for His tiny bed.

Angels sang, Angels sang, Told the shepherds Baby Jesus came.
Angels sang, Angels sang, Told the shepherds Baby Jesus came.

Star above, Star above, Told the wise men Baby Jesus came.
Star above, Star above, Told the wise men Baby Jesus came.

Jesus grew, Jesus grew, As a Man He made the sick ones well.
Jesus grew, Jesus grew, As a Man He made the sick ones well.



Jesus gave, Jesus gave, Gave Himself to take away our sin.
Jesus gave, Jesus gave, Gave Himself to take away our sin.
Went away, Went away, Went away to make a home for me.
Went away, Went away, Went away to make a home for me.

He will come, He will come, He will come and meet us in the air.
He will come, He will come, He will come and meet us in the air.

CHRISTMAS! CHRISTMAS!

(Tune: Praise him, Praise Him All Ye Little Children)

Christmas, Christmas, now it's time for Christmas.
Jesus came, Jesus came.
Christmas, Christmas; Now it's time for Christmas.
Jesus came, Jesus came!

ADD STANZAS: Angels Sang, I'm so glad, Praise His Name.

WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
(hold diamond shaped hands above head)
Wise Men followed from afar.
(Shield eyes with hand)
They found the boy of whom we sing
(hold out hand to show height on little boy)
And gave Him gifts fit for a king
(arms, as if giving a gift)
They fell right down and gave a nod
(kneel and bow head)
Jesus was the gift from God.
(Clasp hands as if in prayer)

There are several traditional Christmas songs preschool children can learn easily. Consider "Away In A Manger" and "We Wish You A Merry Christmas".



STAGE AND PROPS

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB is a preschool presentation of the Bethlehem story using a minimum of props and staging.

SET UP

The church sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas. Christmas trees, Nativity figures, twinkle lights, poinsettias, candles and other displays add to the festive atmosphere. Leave holiday decorations in place.

STAGING

Place an empty manger in the middle of the stage. One small bench or chair for Mary is placed near the manger. Add other stable items as available. Included in this master copy are patterns for cardboard animals and simple items. Enlarge the patterns and make as desired to complete a great stable look.

Add a few large baskets, blankets, floor pillows, pottery and greenery at the edges of the stage scene. Keep it simple!

The Shepherd's Chair: Place a story telling chair near the stable scene. Rachel will use the script to read the story.

The Shepherd's Story: Make a small notebook with script inside. Turning pages must be easy so a 3 ring binder will work well.

Seating: Preschool children are seated on stage from the time they follow the Shepherd into the performance area until they leave the room. Seating is not needed in the audience area. Assign several assistants dressed in Holy Land costume to sit with young children on stage.



