

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

...Unto Us A Boy Is Born!

A
Preschool
Christmas
Program





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A Preschool Christmas Program

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM is an easy-to-prepare short Christmas program exclusively for preschool children ages 3-5. Include younger students as desired. Feature your costumed little ones in an appealing retelling of the story of Jesus' birth.

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM is rehearsed during Sunday School or Preschool Care by small groups with their teacher(s). Gather all preschool children for a final rehearsal and this Christmas program is set to go!

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM is a 20 minute presentation sprinkled with humor and inspiration while telling the basic story of the night Jesus was born. Is there anything sweeter than preschool children in complete Bethlehem costume? Is there a better 'teller' than an angel who was there? What fun! Children gather to listen to her story and then join in the Nativity scene when directed.

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM involves the audience singing Christmas Carols. Teach several simple songs to the little participants part and this becomes a charming presentation completed by the youngest among us!

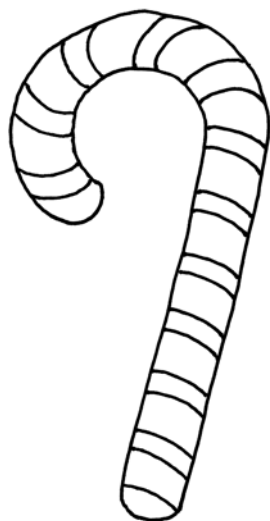
TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM concludes with a fun "Birthday Party For Jesus"! Serve snacks, play Christmas music and celebrate.

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Preschool Christmas Director ...Creating A Little Miracle!

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

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

Since this is a program created for preschool children, it is necessary to have enough children to carry out the program. A little 'cheating' on the upper end is okay. Fill in with kindergarten students if you need them!

Ask small group leaders to organize their children complete with props or costumes for their segment of the poem. 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 youngest among us.



Prepare your heart. Parents, grandparents and guests will be blessed. Mistakes become memories and preschool 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.

It is possible that you are thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside and dive into this charming presentation of Christmas as seen through the eyes of 'Joy Bringer' a gentle, lovely Christmas angel. She tells the story of Jesus as only a true Heavenly insider can.



Young students take to the stage in full costume to re-create the Bethlehem stable scene. They sing simple songs that you insert as desired.

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

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH. This little program is worth extra effort in the midst of personal 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 Christmas 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 and mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt the 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 musical suggestions and let you make the final decisions.

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

Some churches enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Since this program is based on story telling in the form of Joy Bringer's poem, it is possible to read parts. If you desire memorization, lead time must be longer and more intensive rehearsal is essential.

May you delight in a Winter Blessing
With this special touch
Of Jesus' Birthday story.





AT A GLANCE

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

PRELUDE

PARADE OF THE CHILDREN

JOY BRINGER'S ENTRANCE

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"UNTO US A BOY IS BORN!"

The Narrated TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM Poem
Brought to Life by Joy Bringer
And Preschool Children

CONCLUSION

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS





ADAPTING TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM TO FIT YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL

Preview and adapt the program to fit the needs of your preschool. **TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM** is designed to last about 20 minutes depending upon time required for special music. The "Birthday Party For Jesus" is not included in this time frame and is an option.

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.

MEDIUM CHURCH/SCHOOL

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

LARGE CHURCH/SCHOOL

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

BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

Ask an adult Sunday School class, women's group or Parent organization to take responsibility for the party. They decorate, plan, prepare food and arrange clean up. The party is a wonderful conclusion for little ones but is definitely an option. If time does not allow, the program will still be complete.





CHRISTMAS MUSIC!

Choose familiar Christmas Carols to be sung by the audience. Include hymnal page numbers in a printed program or illuminate words on a screen. Coordinate music with church or school musicians.

Christmas Carols

Add traditional Christmas Carols. This music is sung by guests and not necessarily by the young students. Choose Carols you like the best!

New Music

We have included preschool music suggestions that may work well. Choose several short songs. Place those songs anywhere you desire in the course of the event. No piano accompaniment is required. Teach the short songs in the weeks preceding the program. Place the songs anywhere desired in the program. You may choose to forgo preschool music 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	INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
VOCAL GROUP (DUET-TRIO-QUARTET)	HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR
CHILDREN'S CHOIR/ADULT 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.

