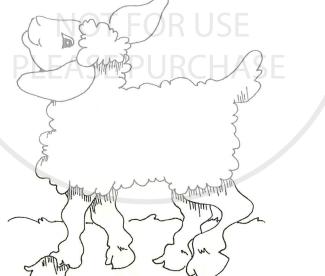
Lambs

R

Us

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs

R



Flocks Of Love!



The Shepherd Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

PREVIEW PI will fear no evil;

for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;
mu cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23

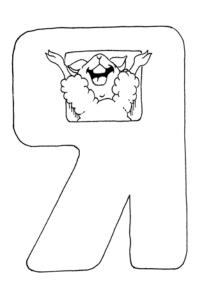


Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

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Lambs . R . Us Flocks Of Love!

It's Easter! Bethlehem shepherds have been telling God's Good News for 33 years and this very week Jesus rises from the dead and changes the world forever. God's plan is completed. Will anyone believe old shepherd tales?

Easy to plan and stage, this Easter presentation is filled with inspiration and humor. The audience joins the fun, singing familiar choruses and Easter hymns. Add special music using local talent to make this Easter presentation outstanding!



Lambs. R. Us is a unique peek into the Easter story through the eyes of Bethlehem shepherds. Children, teens and grown ups thrill again to Jesus' amazing story as seen through love filled eyes that were present the night Jesus was born and were there when Jesus died and rose from the grave.

Experience Flocks Of Love From Che Risen Christ!





Lambs . R . Us Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us is a unique way to tell the Easter story as seen through the eyes of Bethlehem shepherds who saw it all!

Lambs.R.Us gives folks of all ages opportunity to participate and then return to their seats in the audience to enjoy the full program. Choose a few people to become shepherds with a great story to tell.



Add small groups of children, teens and grown ups dressed in Holy Land costume. Assign segment parts as desired. Gather the whole group for a final dress rehearsal and this simple Easter program is set to go.

NO MEMORIZATION!

Lambs.R.Us is sprinkled with gentle humor yet filled with spiritual insight and inspiration.

Lambs.R.Us is a simple program with opportunity to add special music by participants and traditional Easter choruses and songs sung by the audience as time allows. Adapt to fit the talents of your group.

Lambs.R.Us concludes with a Wooly Lamb Party. This informal gathering features fun food and fellowship.



Directing The Director!



Lead With Love!

Mold various ages into a well organized Easter team. Print copies of individual segments. Assign parts to children, teens and adults who agree to become part of the event. Adapt *Lambs.R.Us* to fit the number of participants available in your church or school. Add music and local traditions and eliminate segments as needed.

Lead With Preparation!

Assign short segments to hand picked people. Even young readers become part of the fun. The result will be an inspiring presentation featuring the story of the Resurrection of God's Son, Jesus.

PLEASE PURCHASE

Lead With Enthusiasm!

Are you thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this?" Put those feelings aside and dive into this charming Easter presentation with a minimum of hassle. Bless your church with a special touch to remind everyone of God's gift through Jesus.



Delegate!

Small group leaders prepare individual classes/groups. Trust the staff to carry out their assigned tasks. Never apologize when asking people to help.

Be Positive!

Easter season is busy but also exciting and meaningful. It is worth extra effort in the midst of family preparations and travel plans.

Pray!

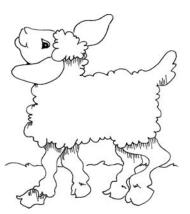
Pray for staff, students and set up. Take details before the Lord and then-RELAX! God is in control. Carry out individual tasks at hand.

PREVIEW PROPlan!

Think about how to organize the Easter program and party. Read it carefully, make adjustments, add music and choose the best children and adults to make this a memory maker.

Prepare!

Hopefully you have received *Lambs.R.Us* with more than one month lead time. We provide one printed master copy with permission to make as many printed copies using your copier as needed for your church. Copy segments for individual groups on your church/school copier. Assign responsibility for small group practice to teacher/leaders.