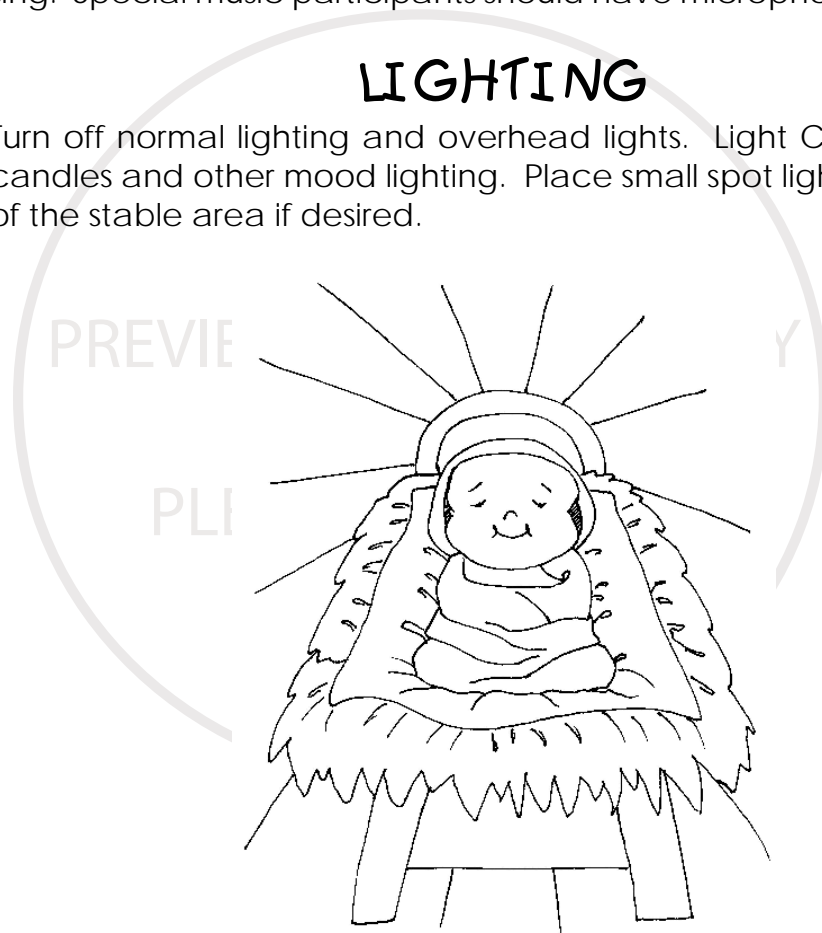
SOUND SYSTEM

Use the existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place a microphone near the Shepherd or attach a wireless microphone to the costume. Any teacher/leader who speaks should have a microphone available. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

Place a microphone near students so they can be heard while they sing. Special music participants should have microphones available.

LIGHTING

Turn off normal lighting and overhead lights. Light Christmas trees, candles and other mood lighting. Place small spot lights on the floor of the stable area if desired.



COSTUMES

Prepare simple costuming for all preschool children. They become various characters in the Bethlehem story. Follow our suggestions for Holy Land costuming or create your own costumes for each little one.

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



PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

Pattern Suggestions

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

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

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



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

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

After The Show

Ask young participants to remain in costume at the **LITTLE LAMB PARTY**. This is the time to congratulate them for a job well done and reward them with hugs and small gifts as desired.

NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE



PUBLICITY



Publicize **MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB** through all normal church communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Church Bulletin And Newsletter

Inform the congregation about this special Christmas event. Print an announcement in November and December newsletters. If you plan The **LITTLE LAMB PARTY**, let people know there will be a Christmas celebration including food following the program.

Local Newspaper

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

Television And Radio

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

Christmas Card Invitations

Send family invitations home with students. This is effective for families who send their children to Sunday School but are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.



TEACHERS!

Pray! Prepare! Present!

ADAPT THIS PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
TO FIT THE NEEDS OF YOUR GROUP



Involve As Many Students As Possible

Preschool children sing together but do not have individual speaking parts. Use every child available. Dress each one in Holy Land costume and add appropriate props for their character.

Highlight Individual Parts

All speaking will be done by the shepherd. Be sure written material is prepared in an easily readable format. Preschool children do not need materials in their hands. Their responses will be short and coached during rehearsal.

Practice With Your Small Group

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

Communicate With Parents

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



Show Up With A Smile And A Helpful Attitude

The Christmas Director values your leadership! Meet your small group for **The Flock Walk**. Dress in appropriate costumes in a back room, line up according to specific instructions and enter the performance area as directed. Sit with your class in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your own part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they need help.

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

After The Program

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

If You Need Help

You will be responsible to have your specific preschool children ready to participate. The Director is available if you need help. The program comes together at the last moment with little formal large group rehearsal.

Enjoy The Experience

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

Don't Forget

Bring your camera! There will be many picture taking opportunities and you may be amazed 20 years from now how precious these memories become. Record them for 'posterity' and your own photo album!



Rachel

Bethlehem's Most Famous Shepherd!



Be extremely familiar with the script but total memorization is not required. Carry the script on stage and read it with humor and deep emotion.

You have been chosen to portray Bethlehem's most famous shepherd. Share memories from the night Baby Jesus was born. The story is told by a shepherd who 'saw it all'!

Rachel's voice is the only voice heard through the program, except for music and moments when Rachel helps the children speak!

Rachel is the Narrator and speaks for little ones who cannot yet speak. Be flexible. If the children say or do something "off the cuff", this does not ruin the program and in fact their innocence, enthusiasm and curiosity make the entire experience enjoyable for the audience.

*The children dress in various Holy Land costumes. After **The Flock Walk**, place them casually in the on stage Nativity scene. Once you put them in the scene, they should stay there. If a few children wander, keep that famous sense of humor in place and remind them of their 'important' part!*

Teachers and assistants should be in place to help with the group. It is helpful to have them guide the children as needed.

