



POCKETFUL
OF
STARLIGHT

...Shine Jesus Shine!

A little Program
For little People



Pocketful Of Starlight!

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...Shine Jesus Shine!



Pocketful Of Starlight

...Shine Jesus Shine!

Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket,
Never let it fade away.

Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket,
Save it for a rainy day.

For love may come and tap you on the shoulder
Some starless night.

And just in case you feel you want to hold it,
You'll have a pocket full of starlight.

Catch a falling star and put it in
your pocket.

Never let it fade away....

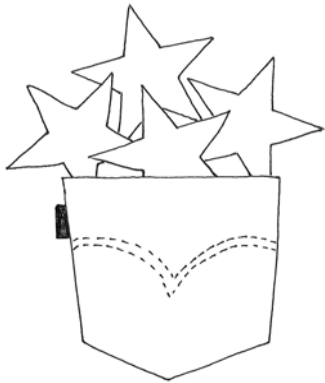
Never let it fade away....

Never let it fade away!

Words and Music by Paul Vance and Lee Pockriss



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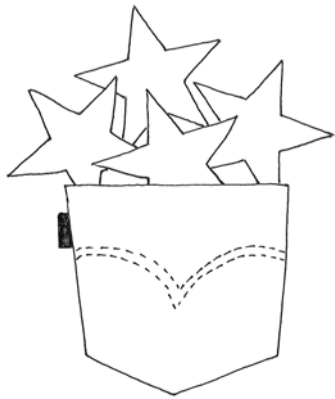
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Pocketful Of Starlight

...Shine Jesus Shine!

A Little Program For Little People



Pocketful Of Starlight is an easy-to-prepare Christmas program designed exclusively for children ages 3-5. Include older students as desired. Feature costumed little ones in an appealing display of the story of Jesus' birth as seen through the eyes of a Wise Man traveling afar to tell the Bethlehem story one more time!

Pocketful Of Starlight is rehearsed during Sunday School or Preschool Day Care with familiar teachers. Gather all preschool children for one final dress rehearsal and this delightful Christmas program is set to go!

Pocketful Of Starlight 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 One and Only Son? Children bring the Nativity scene to life and hear the story from a friendly Wise Man (or Woman) from 'Afar'.

Pocketful Of Starlight involves the audience singing Christmas Carols. Teaching simple songs to the little participants rounds out the event which becomes a charming Christmas presentation completed by the youngest among us!

Pocketful Of Starlight concludes with a sweet Shine Jesus Shine Party! Serve snacks, play Christmas music and celebrate Jesus!

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Preschool Christmas Director

If you lead a church preschool, day care center, Christian preschool or home school, this is the fun, easy program for you.

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!

Lead your children into a grand celebration of the Bethlehem story. Create well organized leadership teams. 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. For the most part they should be able to handle their material. The result will be a precious telling of the Bethlehem story by the youngest among us.

Prepare your heart! Mistakes become memories and children will be enthusiastic to participate. Relax and let it happen! Parents, grandparents and guests will be blessed. Dust off that sense of humor and use it.

Are you 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 friendly Wise Man (or Woman). Discover how eagerly preschool children embrace their wise man and enjoy the amazing story about the day Baby Jesus was born.

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 Wise Man 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! Simple planning is appreciated. This 'Little Program for Little People' is worth extra effort in the midst of personal holiday preparations, party going and travel. 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 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.

Create your own event! 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 and/or Christmas Carols that the audience can sing! We make musical suggestions and let you make the final decisions.

Prepare! Hopefully you have ordered Pocketful Of Starlight with more than one month lead time. Copy materials for individual leaders and assign specific responsibilities 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 Wise Man's personal scroll journal, the actor/leader reads. If you desire memorization, lead time must be longer and more intensive rehearsal is essential.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined area for writing thoughts.

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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

Starlight Journey
'Following The Star'



Pocketful Of Starlight
'Think Like A Wise Man'

Conclusion

Shine Jesus Shine Party!



Adapting Pocketful Of Starlight

Preview Pocketful Of Starlight and adapt it to fit the needs of your preschool. The program is designed to last about 20 minutes depending upon added music. The Shine Jesus Shine 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 and teens are crucial to the small church/school presentation. 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.