**** ****

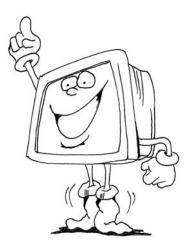
Very Important: 'Techy' Information!

IF PURCHASING LAMBS.R.US AS AN INSTANT DOWNLOAD, PLFASE NOTE ~

YOU WILL DOWNLOAD ONE PRINTED MASTER COPY OF THE PROGRAM.

THE FILE DOES NOT SAVE TO YOUR HARD DRIVE.

PREVIDO NOT WRITE ON THE ORIGINAL MASTER COPY!!!! MAKE ALL PRINTED COPIES FROM THE DOWNLOADED MASTER COPY.



This is a ONE TIME ONLY Instant Download.

Some churches enjoy memorization and other avoid it. Except for young non readers, read all parts. If your church is fond of memorization, lead time must be longer and more intense rehearsal is necessary.

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Print all pages needed for your local church using your local copier. Make as many copies of each page as needed for personal use. Do NOT give this program to any other church or group. Instead, give interested folks our order form, address and toll free telephone number (1-888-236-5433). This allows CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES to continue production of exciting, inspiring Christian programs at low cost to churches across the USA and Canada. All Rights Reserved-Copyright protected.



Adaptations Make It Work!

Adapt *Lambs. R. Us* to fit your group. Segments specified for individual age groups may be assigned to older or younger participants, combined or even eliminated. Your goal is to present the Easter story with available people.

Lambs. R. Us is designed to be presented in about 45 minutes depending upon added music. The Wooly Lamb Party is not included in this time frame.

When Should We Present Lambs. R. Us?

Sunrise Service, Sunday School Hour, Palm Sunday or Easter Morning worship is perfect timing. You may need to arrange a special presentation time in your church schedule.

Is This Possible For Our Group?

Small Church 10-20 Participants

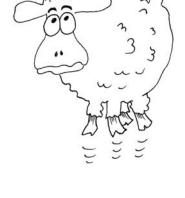
- 1. Eliminate segments requiring more people than available.
- 2. Combine speaking parts/classes/segments.
- 3. Ask groups/classes to present two or more segments.
- 4. Include teens and adults.

Medium Church 20-50 Participants

- 1. Eliminate segments requiring more groups than available.
- 2. Combine speaking parts as needed.
- 3. Include teens and adults.
- 4. Ask musicians to sing/play special musical pieces.

Large Church 50 + Participants

- 1. Organize speakers, servers, sound and lighting staff.
- 2. Include as many people as possible.
- 3. Ask church choirs, musicians to participate.
- 4. Divide parts to include as many speakers as possible.





Music!





Lambs. R. Us is a traditional program adding music as desired. Use talent from all age groups and music we suggest or your own music choices. We do not offer music with this program.

Coordinate music with the music team. Easter Hymns/Praise choruses may be sung by the audience. Include hymn book numbers in a printed program or use a projection system to illuminate the words. Choose special music spots within the program as desired.

Absolute Modern Worship For Kids

PREVIEW Arranger: Various Arrangers

12 Songs: Blessed Be Your Name, Beautiful One, Who Am I?, In Christ, Your Love Oh Lord, I Can Only Imagine, Audience of One, Majesty, Above All, Trading My Sorrows, Sing Alleluia, God of Wonders

We found this delightful collection of songs you will enjoy using with Lambs. R. Us. Do not teach every song, Choose a few you know your children can learn to add to the spoken words.

> This is a suggestion! You may have music that is perfect for your participants.

Purchase separately from **Brentwood-Benson Music Publications** at <u>www.brentwoodbenson.com</u> Find it in their online catalog at: Kids Music-Non Seasonal-Collections. Listen to all songs online! Check the Benson-Brentwood website to place an order, check product availability and find more information about the product. Speak with one of their friendly sales representatives by calling:

1-800-846-7664 Ext 1

PURCHASE SEPARATELY



Choose the items from **ABSOLUTE MODERN WORSHIP FOR KIDS** that best suit your budget and needs:

Listening CD
(Product #75610024) \$7.99
CD Preview Pak-Limit one per title
(Product #75710741) \$10.00
Split Track Accompaniment CD (Musical)
(Product #75710743) \$90.00
Choral Book
(Product #75710747) \$7.99

Easter Hymns

Sing traditional Easter Hymns at appropriate spots. Choose songs that fit the tradition of your local group. There are many contemporary Easter praise songs available and may be exactly what you need.