Be gentle. Preschool children are most comfortable with those they know best. Visit their classroom, talk with them and become a gentle shepherd in the weeks prior to the program. This pre-show preparation will reap great benefits. The youngest children will not be afraid of Rachel the Bethlehem Shepherd.

If you are the daily/weekly preschool teacher, they will respond more readily to you on stage.



RACHEL'S COSTUME AND PLACE

Rachel's Costume

Create a simple, traditional Holy Land shepherd costume. Wear a long gown or robe. Add a long head covering or tie colorful fabric around the head. Bare feet or simple sandals are appropriate. Add accessories as available.

The character of Rachel the Shepherd is an outgoing, talkative, cheerful soul. She has had lots of experience with sheep and except for one Amazing Night, has lived a quiet life with her animals and her people. Her costume should reflect the simple lifestyle.



Rachel's Place

Involve the young, costumed children while reading from the script. For performance, it may be desirable to place the script inside a colorful cover so pages can be easily turned. Highlight private instructions as needed.

Rachel may sit on the floor with the children or rest on a rustic bench. Place a few sheep (*costumed children or cardboard sheep*) around the area where Rachel tells her story.



CHILD CHARACTERS

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB includes every single child available. To tell the entire story of Jesus' birth, don't forget any of the important characters!

Mary

Joseph

Baby Jesus-Doll

-live baby may be featured at conclusion

Angels

Shepherds

Wise Men

Star

-Choose one

'star' who can speak 2 lines

OPTION: Animals as desired



Dress them in appropriate Holy Land costume. The child portraying The Star may have a large posterboard star around their neck or over their head.



CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

There are spots throughout the program where the children are encouraged to respond to the shepherd with enthusiastic reactions.

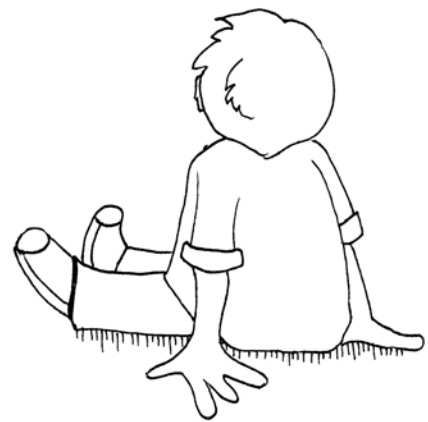
'TIS A GIFT TO BE SIMPLE: Keep participation childlike. Easy songs with familiar melodies like "Away In A Manger" or nursery rhymes work well and are well received by the audience.

HAND SIGNAL: Because they are so young, develop a special hand sign to signal it's time to say "I know!" or whatever the appropriate response is. There are cues in the script. Also, encourage and repeat the responses as needed on stage.

It may be helpful to have one grown up in the front row who gives the hand signal at the right time and joins in with the verbal response.

REHEARSE: During rehearsal, encourage the group to speak loudly together with enthusiasm. The more comfortable they feel, the better the performance. It eliminates the 'deer in the headlights' look! Practice songs with the group, including leaders and assistants, in the weeks leading up to the Christmas program.

FREE TO BE THREE: Don't aim for perfection. Preschool children are delightful on stage no matter what happens. Chaos doesn't work but if one or two children cry, comment or run off stage, don't panic. Take time to handle the issue or regroup as needed. The more casual the effort, the better the result. Just have fun with your darling little ones!



TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB is designed around narration by Rachel, Bethlehem's most famous shepherd!

Rachel needs a few helpers to keep the children where they need to be on stage and off stage. Become one of these valued helpers.



Dress In Costume

To add to the ambiance of the entire event, all helpers dress in Holy Land costume. Keep it simple. Become people of that time and place. If you are guiding children on and off stage or sitting with them in the on stage Nativity scene, wear a costume.

If you are assigned a short speaking part, say it with enthusiasm. Unless instructed, read all parts. Memorization is not necessary.

Sing Along

Simple songs are suggested on the **CHRISTMAS MUSIC** pages and may be added anywhere in the program as desired. If songs are used, teachers and helpers should sing along to encourage student participation. Most of the suggested songs are short, have familiar nursery rhyme tunes and can be repeated two or three times.

There are many Christmas songs that can be performed. Choose music that is most comfortable for the staff and students. Piano sheet music or CD accompaniment is **not** included with this program.