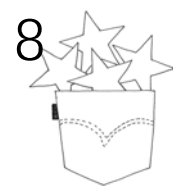
'Shine Jesus Shine' Party

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or loving parents to take party responsibility. They decorate, plan, prepare food and arrange clean up. The Shine Jesus Shine Party is a wonderful conclusion where little ones 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.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

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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 sheet music or CD available from our end!

Teach the 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. 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.

Voca | Solo

Instrumental Ensemble

Voca | Group (Duet-Trio-Quartet)

Handbell/chime Choir

Youth/Adult Choir

Instrumental Solo



Preschool Christmas Songs



Consider teaching your little ones Christmas words to familiar melodies. No piano is needed. Let them sing a capella in all their 'little voice' glory. We provide these 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 focus. Shorter is better. 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

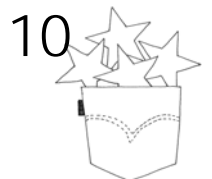
(Tune: Take Me Out To the Ball Game)

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 dove 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' Birth-day!

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

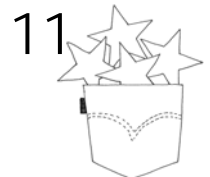
(Tune: Mary Had A Little Lamb)

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.

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.

MARY AND JOSEPH WENT TO BETHLEHEM

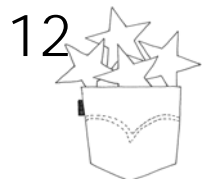
(Tune: Ten Little Indians)

Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem (3x)
Riding on a donkey. (Act like bouncing on donkey)

So they rested in the stable (3x)
They could go no further. (Fold hand like sleeping)



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Baby Jesus was born to Mary (3x)
She laid him in a manger. (Rock a baby)

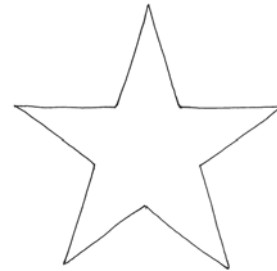
The shepherds and wise men came to Jesus (3x)
to bring the baby gifts. (Hold out hands to give gift.)

Now we celebrate Jesus' birthday (3x)
On each Christmas Day! (Hold arms up to rejoice.)

TWINKLE CHRISTMAS STAR

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas Star
How I wonder what you are.
Shining high up in the sky
Show the shepherds where Christ lies.
Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas Star.
How I wonder what you are.



'TIS CHRISTMAS

(Tune: Away In A Manger)

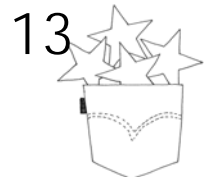
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas bells ring.
The birthday of Jesus, Our Savior and King.
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The candles all glow;
The birthday of Jesus, Let everyone know.
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas star shines.
The birthday of Jesus, A glad, happy time!
'Tis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

*Audience may sing "Shine, Jesus, Shine".
(Sheet music not included in this program.)*



Stage And Props

Pocketful Of Starlight 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 scenes, twinkle lights, poinsettias, candles and other displays add to the festive atmosphere. Leave holiday decorations in place.

Staging

Place an empty manger and nativity scene props at one side of the stage. One small bench or chair for Mary is placed near the manger. Add other stable items as available. Add a few large baskets, blankets, floor pillows, stuffed or cardboard animals, pottery and greenery at the edges of the staged scene. Keep it simple.



The Wise Man's Chair: Place a story telling chair near the stable scene, center stage. The Wise Man will use the script attached to a rolled up, handmade scroll to read the story.

The Wise Man's Three Gifts and Camel: Display items representing gold, frankincense and myrrh in a prominent spot. Light the gifts with a spot light or back lighting to highlight their presence 'in light' on stage. The gifts do not have to be wrapped. They could be large metal pots, ceramic pottery or gold wrapping paper glitter sprayed. (See camel pattern included with costume information.)

The Wise Man's Story: 'Think Like A Wise Man' is told as the remembrances of this person who was part of Jesus' story. The scroll represents a journal kept by this person and is now being told to the children and audience.