NOT FOR USE PLE Optional Special Music

Choose people to perform personal choices of solos, duets, trios, instrumentals. Place special music anywhere desired within the program.





Stage And Props

Lambs. R. Us is a simple telling of Jesus' Resurrection told by Bethlehem shepherds. Staging and props are casual.

Set Up

The church sanctuary will be decorated for Easter. Displays of Easter lilies, crosses and other items may remain in place.

Staging: The Sheepfold

Full stage is set up to look like a simple sheepfold. Traveling back in time to see and hear the story of Jesus' death and resurrection is effective with a minimum of Holy Land items on stage.

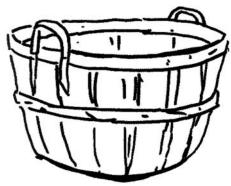
\ PLEASE PURCHASE

'USE YOUR IMAGINATION' PROPS: Create a sheepfold. Design a cardboard wall painted like big rocks and add some real big rocks on stage. Add a variety of outdoor items. Hay and green plants work well.

Hand print a large sign --LAMBS.R.US-- and make it the centerpiece of the sheepfold.

Add cardboard cutouts of sheep and lambs.

Include baskets, wooden benches, wooden tools, rope, green plants, hay....any old item that has an ancient feel to it. Backyards, garages and attics are the best places to find simple props. Scatter items across the stage as desired.





LIGHTING: Place small spot lights on the floor across the stage. Wherever possible place lighting behind items for a dramatic flair. Turn off overhead sanctuary lights. Create dramatic lighting with light and dark shadows.

PATTERN SUGGESTIONS FOR CARDBOARD SHEEP

Enlarge as desired or use your own sheep patterns found easily online. Google 'coloring book sheep images' and have fun making a few flock members.





Speaking Parts

Since no memorization is required, consider backing all speaking segments with crinkled brown paper or raw cut burlap fabric or faux white wooly fur fabric. This gives an ancient parchment/fabric feeling to the printed script.

Seating

Reserve seating in the audience for classes, small groups and individual participants. Consider assigning teens/adults to sit with younger children during the program.

Sound System PLEASE PURCHASE

Use the existing sound system to it's best advantage. Place one or more microphones within easy reach of participants. Speakers must be heard clearly. It makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful event for the audience.





Costumes

Each participant provides personal attire. Parents may be willing to provide bathrobes, caftans and head gear.

people may need costume Some Props can be made from assistance. cardboard and carried as if they are "real" items. Prepare bathrobes, sandals, sheets, long t-shirts with rope belts, bare feet, simple caftans and head wraps. Some jewelry may be worn.



PILLOW CASES: Cut a neck hole in the top of the pillow case. Cut pillow case up the front to the neck hole. Cut armholes in the sides. This makes a long, vest type costume for small children. Plaid or striped flannel pillow cases are available and work great!

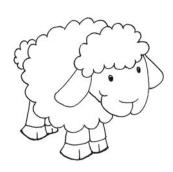
FABRIC: Two wide strips of fabric, one over each shoulder, crossed across the back and front of the child, tied with a sash makes a good costume too. Use striped or colorful fabric.

A square of fabric over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the tope of the head makes a sturdy headpiece.

BATHROBES: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales and resale shops or borrow robes. Wrap in front and use contrasting fabric for head dresses and sashes to complete the costume.



ANGELS: Dress Easter angels in white cotton or silver lame' fabric found in most textile stores. Angels may wear cardboard, feather wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel taped in a circle halo on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Face and hair glitter add "extra sparkle".



SHEEP: Feature a few children as lambs and sheep who follow the Bethlehem shepherd. Make simple homemade costumes by following directions for "How to Make Costume Sheep Ears" at www.ehow.com. There are other web sites that offer great headband and costume ideas to make a few sheep come alive as your shepherd's flock. If making just ears, have children dress in white clothing and add small cotton ball tails.