On Stage/Off Stage

Keeping children quiet and involved is the best way to assist the Shepherd. Let them sit on your lap or place your arms around them as they sit near you. The grouping of teen and adult leaders mixed with little ones is charming and is a basic way to keep order on stage. Off stage, guide children and sit with them. Help with costuming.



THE PRELUDE

Church instrumentalists (organ/piano/keyboard) play Christmas music as the audience gathers for the program. Choose happy music suited to a children's program. Other instruments can be added as desired.

THE FLOCK WALK



Gather participants in an outer room before the program begins. To keep children calm, it may be desirable to have all introductions, audience songs and even an offering (if appropriate) completed before the little ones follow the shepherd into the performance area.

Dim the lights. Existing holiday lights are left to glow merrily in the background. Leave stage lights and spotlights shining so anyone reading a part can see to read.

As the children enter the room from the rear, let them sing a song of your choice or have the musicians play a Christmas Carol as they follow the shepherd down the aisle or around the audience in 'The Flock Walk'. This allows picture taking moments as well as a casual way for the group to enter the area.

Place the children in the Nativity scene as they arrive at the stage. Take your time putting Mary and Joseph near the manger, angels in the back, shepherds on one side and wise men on the other side. Add the innkeeper and King Herod on opposite sides of the scene. If you decide to dress a few children as animals, place them on the floor in the front.

Insert preschool songs as desired at the beginning, middle or end of the program. Your choice!



MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB!

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!



Be fun and funny. Get serious as you impress upon the children and audience the importance of the birth of Jesus.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

Follow the stage directions. This indicates the preschool group reaction and songs inserted by the Director. Your own bubbly, humorous personality will make their participation delightful as you include them in the stage scene. Ask them to respond casually at appropriate times. Repeat their responses with them. Whatever happens...happens!

Guide the children through simple songs. Plan music before program day. There are many song suggestions included with the program so chose a few you know your group can handle. We have suggested songs at certain spots but if you change it, print the song title in the script so you don't forget! Because the songs are short, it may be possible to let the group repeat certain melodies as desired.



RACHEL'S AMAZING NIGHT!



I know you people. Let's see, did we meet in the market place? No, that can't be it.

Maybe we met by the river last week. No, you weren't there.

I know! We met on that amazing night long ago. The night the LAMB was born!

(Show off your costume)

You remember me, don't you? Look at me! It will come to you. I'm Rachel, the shepherd from Bethlehem! Remember? Long robe, head gear, shepherd's crook! I'm the one who always smells like wet wool. Don't laugh, there's a reason for that.

I'm glad I found you here...like this...in a stable...with angels. I want to tell you something. It is very important. Are your listening ears ready? Mary had a little Lamb. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

ALL CHILDREN: *(In Unison)* We know!

MUSIC OPTION: *(In Unison)* All children on stage sing MARY HAD A BABY BOY (Tune: MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB).

You have to listen to my story. I'll prove it to you. I'm a shepherd from a very small village called Bethlehem. You're going to get a kick out of this-- my name, Rachel, means "sheep"! Can you believe it? My parents named me "sheep" and then I became the most famous shepherd in all of Israel.

*(Settle on stage by sitting on the floor
or on a small bench or a grouping of large pillows.)*

It all began when I was a very little girl and got my first Lamb for Passover. Stop me if I have told you this story!

ALL CHILDREN: *(In Unison)* STOP!



Well, maybe I did tell you that story. But I didn't tell you this one. Mary Had A Little Lamb! In Bethlehem! I should know because I was there.

SHEPHERDS

I have witnesses! You shepherds were there. Come over here and help me tell this story.

(Children dressed like shepherds gather around Rachel.)

You are looking fine, by the way. Remember that night on the hillside outside Bethlehem? What were we doing?



SHEPHERDS: *(In Unison)* Watching sheep!

Right! All the sheep with their lambs were tucked into their grassy patches, we were talking around the campfire and SUDDENLY...there were angels! They were all around us shining and smiling and waving and singing and talking! I don't know about you shepherds but I was scared! My knees were knocking together. Those angels were big!

SHEPHERDS: *(In Unison)* Big!

Right! Big and beautiful and hanging around in the middle of our sheep camping trip. The angels knew we were scared and said, "Do not be afraid!"

Hey shepherds, do you see the angels back there? They are watching over Mary and her Lamb. Let's see if they will come out and tell their story again.

ALL SHEPHERDS: *(In Unison)* Come out! Come out, wherever you are.