Seating: Costumed children are placed in the Nativity scene from the time they follow the Wise Man 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.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for thoughts.

Sound System

Use the existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place a microphone near the Wise Man 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.

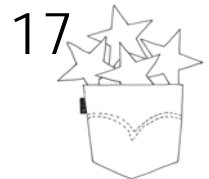
Place a microphone near students so they can be heard while they sing. Special music participants should have microphones available.

Stage 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.

Pocketful Of Starlight is all about 'starlight'. Fill the floor of the stage with bunches of white twinkle lights. Plug them in at the appropriate time in the program. Light a large cardboard star and place it somewhere in the background.

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Costumes

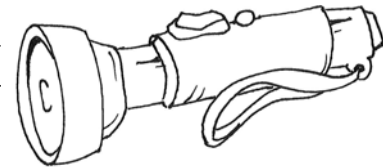


Prepare simple costuming. Students become specific Bethlehem people. Follow our suggestions for Holy Land costuming or create your own costumes for each little one. Choose their costume according to the person you choose for them to portray.

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.

Pocket Light Surprises!

Sshhh, keep a secret! Prepare a pocket in each child's costume or clothing. Hidden inside their pocket should be a small lit flashlight, glow stick or finger light.



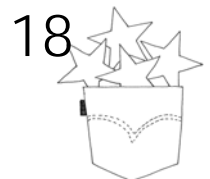
Finger lights are available at www.amazon.com and are inexpensive! Look for: LED Finger Lights (40 pcs) by Laser Finger Lights on that internet site. There are several companies that sell them. Children LOVE them and after the program can take them home as a small gift.

Buy more than you think you need. Consider the unusual circumstance that a few will not work when they arrive so be prepared!

Instead of placing the lights on fingers, safety pin them inside the folds of each child's costume or pocket to be revealed during the program. Light them before the group takes to the stage. This may not work perfectly but it 'lights up' the kids and the audience when these little secrets are revealed!

OPTION: Instead of finger lights, consider **small flashlights** hidden in pockets or underneath costumes. **Glow sticks** hanging as necklaces underneath clothing or hiding inside pockets works great too.

Have fun 'lighting up' your children. The Wise Man will help them reveal their lights at the right time in the program.



Costume Pattern Suggestions

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

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

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

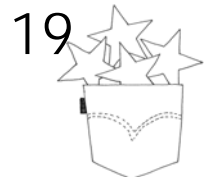
Bathrobes: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for headdresses and sashes to complete the costume.

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

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

After The Show

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



Publicity

Publicize Pocketful Of Starlight...Shine, Jesus, Shine through all normal church/school communication channels. Announce it in your newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Bulletin And Newsletter

Inform the congregation/parents about this special Christmas event. Print an announcement in November and December newsletters. If you plan The Shine, Jesus, Shine 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. Daycare/Preschool children could make paper Christmas cards as a project and attach the invitation inside to be placed in their take home papers or backpack.



Teachers!

Pray! Prepare! Present!

When you play with puppies, expect puppy tricks!



Involve As Many Students As Possible

Preschool children sing together. They 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 is done by the wise man. Be sure written material is prepared in an easily readable format. Preschool children do not need materials in their hands. Their responses are short and coached during rehearsal.

Practice With Your Small Group

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

Communicate With Parents

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



Smile and Help!

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

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

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

After The Program

Stay for The Shine, Jesus, Shine 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 are 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 life changing. The spiritual experience is delightful!

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 for your own photo album!



The Wise Man From Afar



The Story Teller: *The Wise Man* can be a man or a woman. If there is a gentleman who is perfect for the part and can direct the participants on stage, by all means ask that person. The traditional teacher in a preschool setting is female so ask a gal who enjoys leading the group to take the part. Choose the perfect person in your specific preschool setting!

Become familiar with the script but total memorization is not required. Carry the script on stage inside a homemade rolled scroll and read it as the scroll unfolds. Be humorous and yet display deep, loving emotion as the Bethlehem story is told. The children bring it to life visually in their stable places.