Child Ushers

Consider assigning a few Easter angels and costumed children to serve as ushers handing out programs and seating people before the performance.

Place children at each entrance and coach them:

"Welcome to 'Lambs. R. Us'!
May I show you to your seat?

Where would you like to sit?"

The friendly greeting is an added personal touch that is much appreciated by members of the audience.

Ask participants to remain in costume at The Wooly Lamb Party. They serve beverages, greet guests and wander through the serving area while people eat and talk.





Publicity Publicize 'Lambs. R. Us..Flocks Of Love'

through church communication channels.
Announce it in the church newsletter,
weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Church Bulletin/Newsletter/Website

Print announcements in all forms of church media. If you plan **The Wooly Lamb Party**, let people know there will be fellowship and food following the performance.

Local Newspaper

Include a news announcement
with church Easter publicity.
Talk to a news reporter and photographer
to see if a feature article is possible.

PLEASE PURCHASE

Television and Radio

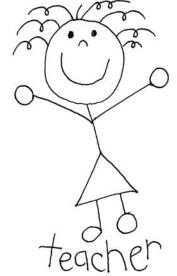
Advertise on your local cable channel. Check it out! It is one more avenue of great publicity!

Invitations

Send family invitations home with Sunday School students. This is effective for families who send children to your children's ministry but are not personally involved. Send real Easter cards with invitations tucked inside.



Teachers!



Involve People Of All Ages

If there are more students than speaking parts, divide parts or decide how to involve extra students. If there are less students than parts, assign two or three parts to each student. Be specific when assigning jobs holding visuals, carrying props and dressing in costume. Some people may participate with special music.

Highlight Individual Parts

Back copies with crinkled brown paper or raw cut burlap fabric or faux white wooly fur fabric. Performance copies must be in good shape.

NOT Practice!

Practice and plan costuming and props during the first few minutes of Sunday School. Adjust the program to fit your group. Reserve several Sundays for this purpose.

Communicate!

Let parents know when to have their children at rehearsals and the performance. Invite them to attend and be sure they know what props or costuming their child is responsible to bring.



Attend Rehearsal/Performance

Put on costumes in a back room, line up according to specific instructions and enter the sanctuary as directed. Sit in the designated area. Lead students on and off stage. Coach students quietly if they have problems speaking their parts.

...Stage fright is not uncommon!

Need Help?

The program comes together at the last moment with little formal large group rehearsal. Work out staging issues during rehearsal with the Director and music team. Be sure musicians and singers know what music is to be performed and when that will happen.

PRE The Wooly Lamb Party

Stay for the fun, fellowship and food! Decorate the room with any "sheep" props made for the stage. Mingle with guests. Enjoy students and their families. Eat something delicious to reward yourself for the great performance!

Enjoy The Easter Experience!

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch lives. Enjoy your small part of the bigger picture. The story of Jesus' Resurrection is classic. Our children should hear it and our adults should hear it again. The spiritual experience is amazing! Have fun with the production.



Bethlehem Shepherds:

33 Years Later



Lambs. R. Us needs a few faithful teen and adult shepherds. The Bethlehem shepherds hold the story and group segments together. Adjust this character depending upon how many people are available. Since the program is divided into 3 segments, a different shepherd can pick up the story. If one person is available, that shepherd can tell the entire story.

Teachers of small groups become Bethlehem shepherds who add to the story as their group takes to the stage.

DIRECTOR: Choose mature teens or adults who read well and are comfortable speaking in front of a group.

COSTUME AND CHARACTER: Dress simply as a Holy Land shepherd. Carry the script and read from it. Rehearse aloud before the program to be familiar with the words and order of program segments.

Authentic shepherds carried a blanket-like garment to wrap up during inclement weather, a pouch for food and a defensive weapon, a long rod with a crook at the upper end to manage the flock, keep it together, guide it, defend it and 'bonk' disobedient sheep as needed.