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 BABY BOY

(Tune: Mary Had A Little Lamb)

Mary had a baby boy, baby boy, baby boy.
Mary had a baby boy
And she named him Jesus.

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

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The shepherds came to visit him, visit him, visit him.
The shepherds came to visit him
Because the angels sent them.

The wise men brought him three nice gifts,
Three nice gifts, three nice gifts.
The wise men brought him three nice gifts.
Frankincense and gold and myrrh.

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



TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM 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 for Mary is placed near the manger. Add other stable items as available. Included in this manual are patterns for cardboard animals. Enlarge and make as desired to complete a great stable look.

Angel Chair: 'Joy Bringer' the angel tells the story of Christmas while sitting in a chair. Place her chair near the Nativity scene area. Prepare a large, throne like chair, lit from back and front. Cover in white sheet, spray glitter and drape with gold or silver tinsel. White twinkle lights should be lit under white sheets puffed like clouds on the floor around the chair.

Leave lots of space around the chair so every preschool student (dressed in costume) can sit on the floor surrounding 'Joy Bringer'. They listen to her story and then are placed in the Nativity scene at the proper time.

Angel Story Book: Make a large, fancy story book that looks like it comes from Heaven. Use white poster board with script attached inside. Spray glitter the outside of the 'book' with glitter so that it sparkles in the lights. Decorate as desired.



SEATING. Reserve seating for students and staff before the audience enters the area. Do this as needed. Display bows or rope off saved rows. Assign assistants to sit with younger children.

SOUND SYSTEM. Use the existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place a microphone near 'Joy Bringer' or attach a personal microphone to her 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 if desired.

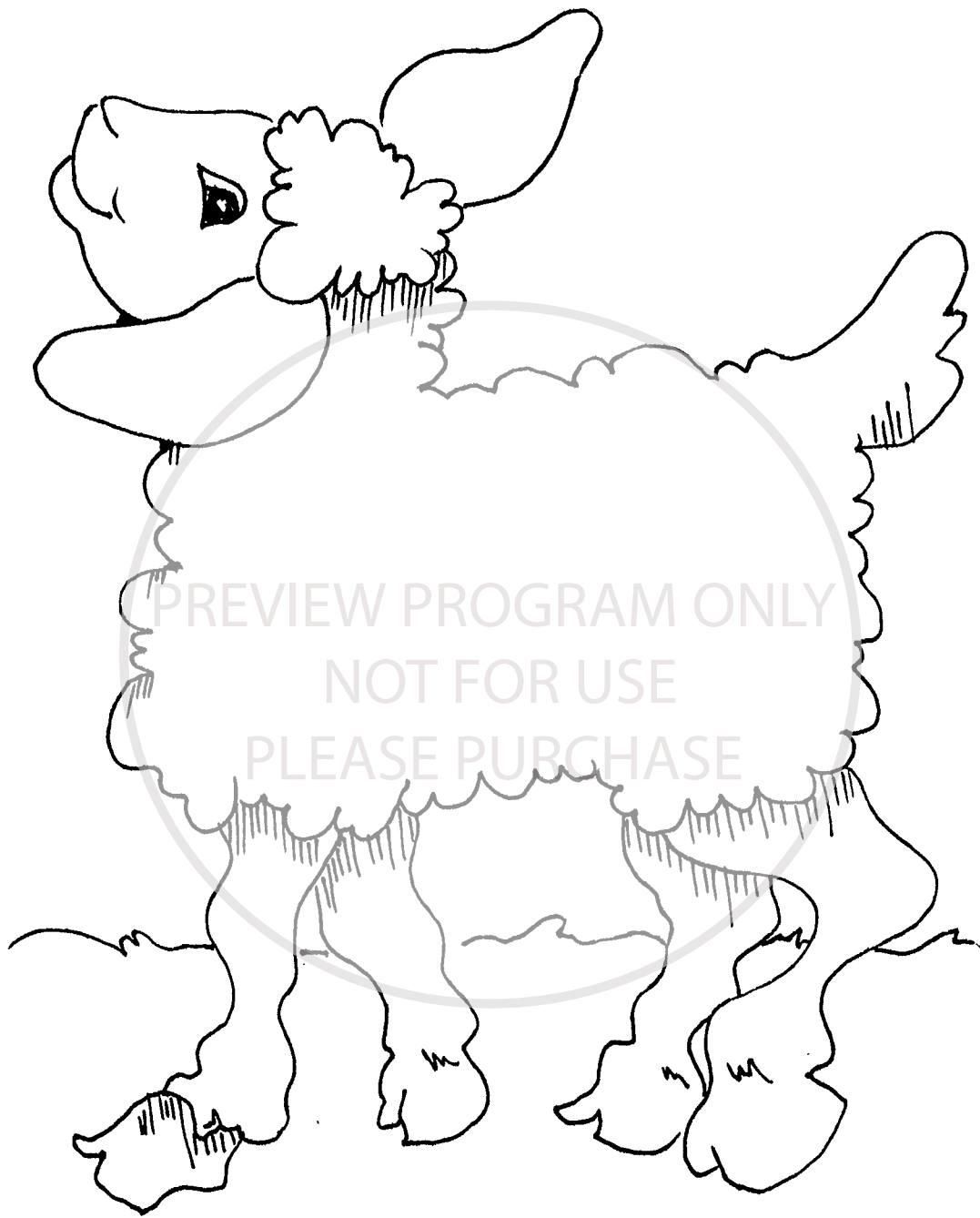
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COSTUMES