You have been chosen to portray one of the famous kings from 'Afar', better known as 'The Wise Man'. This wise man (or woman) was indeed wise and apparently kept a 'Star Journey Journal' of the long trek to meet the Baby King in Bethlehem.

The Wise Man's voice is basically the only one heard through the program, except for music and moments when the children are coached to respond as a group.

The Wise Man speaks for (and with) 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 their innocence, enthusiasm and curiosity make the experience enjoyable for the audience.

The children dress in various Holy Land costumes. After The 'Starlight Journey' entrance, place them casually in the Nativity scene. Once placed 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 people guiding the children as needed.



Be gentle. Preschool children are most comfortable with those they know best. Visit their classroom, talk with them and become an approachable 'Wise Man'. This pre-program preparation reaps great benefits. The youngest children will not be afraid.

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

The Wise Man's Costume

Clothing: Create a traditional Holy Land styled Wise Man costume. Try to look like an elegant, wealthy person.

Wear a long gown or robe. Because you are portraying a 'king', dress it up with bright colors, fancy slippers/shoes, lots of jewelry.

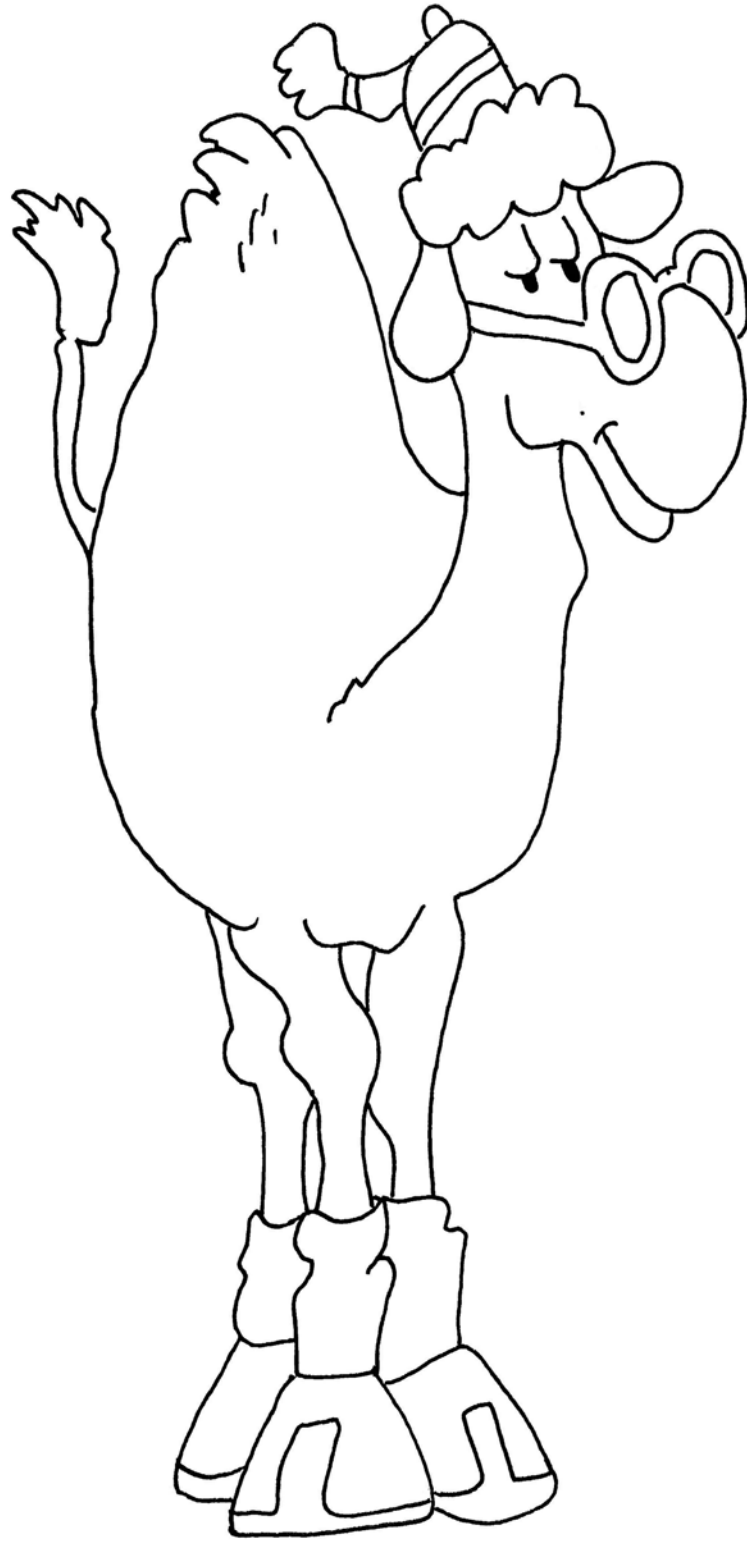
Wear a crown or a brightly colored scarf turban secured by a large, glittery broach. Wear large hoop earrings.