ANGELS

*(All angels pretend to 'fly' out of the Nativity scene
and join the shepherds at the front of the stage.)*

I'm not afraid of angels anymore. Angels are special messengers sent from God in Heaven. We shepherds know that better than anyone. We saw thousands of angels on our hillside.... a CHOIR of angels singing just for shepherds.



Remind us what you sang:

ALL ANGELS: *(In Unison)* Glory To God!

Ahhh, it is still beautiful. I love those words. Say them again.

ALL ANGELS: *(In Unison)* Glory To God!

I remember the rest of your song. You said, "And on earth peace, good will toward men." It was wonderful! We shepherds had a job to do. You said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." I'll never forget the night of the angels.

MUSIC OPTION: Shepherds, angels and all children sing a song together. Our suggestion is JESUS CAME. Sing first 2 verses. Shepherds and angels go back to their places in the Nativity scene.

As soon as the angels left, being very smart shepherds, we said to each other, "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has said." We ran and ran and look what we found! *(Gesture widely toward the entire scene.)* Mary and Joseph and the LAMB lying in the manger.

ALL CHILDREN: *(In Unison)* It was a BABY!

Mary had a little Lamb! That's my story and I'm sticking to it!



MARY AND JOSEPH



Mary and Joseph took good care of God's little Lamb when He was born. They protected Him and placed him in a manger of hay. Mangers are animal food dishes so it was surprising to find him sleeping there. He didn't care. He just slept and smiled and seemed very glad to be here.

Look at Mary and Joseph. They seem happy too! Are you happy?

MARY AND JOSEPH: *(In Unison)* We're happy!

What a peaceful stable! Well, as you can see, we shepherds had to complete our God given job. We told everyone we met what the angels had said. Everyone who heard us was impressed. We are very impressive shepherds!

MUSIC OPTION: All children sing TIS CHRISTMAS (Tune: AWAY IN A MANGER).

WISE MEN AND STAR

That is not the end of our story! Yes, there is more! Look at the very wealthy and very wise people visiting this place. They look like wise guys to me! We shepherds know these things!

Come and show off your wise ways, wise men! *(All wise men gather around Rachel, the shepherd.)* Are you smart?



WISE MEN: *(In Unison)* We're smart!

I believe it! You traveled from a faraway land following a star. Is that the star you followed? Come here, star, and shine for everyone to see!



STAR: *(Walks to the front of the stage to speak)*

Star light, Star bright,
Follow me to the Lamb tonight.

And that is just what the wise men did. They followed the bright, beautiful star to where it shone down on this very stable where all these folks were celebrating the birth of a LAMB!



ALL CHILDREN: *(In Unison)* BABY!

Mary had a little LAMB! That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

The wise men had a little trouble on their trip. They stopped to ask directions and King Herod, a nasty old king, tried to trick them. Hearing rumors of a new King, he wanted to know where Jesus was born. Nothing good could come of that! Did I mention these men were wise? They did not tell King Herod where they were going or how to get there. And boy, was he mad!

These wise men knew Mary, Joseph and their baby needed help. They brought baby gifts with them. You might think they brought diapers or baby powder but...no-o...they brought neat stuff like Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. That might not mean much to you at a baby shower but, trust me, M&J were really happy with those presents.

MUSIC OPTION: THREE WISE MEN (Tune: Three Blind Mice) sung by all children on stage. Add WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM (Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) sung by all children on stage.

THE LAMB

The night I saw angels on the hillside my life changed. God came to earth that night in the form of a baby boy born in a stable in Bethlehem. That baby was Jesus! I'm not changing my mind about one thing: MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB! That's my story and I'm sticking to it.





Mary and Joseph, bring that baby here so everyone can see Him.

(Mary and Joseph carry wrapped baby doll carefully to the front of the stage.)

Everyone in the audience should show their appreciation for this precious, little Lamb so when I count to three every say oooo—ahhh.

Ready? 1-2-3 Oooooo—Ahhh!

(Let audience do this two or three times along with all children on stage.)

MUSIC OPTION: *(In Unison)* All children gather together on stage to sing MARY HAD A BABY (Tune: The More We Get Together).

We, the children and me, a very important shepherd, want to tell you, our grown ups, a very important message:

ALL CHILDREN AND SHEPHERD: *(In Unison)* Mary Had A Little Lamb!
That's our story and we're sticking to it!