Get into character. If group issues arise with children, go with the flow and assist with any impromptu malfunction with grace and humor.

Be involved with the story line at all times. When not required to speak, sit quietly on a simple bench on stage, watching and listening with interest. The Bethlehem Shepherd never leaves the stage.

WANT TO ADD SOME FUN? If there is a gently trained, child friendly, calm DOG available, consider including it in the program. It can hover near the shepherd for affection or sleep on stage. The dog's owner must dress in costume and accompany the dog (on lead) at all times. If the dog gets frisky, it will be easy to walk it out of any scene at any time as if it is a planned part of the program.

Shepherds were helped by dogs who, while not necessarily the cuddly pets we own, still protected the flock by warning of danger by their barks.



The Bethlehem Shepherd is the story teller who holds the telling of Lambs. R. Us together. Highlights of the life of Jesus are told through the eyes of these common night shift workers who were there the night He was born, during His life and, very possibly, at the resurrection.

> Have fun being unknown, everyday shepherds. Draw the audience into the story of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection!

Narrator

Choose one person of any age to read the Narrator segments in modern dress.

Option: Sheep!

A few children of various ages become 'sheep' following the shepherd, listening to every word of his story. They never leave him! Sheep do not speak ~ they 'Baa'

They sit or kneel in the background, wiggle and 'baa' as required.

Numbers of sheep do not matter. Judge how many sheep by how many participants are available. Two or twenty two ~ you choose!

Use our simple costume suggestion, find a great web site with suggestions, rent or buy costumes or make a few simple cardboard sheep.

Are you in the country? Consider featuring one live lamb carried by the owner.

Sheep and lamb puppets are available on web sites. Soft stuffed toy sheep may also be carried! Whatever option you choose, the Bethlehem Shepherd's Easter Sheep will be memorable roles in Lambs.R.Us!



At A Glance

Prelude Processional

Narrator: Easter Story From A Sheepfold Shepherd Introduction

ACT 1: LAMBS. R. US SHEPHERD FROM THE HILL...33 YEARS LATER

The Narrator: Easter From A Sheepfold Shepherd Introduction

NURSERY/PRESCHOOL: Tell Me A Secret! KINDERGARTEN: Jesus Is Our Sunshine!

SPECIAL MUSIC: AUDIENCE SINGS:

ACT 2: LAMBS. R. US ... THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Narrator Shepherd

GRADES 1-2: Baa Baa God's Sheep GRADES 3-4: Hope Is Alive!

PLEASE SPECIAL MUSIC: SE AUDIENCE SINGS:

ACT 3: LAMBS. R. US ...FOLLOW THAT SHEPHERD!

The Narrator Shepherd

GRADES 5-6: The Dastardly Plan TEENS: Isaiah 53 Angels

CONCLUSION: The Narrator THE WOOLY LAMB PARTY!



Let's Begin!

Choose a comfortable, respectful way to begin the program. Music should be playing as the audience enters. Seat the audience as the music plays. Greet everyone cordially. Participants enter near the end of the prelude.

The Prelude

Church musicians (organ, piano, keyboard) play Easter music as the audience gathers.

Feature children who play various musical instruments. Allow them to play pieces at their skill level during the Prelude. Include church musicians as needed.



The Processional

Gather Lambs. R. Us participants in an outer rom. Dim sanctuary lights. Existing candles or spotlights remain lit so people can read their speaking parts.

Light all stage lights on the floor and general area before the program begins.

Participants walk to their seats in the audience. Classes and small groups should sit together.



Narrator: Easter Story From A Sheepfold

This Introduction is read by a Narrator in modern clothing. Stand in the middle of the on stage sheep fold.



Ordinary night shift workers who found themselves in an extraordinary situation, men who started a little business called **LAMBS.R.US** in their simple sheepfold are watching Jesus who is in big trouble.

They know the truth about this Man, that delightful baby born in Bethlehem. They should! They have been telling everyone since a night 33 years ago when they were called away from their flocks and thrown into history. Unnamed common folk, we know them simply as 'The Bethlehem Shepherds'. They made a promise to tell everyone they met that their long awaited Messiah had arrived and He was right in their village, in a manger, down the lane!