Scroll Journal: This is a crucial item! *The Wise Man* reads the entire journal story and makes comments from this prop. Make an old fashioned scroll from brown paper bags, crinkled to look aged. Tie the 'scroll' with a large ribbon or twine. Inside the scroll, tape the entire script, end to end. Highlight private instructions as needed. As you read and respond to the script, roll the scroll or let it unfurl dramatically.

Setting: Beside the 'child filled' Nativity scene, *The Wise Man* sits on a large chair covered in bright fabric with large tossed pillows added for that middle eastern flair. The three gifts should be displayed nearby. A large cardboard camel may be displayed behind the chair. Make the camel (see pattern) and prop it up securely.





PREVIEW
ONLY
PLEASE

ONLY
PLEASE

Preschool Children As Bethlehem People

Pocketful Of Starlight includes every single child available. To tell the entire story of Jesus' birth, don't forget any of the important Bethlehem People!

Mary

Joseph

Baby Jesus-Doll

Angels

Shepherds

Wise Men

Stars



Option: Animals as desired

Dress students in appropriate Holy Land costume with pockets full of 'light'. Stars may wear a large posterboard star around their neck or over their head.



Children's Participation

There are spots in the program where the children are encouraged to respond with enthusiastic reactions. They sing and focus on the story while becoming their character on stage for most of the program.

The Star

One child becomes The Star and leads the group on a Star Journey around the aisles as music is played. The Wise Man holds The Star's hand and helps guide the 'Star Journey' as everyone follows. They end up at the stage.



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

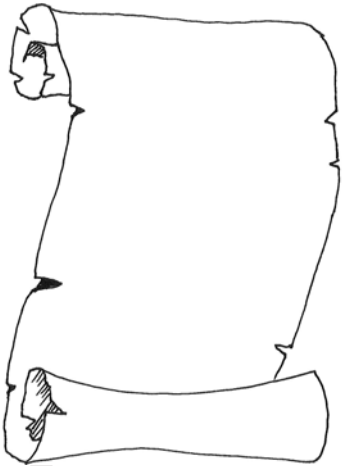
It may be helpful to have one grown up in the front row who gives the hand signal at the right time and join in with the verbal response.

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

Free To Be Three: Preschoolers are delightful on stage no matter what happens. 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. Don't aim for perfection. Avoid chaos and have fun with your little ones!



Teachers And Assistants



Pocketful Of Starlight revolves around The Wise Man's scroll journal recollections brought to life by the little ones as they become the Bethlehem People in the Nativity scene.

The Wise Man needs helpers to keep children where they need to be on stage and off stage. Become one of these valued helpers.

Dress In Costume

Helpers dress in Holy Land costume. Keep it simple. Become people of that time and place. If guiding children on and off stage or sitting with them on stage, wear a costume.

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

Sing Along

Simple songs are suggested 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.

Choose music that is most comfortable for the staff and students. Piano sheet music or CD accompaniment is not included with this program. The songs can be sung a capella!

On Stage/Off Stage

Keeping children quiet and involved is the best way to assist The Wise Man. Let them sit on your lap or place your arms around them as they sit near you. Guide them gently into their position. 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.