Prepare simple costuming for all preschool children. They become 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



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.

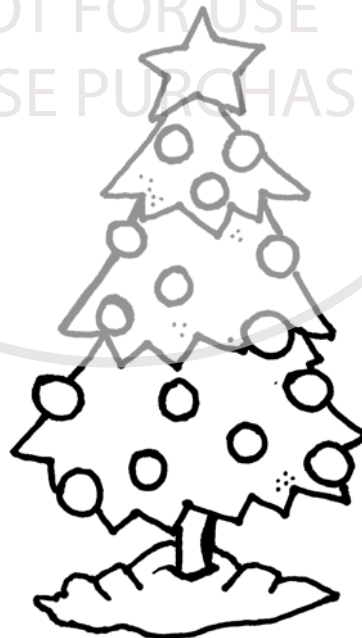


Bathrobes: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for headdresses and sashes to complete the costume.

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"!

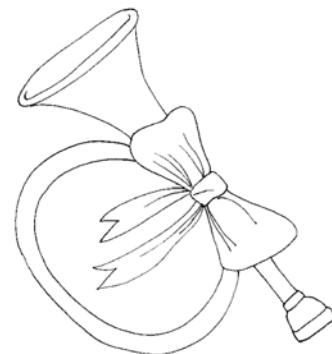
After The Show

Ask young participants to remain in costume at the HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS PARTY. This is the time to congratulate them on a job well done and reward them with hugs and small gifts as desired.



PUBLICITY

Publicize **TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM...Unto Us A Boy Is Born** 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 **ALL SPRUCED UP FOR CHRISTMAS PARTY**, let people know there will be a Christmas celebration including food following the program.

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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

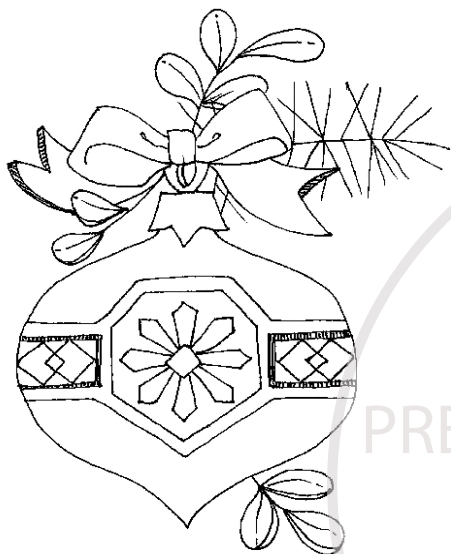
Send family invitations home with students. This is effective for families who send their children to Sunday School but are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.



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

Speaking will be done by 'Joyful Bringer'. Be sure written material is prepared in an easily readable format. Preschool children do not need materials in their hands.

Practice With Your Small Group

If you are assigned a small group, be in 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 Preschool Christmas Director values your leadership! Meet your class for the Preschool Parade. 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

Plan to stay for the HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS 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

The Director is available if you need help. You will be responsible to have your specific preschool children ready to participate. The programs 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 adults. Take time to 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 amusement!