The shepherds' story is a mystery and an adventure. It unlocks God's plan to save the whole world through His Son, Jesus.

The shepherds' story might sound like a fairy tale, but the wonder of it all is that it is true! There is no more thrilling adventure than discovering the wonder of God's promise to the least of us.

Easter begins and ends with the voice of shepherds who saw angels, ran to Bethlehem and worshiped their Messiah. They grew old telling everyone they met the amazing news that God had come to earth. They kept their promise to God.

Who would believe a shepherd? They were not fit to be in the company of good citizens. Their unlikely story may have begun in the hills of Bethlehem but it ends at a garden tomb near Jerusalem.

Here comes a Bethlehem shepherd now. Observe, if you will, the worn sandals, the firm step and a twinkle that comes from somewhere deep inside a person who has been changed by a miracle. Everywhere that shepherd goes sheep follow.



Act 1: SHEPHERD FROM THE HILL ...33 YEAR LATER

Shepherd Enters

Enter from the back, making soothing sounds as if guiding a flock of sheep.

Act as if speaking to the sheep.

SHEEP OPTIONS: MAKE A FLOCK OF CARDBOARD SHEEP, ASSIGN ONE CHILD (any age) TO CARRY ONE SHEEP AND FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD. SHEEP PUPPETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE. STUFFED TOY SHEEP MAY BE CARRIED. IF AVAILABLE, CONSIDER ONE LIVING LAMB CARRIED IN FOR A FEW MINUTES BY IT'S OWNER. A COMBINATION OF 'SHEEP' MAY BE USED AS AVAILABLE.

THE 'SHEEP' WIGGLE WHILE THE SHEPHERD SPEAKS TO THEM. ENCOURAGE THE CHILDREN TO SAY 'BAA' EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE. OR, MAKE SIMPLE SHEEP COSTUMES/HEADBAND EARS FOR AS MANY 'SHEEP' AS AVAILABLE.

Come, sheep! Come, sheep! (Make clicking, sshing sounds) That's it! Follow along the best you can. The hill is still steep. The path is still narrow but we can make it. (Sheep 'baa' and follow the shepherd.)

(Sit on edge of stage, leaning on staff or cane, speak to sheep) Ahh, these old bones are aching today. It's a far cry from years gone by. I used to climb that hill as easily as a fresh lamb but that was, let's see, 33 years ago. Hard to believe it has been all that time since I've seen an angel. Not that I haven't been looking. If I saw an angel, I would follow it straight to Heaven this time.

I see that look in your sheep eyes. You don't believe me. You don't think I saw a real, true angel from Heaven. You think I made it up. I'm just a lowly Bethlehem shepherd...liar, thief, poor. (Sheep: BAA!)

Every night when we are safe in the sheepfold, I still search the skies to see if those glorious creatures are coming to tell me more about that baby boy, Jesus.



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

The angel said, "Don't be afraid". Not be afraid? Ha! I was shaking in my sandals. Their light was so bright I was knocked to the ground. You sheep would have been skittering all over that hill had you been alive in those days. (Sheep: BAA!)

The angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For to 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."

Are you impressed that I remember angel songs after all these years? Oh, right, you are sheep, nothing impresses you. I've told you this story a thousand times and you still say, 'baa'. (Sheep: BAA!)

Suddenly that angel was standing with a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." It was really something! Bright light so big we had to hide our eyes. Music so glorious we cried. I get it, you don't care. Let me hear your 'baa'. (Sheep: BAA!)

We ran to Bethlehem! We found Mary, Joseph and the baby in a manger. How can it be? Angels announce His birth and no one seems to care. His bed is an animal food dish. Just like you sheep, the people said, 'Baa-Humbug'. (Sheep: BAA!)

He was a beautiful baby. After seeing God's angels and that baby boy, we ran and told everyone. It made them think, that's for sure. When we got back to the sheep on the hill, not one lamb was missing or harmed. We praised God for all the things we heard and saw.