Prelude

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

Starlight Journey 'Following The Star'



Gather costumed participants in an outer room. To keep children calm, it may be desirable to have all introductions, audience songs and an offering (*if appropriate*) completed before the little ones follow The Star and The Wise Man into the performance area.

Light all their hidden little lights, flashlights and glow sticks and tuck them inside their costumes before they enter the performance area.

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

As the children enter the room from the rear, have the musicians play a Christmas Carol as the group follows The Star in a meandering journey to the stage. This provides a dramatic entrance as well as picture taking moments.

Place the children in the Nativity scene as they arrive at the stage. The Wise Man should place Mary and Joseph near the manger, angels in the back, shepherds on one side and wise men on the other side. If a few children dress as animals, place them on the floor in the front. Scatter children dressed as stars on each end.

Insert preschool songs as desired at the beginning, middle and end of the program. We'll suggest a few options in the script but you choose!



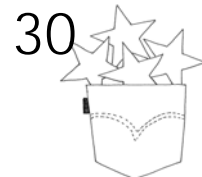
One More Thing....



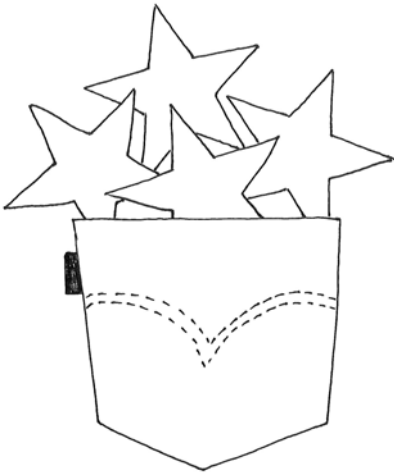
Be fun and funny. Get serious as you impress upon the children and audience the importance of the birth of Jesus. Become the unique Story Teller who lets the Bethlehem Story of Jesus unfold along with the long scroll journal entries.

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

We have suggested songs at certain spots but change as desired! Because the songs are short, it may be possible to let the group repeat certain melodies. Guide the children through simple songs.



Pocketful Of Starlight Shine, Jesus, Shine!



Wise Man Speaks to The Child Star (*Still holding Star's hand*):

Well, well, look what we have here, Star! I followed you all the way to Bethlehem and this is what we found. (*Look in manger with The Star*) A baby in a manger. I expected to greet a king, you know.

Place Star in the middle of the Nativity:

There, now it's perfect! You look very bright standing in the middle of these Bethlehem people. Stand straight and tall—and-GLOW! Stars look best when they glow. Ask me, I've been following you a very long time. We finally made it. Our Starlight Journey is complete.

Sit In Chair facing Nativity Scene:

Time to write in my journal. (*Open scroll and allow it to unfurl*) Ahh, yes, I have just enough space to add a few more 'wise' thoughts. Anybody here want to hear my wise thoughts?

ALL CHILDREN: (In Unison) NO!

Oh come on, I feel a good one coming on right now. Wise words just kind of bubble out of me. It won't take long. I have to write it down.

ALL CHILDREN: (In Unison-Or choose one child) WE WANT TO SING TO THE BABY!

Just one wise word, one wise phrase...then you can sing to the baby. Here it comes. Get ready.... (*dramatically*) "Old MacDonal had a farm, e-i-e-i-o." How's that?

ALL CHILDREN: (Laugh out loud!)

I know when my wisdom is not appreciated. Someday you'll understand the wisdom in those classic words. Okay, have your own way. Sing a song to this beautiful baby boy.



SING: CHOOSE ONE SONG FOR THE CHILDREN TO SING AS A GROUP.
 (Option: 'Away In A Manger', 'Mary Had A Baby', 'Tis Christmas')

Think Like A Wise Man

I am the famous Wise Man from Afar. Not many people know there is actually a city named 'Afar'. Afar, Persia. Something got lost in translation through the years. I followed the star from Afar in the East to where the baby lay. And...lucky for you....I took notes! I knew you would want to know. Let's see what my journal says...

Star Journey-Day 1: Several Wise Men from Afar (*See? That's my hometown!*) have noticed an unusually bright star. They have asked me to join them in a journey, following that star. Not sure if I should go. What to do, what to do.