JOY BRINGER

Becoming An Angel On Earth!



You have been chosen to portray 'Joy Bringer', God's Own Christmas Angel. Joy Bringer reads the story of Baby Jesus as a story teller poet with children sitting around her feet. The story is told in Dr. Seuss-like rhyme. Have fun with the lyrical quality of the words and rhymes.

Joy Bringer is the Narrator and speaks for little ones who cannot yet speak. Be flexible. Allow children to speak if they say something "off the cuff". This does not ruin the program and in fact their innocence, enthusiasm and curiosity makes the entire experience enjoyable for the audience.

The children dress in various Holy Land costumes. At the appropriate time, place them casually in the Nativity scene. Once you put them in the scene, they should stay there. If a few children wander, keep that "angelic sense of humor" in place and remind them of their 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 comfortable with those they know best. Visit their classrooms, talk with them and become a gentle friend in the weeks prior to the program. This pre-show preparation will reap benefits. The youngest children will not be afraid of Joy Bringer.

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



Joy Bringer's Costume

This is the time to create 'angel glam' the best you can. Wear a long white gown or robe. Wear gold or silver sandals or bare feet. Add accessories as available.

Wings may be difficult to maneuver while seated in the Angel Chair. Purchase gold or silver garland tinsel to trim the gown and wear as a belt and halo. A halo that sits in the hair is much easier to wear than a halo that is perched on a wire.

Add light, bright make up with pink cheeks and big eyes. Spray glitter in hair and on face to complete the sparkle. Spray glitter the entire costume so it shines in the light each time Joy Bringer moves.

The best part of any Angel costume is a happy smile. After all, angels have the best jobs and they come directly from Heavenly Father. Be cheerful, happy and lively.

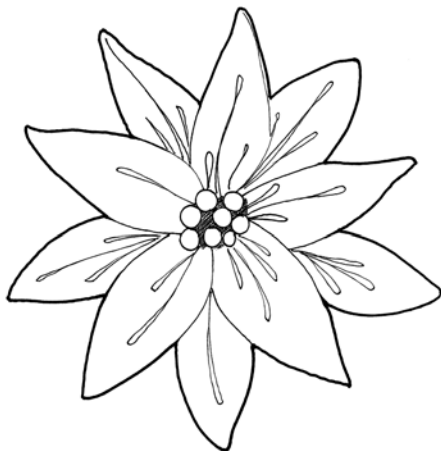
There will be an Angel Chair placed on stage for Joy Bringer. Sit at the edge of the chair in an expectant mood as the story is read.

Hold the large story book as if it is a very special keepsake. Suggestions for making the book are included in STAGING AND PROPS.



There's no time like Christmas
To release your inner "Ham".





TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS

TIPTOE TO BETHLEHEM...Unto Us A Boy Is Born is designed around narration by Joy Bringer, God's Own Christmas Angel.

Joy Bringer needs "earthly" 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 of any age 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 at Joy Bringer's Angel Chair, wear a costume.

If you are assigned a short speaking part, say it with enthusiasm. Unless requested, you may 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 leaders should sing along softly to encourage student participation. Most of the suggested songs are short and can be repeated two or three times.

There are many appropriate Christmas songs that can be performed. Choose music that is most comfortable for the staff and students.

On Stage/Off Stage

Keeping children quiet and involved is the best way to assist Joy Bringer. 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 as needed and sit with them. Help with costuming.



THE PRELUDE

Church instrumentalists (organ/piano/keyboards) 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 PRESCHOOL PARADE

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 parade into the room.

Dim the lights. Existing holiday lights are left to glow. 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 "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" or similar song. Or, ask the organist/pianist to play a Christmas Carol while they enter.

Either seat them in front rows or place them on stage. Children and helpers sit on the floor surrounding The Angel Chair as the program begins.

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



JOY BRINGER'S ENTRANCE



Once children are seated on stage, there is a flurry of activity in the back of the room. Joy Bringer is arriving! The flurry could be bells ringing, tinkling laughter, paper rustling. Joy Bringer "floats" along the center aisle to the stage in full angel costume.

Joy Bringer is peaceful, friendly, gentle and kind. Use an enthusiastic lilting voice when bringing this angel to life. The goal is to gather the little ones into the program plan and not frighten them.