THE SHEPHERD'S STORY

SHEPHERD SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO AUDIENCE: (Hold the swaddled baby—or a real baby—while speaking.)

Why is Jesus called a LAMB? I'm a shepherd and I should know. Our sheep were quiet the night Jesus was born. Night had fallen, stars were sharp in the nippy sky. We talked about the new lambs in our flock. One old shepherd said, "The lambs will all die before long".

I have loved shepherding all my life and those are still the hardest words I hear. So fresh, so clean, so full of life and yet every year, at Passover, the perfect lambs were sacrificed in Jerusalem for the sin of the people. I don't think I'd like to be a perfect lamb.



I was shocked to see Mary, Joseph with Baby Jesus in the manger. Even if angels said it was true, I had to see it for myself. God always said He would send a Savior. What my eyes beheld brought tears.

We ran into the stable and there they were, Mary, Joseph and...well, a lamb. Oh, he was a baby boy to be sure but don't doubt it for one moment, this baby boy was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

How did I know, you ask? It was too right to be wrong. The angels were sent to earth, to shepherds, with a message for the ages!

**"And she brought forth her first born Son
and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes
and laid him in a manger
because there was no room for them in the inn**

**...For unto you is born this day in the City of David a
Savior Who is Christ the Lord.
From Luke 2**

Shepherds wrap newborn lambs in swaddling clothes to protect the body of the lambs, keeping the new lambs without spot or blemish, we lay them in a manger until they calm down. Only perfect lambs were given the swaddling treatment because those were the lambs who would go to the Temple in Jerusalem.

And there He was, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. I could not resist reaching out to touch Him. He was so small, so soft, so fresh...so perfect. God's little Lamb! "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

We have here the Messiah, God's Son in human form who will be willing to be the Lamb that God provided ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. This Lamb would pay a heavy price for you and for me and for everyone who ever lived.



This Lamb was a gift, a precious gift from God. How could I do anything else but run as fast as I could to tell the world: Mary Had A Little Lamb! That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

CONCLUSION

Ask one or two older children, reading age, to read this final thought. Or ask one teen or grown up to read the lines and preschool children respond with : 'Thank God!' They may stand on either side of the shepherd, still holding Baby Jesus, center stage:

The Child was born, God's Child, for us.

Thank God!

The Child grew up, for us.

Thank God!

The Child lived and taught and acted
and healed and helped and cared
and suffered and died for us!

Thank God!

The Child, our Savior, rose again, for us.

Thank God!

God, we thank You that Mary had a little Lamb!

~Dennis Haas



CLOSING PRAYER

MUSIC OPTION: The audience sings the Christmas Carol "Joy To The World" while the shepherd leads the preschool children off stage, down the aisle and out of the presentation area.



LITTLE LAMB PARTY



Assign party planning to one small group. This could be a few grown ups hand picked for this purpose or a Sunday School class.

Parents of the preschool children may set up the party area before the program begins.

Offer delicious desserts, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.

Preparations Before Party Day

Menu: Plan the menu and prepare a Christmas Birthday cake. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share. If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with doughnuts, orange juice and coffee. Provide a variety of beverages.

If the LITTLE LAMB PARTY is strictly for preschool guests, consider these fun foods:

EDIBLE MANGER

Paper baking cup, chocolate pudding, Shredded Wheat, pretzel nuggets, mini marshmallows.

Fill baking cup ½ full of pudding. Have each child shred the shredded wheat biscuit over pudding to represent hay. Place the pretzel nugget on the hay to represent the body of Baby Jesus. Top nugget with marshmallow to represent the head of Baby Jesus.





BABY JESUS IN A BLANKET

Baby Jesus wrapped in blankets need crescent rolls and little smokies. Take pieces of the crescent rolls and wrap around the smokies (cocktail weiners). Bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes

APPLE STARS

Cut apples in half crosswise. Have the children see if they can see a star. Talk about the importance that the Star played in the birth of Jesus.

Option: Use Star Fruit

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

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

Centerpieces: Cover tables as desired. Christmas centerpieces should be featured on each table. Consider scattering lambs from nativity sets on each table. Add one or two other nativity set pieces in the mix to tell the Bethlehem story.



Preparation On Party Day

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

During The Party

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

After The Party

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

Go home knowing you have been
a good and faithful servant.

If your own Christmas tree
is not trimmed,
you have a lot to think about
while you decorate!

Enjoy The Season!