Wisdom For Today: "I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

I guess that explains why I decided to pack up my camel and hit the dusty road. Go West, young Wise Man, Go West!

Star Journey-Day 7: I would be much happier if that star would settle down. We must keep following it. We had a dream that said we must prepare to meet a king. We have decided on three important gifts to give this king. Gold represents His Kingship. Myrrh is dried sap from a tree. Makes great perfume and is quite expensive. Frankincense is milky sap from another tree and honors God. We Wise Men think the king will be quite impressed with our rich gifts.

Wisdom For Today: Seven days on the road from the East to the West makes one 'weak'. Get it? One week-makes one weak! Boy, am I smart! Funny too!

Star Journey-Day 'Who Knows?': I am so sick of this star journey. I have dust and sand in places I didn't know I had. My camel looks at me like I have lost my mind. Big news! We met King Herod in Jerusalem. Seems like a nice guy. He says when we find this baby King he wants to worship him too. He smiled real big. He must really mean it.

Wisdom For Today: When you meet a real king, just be nice.



Star Journey–Last Day: This just in--King Herod doesn't want to worship the baby King. He wants to kill him. We must be very careful. The star finally stopped over the Child. You won't believe what we found! We found Mary, Joseph and the Baby. We were so amazed that we dropped to our knees and worshiped him. We offered our gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And then we said, "coochy-coochy-coo." After all, he IS a little guy! He was impressed.

Wisdom For Today: It is not the gift, but the thought that counts.

So here we are today. I have a secret...a star surprise in my pocket. (*Open your pocket or the folds of your costume to reveal a bright light–flashlight–shining upward.*) I never want to forget my Star Journey to Bethlehem so I kept a 'Pocketful of Starlight'.

How about you? Do you have a 'Pocketful of Starlight'? (*Students reveal their little lights from their costumes. Help them and take time to let the audience see all the little lights. Add lots of little lights that fill the stage. Plug in bunches of white twinkle light sets set up all over the stage.*)

**OPTION: STUDENTS SING "Wise Men Still Seek Him"
to tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"**

So here we are on this day of all days, the birthday of God's Only Son, Jesus. Help me tell the WHOLE story for my journal.

To Mary: Who are you?
MARY: I'M MARY, JESUS' MOTHER

To Joseph: Who are you?
JOSEPH: I'M JOSEPH. GOD LET ME BE JESUS' DAD ON EARTH.

To Shepherds: Who are all of you?
SHEPHERDS: WE ARE SHEPHERDS FROM THE FIELDS.

To Angels: Who are all of you?
ANGELS: WE ARE GOD'S ANGELS. (Flutter hands like wings.)

To Wise Men: Who are all of you?
WISE MEN: WE ARE WISE MEN FROM AFAR.



Ahh, yes, my hometown wise men. We traveled from Afar to meet Baby Jesus.

To Stars: Who are all of you?

STARS: WE ARE GOD'S STARS.

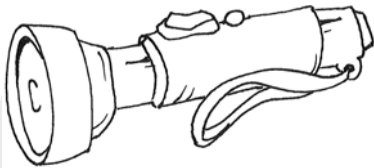
To Animals: Who are all of you?

ANIMALS: MAKE APPROPRIATE ANIMAL SOUNDS.

OPTION: STUDENTS SING "CHRISTMAS, CHRISTMAS" TO THE TUNE "PRAISE HIM ALL YE LITTLE CHILDREN" AND "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR JESUS".



THE WISE MAN WRITES ABOUT EACH OF THE BETHLEHEM PEOPLE.



All present and accounted for. Most important is that Baby in the manger. Jesus, Name above all names. Let me think, what shall I write in my Star Journey Journal.... *(Pretend to write as you read.)*

Star Journey–Today: I am among amazing people. Mary and Joseph trusted God and traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the counting of people. Mary gave birth to God's Son, her firstborn, and laid him in a manger because there was no room in the inn.

Bowing To Mary and Joseph , carrying the Baby: Thank you Mary and Joseph for trusting God. Many will praise your names for generations.