JOY BRINGER: Do not be afraid! (Whisper...) I have a secret to share with you..and with you...and with you!

I may as well share my secret with ALL of you. My name is Joy Bringer! I am a very, very special Christmas angel. I bring a message from Heavenly Father who is Almighty God and Creator of Everything.

Heavenly Father said to tell you: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 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 unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:10-14)

I have completed my mission. Heavenly Father said I should come right back to Heaven so I bid you farewell. Farewell!

Wait! It seems as if I have forgotten something. (Look up as if listening.) Oh-h-h! Right. Heavenly Father says I must tell the WHOLE story. I love stories. Don't you love stories? Well, let's get going. Gather around as I tell you a story you won't believe. However, I'm such a terrific story teller that by the time I am done you WILL believe it....because it is TRUE!



Gather the costumed preschool children on stage to sit around the Angel Chair. Sit down to read and take time to place the little ones in the Nativity scene at the proper time. Read the story from a large, glittery story book. The verbal directions included between parts, can be said in your own words as desired.



UNTO US A BOY IS BORN!

Come listen, come listen,
Come one and come all!

To the tale of a Baby born in a stall.
This Baby we speak of is tiny, not tall.
This Baby is special. This Babe is a doll!

Our story begins in Eden of old.
A man and a woman, created, quite bold.
They walked in the cool of the eve with their Friend.
The tale that I spin has quite a sad end.
A snake in the grass put a girl up a tree.
She ate and she ate... she ate with such glee!
God warned, 'This fruit is forbidden.' But Eve disobeyed.
Adam ate too, what a bad day they had.

Eve's greedy lunch removed our Creator.
Because of their sin, He left sooner than later.
Back in God's Throne Room a plan began hatching.
Heavenly Father devised a new way of matching
His love for all people and it would be catching.

'I have it' He thundered. 'The way to perfection.
I'll go to earth. I'll head that direction.'
The angels around Him bowed heads, folded wings.
It sounded quite dangerous and even quite 'strang-erous'



But they bowed to the will of their wise, loving King.

What would He do? When would He leave?
Heaven was buzzing. They couldn't believe
Their dear God loved people enough
To guide them to Heaven, now that would be tough.

Where are my Mary and Joseph? Come here. Let's put you in the story right now. Stand here...and I need one angel. You stand here. (Place them all beside the Angel Chair for now.)

Back on the planet with life ordinary,
A young man named Joseph fell in love with sweet Mary.
An angel, like me, appeared at the door.
'Do not be afraid, for you two there's more.'

The angel offered a grand invitation
The world would rejoice with God's Visitation.
God's Own Son, was about to arrive
In the form of a Baby, they were quite mystified.

Was He born in a mansion, a castle, a home?
No, I'm afraid our dear Jesus was born in a barn.
In a dark little stable in Bethlehem town.
Where cattle and oxen and sheep all laid down.

Walk Mary and Joseph over to the empty Nativity scene. Place them in position behind the manger. A small bench or stool for Mary to sit on works well.

But first, let us journey with Joseph and Mary
By foot and by donkey. It was quite necessary.
The government made everyone sign up their family.
The law was required and so they left Galilee.



I need an Innkeeper. You know, the guy who found a place for Jesus to be born. You look like an innkeeper. Stand over on the side. Put your hands on your hips like you are very pleased with yourself. That looks great!

The night was chilly in wee Bethlehem
Mary needed a safe place to give birth to Him.
Joseph knocked on the door of one Innkeeper man.
'No room, keep moving!' and that door was slammed.

This Innkeeper thought there might be an answer
He found a spot with a tip of his hat, sir!
Warm and dark and quiet and clean.
His stable was perfect and simply serene.

Mary, pick up that sweet Baby so everyone can see Him. Hold Him tight so He won't cry. (A baby doll wrapped in blankets should be placed in the manger before the program begins.)



Mary and Joseph welcomed a Baby that night.
He was sweet, He was dark eyed, He fit just right.
No cradle was waiting so a manger worked best
To give this Child cuddles, to give this Child rest.