Writing: There were sheep herders camping in the neighborhood. They were watching their sheep in the night. God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed all around them. They were terrified!

Bowing To Shepherds: Thank you, shepherds. An amazing thing happened.

Writing: The shepherds were surprised to see the sky filled with angels praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to men."

Bowing to Angels: Angels are wonderful messengers of God. One angel said, "Unto you is born this day in the City of David—that's Bethlehem—a Savior who is Christ the Lord."



I have it on good authority that the angels disappeared and the shepherds took off and ran as fast as they could to Bethlehem and found the Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Writing: I followed one star to a stable in Bethlehem. God created so many stars and they bow before their Creator.

Bowing to Stars: Stars reflect God's light. I had much time to reflect upon the stars as we traveled during those cold nights. May God's light be reflected in me.

Writing: ...and the animals. There was no room in the inn for a king that night. If only the innkeeper had known he was hosting a royal family. Instead, animals witnessed Jesus' birth and in their simplicity, must have wondered about all the commotion.

Bowing to Animals: God's full creation hushed at the birth of the Savior of the world. He didn't come as a full grown leader. This king arrived in a humble stable where humble animals lived. God must have a great sense of humor.

SITTING ON STAGE-Wise Men Gather:

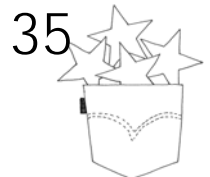
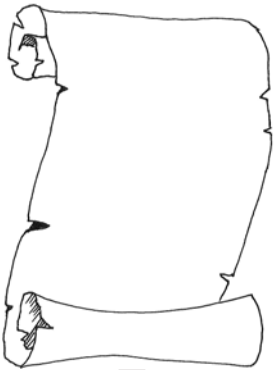
Writing: And that brings us to this moment. A Baby, shepherds, angels, wise men, stars and even animals gather in a little stable to celebrate a birthday party. God sure knows how to say "Happy Birthday, Jesus".

Word Of Wisdom for Today: I have one more Word of Wisdom to write in my Star Journey Journal: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31)

I, being the Wise Man from Afar, assure you that I will never forget pockets filled with light to celebrate Jesus' birthday.

Rise from Wise Man's Chair:

We must go home now; Back to Afar. My wise men friends will 'go home a different way' to be sure that old King Herod doesn't find us after we deliver our baby gifts. Follow me. The life of Jesus has been lived and lives still, the journal has been written, the story has been told by the littlest among us. Show off your own 'Pocketful Of Starlight' everywhere you go.



Conclusion

One grown up concludes the program

As the angel choir went home to heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

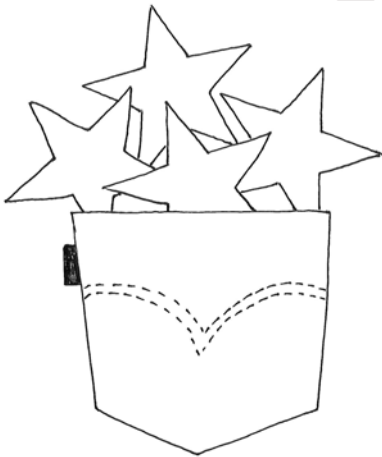
Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself.

It turns out that our Wise Man's story is all too true. King Herod asked wise men from the East, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star and have come to honor Him." They were wise enough to find Jesus, give their worship and gifts and travel home a different way.

If the wise men could have captured starlight, they would have taken it home with them to light the whole world. God's miracle star led them to the stable and lit the spot for all to see. It was impossible to capture it and hide it in a pocket.

What was not possible for wise men from Afar, is possible for you! Jesus fulfilled all the promises of scripture. He lived, died and rose from the grave just as He said. Don't keep the light inside your pocket, tell everyone the good news we celebrate at Christmas. "For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

OPTION: AUDIENCE SINGS
'CATCH A FALLING STAR'
AND 'JOY TO THE WORLD'.



Shine, Jesus, Shine 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.

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.

Write your thoughts here.

Lined writing area for notes.

During The Party

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

After The Party

Don't forget! The 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!



PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