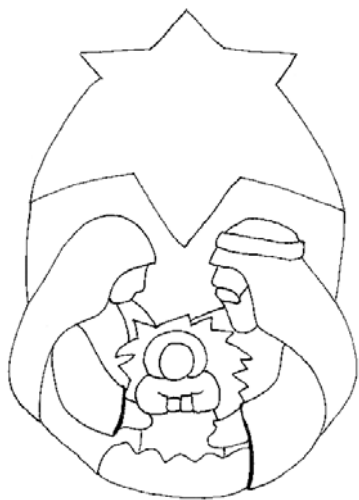


Ooo, this is one of my favorite parts of the Christmas story. I need some shepherds and angels. Do we have any sheep? Stand over here like you are looking at the baby. Shepherds in front and angels, you fly to the back to watch over the whole family.

Out on a hillside some shepherds were keeping
Their sheep in a field and those sheep were bleating.
Out of the sky there arose a great light.
Those shepherds spied angels from Heaven in flight.



Angels are special, just ask me, I know!
Angels brought news, rejoiced toe to toe.
"Glory to God in the highest," they sang.
"Peace on the earth", we are here to proclaim!



"Get into Bethlehem. Go there tonight!
You'll find Baby Jesus sleeping so tight.
He's just inside town in a cozy, dark stable.
He's waiting for you to bow if you're able."

The shepherds ran quickly to Bethlehem village.
They searched and they found him,
the Boy of the Ages.

Those lowly shepherds bowed at the manger.
The angels were right, they found this small stranger.

Get ready for the big finish everybody. I need some wise men. Do we have any camels? Do you have your baby gifts ready? Come over here. You can kneel right in the front and look at Mary holding Baby Jesus. And I need a star! A real star! You stand over here and shine down on everybody! Oh, that looks great!

You may think our story is finished, quite done.
Not yet! There is more adventure to come!
Far, far away, wise kings rode on camels.
Chasing a star, they shuffled through big hills.

These guys were wise guys!
They even brought presents.
Gold and Myrrh and something called
...Frankincense.
Don't you laugh, you might not know,
That these three gifts helped that Baby grow!



Now look what we have here in front of our faces;
A scene that is lovely with all in their places.
A Mom and a Daddy and Baby make three.
Some shepherds, their sheep made excellent guests.
My favorite, the angels, fly low in the back.

The wise men were brave men and heroes to all.
They never returned evil King Herod's call!
He wanted to kill Baby Jesus that night.
They quietly rode their fat camels back home
Without any fuss and without a big fight.

Jesus was born in a stable it's true.
God sent His Son for me and for you.
We tell the Bethlehem story today.
Trust Jesus to save you. He is The Way!

And now we have come to the end of our story.
It is told for God's grace. It is told for God's glory!

Everyone stand up and take a bow! Our audience wants to clap for you. (Lead the entire group of preschoolers in a full bow from the waist.)

The children are led from the stage, single file. They may walk back the center aisle or walk completely around the room as they exit so everyone can see them up close and personal.





CONCLUSION

JOY BRINGER concludes the program by reading from her large, glittery story book. Stand in the middle of the stage to speak.

Dear people of God's precious earth, you are privileged to hear the story of the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Many nations filled with people never get to hear the story of Bethlehem. And you? Well, you get to hear God's Good News of salvation from the littlest among us. What joy! I am honored to be a true 'Joy Bringer' on this day in this place.

We don't know much about Jesus' childhood. This is what we DO know: "And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him."

Luke 2:40

I leave you with words Jesus spoke to His friends before He went back to Heaven. It had been a hard time. He was arrested, tried in illegal courts, beaten, and crucified on a Cross. He didn't stay in the grave. He rose from that grave and is alive today.

Jesus said:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:18-20 KJV)

Joy Bringer leaves quickly, walking back the center aisle, disappearing out the door.

**Conclude the program with a Christmas Carol of your choice.
Announce the BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS.**





BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

Assign party planning to one small group. This could be a few men and women hand picked for this purpose or an adult Sunday School class.

If available, parents of the participants 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 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. Bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes.

Option: Use hot dogs cut in pieces.

APPLE STARS

Cut apples in half crosswise. Have the children look to 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 musicians or favorite CD performances.

Centerpieces: Cover tables as desired. Christmas centerpieces should be featured on each table. Consider scattering a few lovely ornaments on each tables. Add one or two nativity set pieces in the mix to tell the Bethlehem story.



Preparations 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! THE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

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

If your own Christmas tree
is not trimmed,
you have a lot to think about
as you decorate! Enjoy the Season!