Nursery/Preschool: Tell Me A Secret

Nursery/Preschool children are accompanied by parents. Carry or walk with toddlers dressed in simple Holy Land garb. Babies may be wrapped in long white sheets.

Preschool teacher speaks for this small group as a shepherd who has also been assigned the task to tell everyone what she/he saw the night Jesus was born and... to tell an Easter secret.

All dress in Holy Land costume. Number of students is flexible one or more, include everyone possible!

Divide speaking parts between available participants.

NURSERY PARENT: We finally found you! (Reading sign...) "Lambs.R.Us! ...Flocks Of Love" Yes, this is the place we were told to get our lamb. It's Passover time and we must begin our journey to Jerusalem.

TEACHER: (Seat children on the floor to hear a story.) **Gather around**, children. I have a secret! Sit here and here and here.

(To Shepherd seated on stage) Shalom, old friend! Remember that night on the hillside? We shepherds were given an important job. We must tell everyone we meet about Jesus.

(To children) BUT...there's MORE to our story. Let's see if I can think of it. Do you like secrets? I have a secret. Lean in real close so I can whisper it. Closer! Closer! Are you ready for my secret?

WAIT FOR CHILDREN TO LEAN IN AND CUP THEIR EARS WITH ONE HAND.

(Shout) He's Alive!

CHILDREN: (Clap Loudly)

TEACHER: I knew you would like my secret. Just like every Bethlehem shepherd who tells everyone that Jesus was born, we must tell everyone that Jesus is ALIVE!



FINGER PLAY: THREE DAYS

Day One- Hold Up One Finger The guards watched the tomb. Put hand above eyes. Pretend to watch something intently. All was quiet. Hold finger to lips.

Day Two- Hold up two fingers The guards watched the tomb. Put hand above eyes. Pretend to watch something intently. All was quiet.

Hold finger to lips.

Day Three- Hold Up Three Fingers The guards watch the tomb. Put hand above eyes. Pretend to watch something intently. All was quiet. Hold finger to lips.



SUDDENLY! Jump, as if in shock The stone rolled from the door of the tomb. Make a rolling motion with hands. Jesus stepped out! Walk fingers across palm of hand. God's Son was alive! Point to sky.

TEACHER: You know the secret! Now it's our turn to tell everyone God's great secret. Jesus is Alive!

EXIT STAGE



Kindergarten: Jesus Is Our Sunshine!

Kindergarten teacher speaks for this group as a shepherd who has also been assigned the task to tell everyone what she/he saw the night Jesus was born.... and to spread Easter sunshine.

All dress in Holy Land costume. Number of students is flexible one or more, include everyone possible!

Divide speaking parts between available participants.

TEACHER: Have you noticed how brightly the sun is shining today? I am a shepherd who appreciates such beauty. I was on a hill in Bethlehem when angels said the Messiah is coming! I saw them and I believe the baby born that night is Jesus who will save His people from their sins.

I was in the village today and the news is sad. Jesus, God's Son, our Messiah, is in big trouble. There are people who never did believe we shepherds saw angels 33 years ago. Jesus is in constant danger for His very life.

STUDENT #1: What kind of danger?

STUDENT #2: I don't want Jesus to be in trouble.

STUDENT #3: Jesus loves us.

STUDENT #4: What can we do?

TEACHER: Pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. That is how Jesus taught us to pray.

STUDENT #5: I can pray.

STUDENT #6: We need to cheer up.

STUDENT #7: Let's sing a song while we pray.

TEACHER: What a good idea! Jesus is our 'sunshine'. Let's sing about that!



STUDENTS SING: You Bring Us Sunshine

(TUNE: 'You Are My Sunshine' ~ Sing A capella)



CHORUS: You bring us sunshine.
You bring us rain.
We know you make things grow each day.
You bring us love to share with others,
And we thank You when we pray.

Dear God we love you, we want to know you And be more like you want us to...
Our hearts are open to spread your love, God.
'Cause we know you love us too.

PREVIEW REPEAT CHORUS

You brought us Jesus
PLE Thank you for Jesus
He died to take our sins away.
We want to talk to Him and thank Him.
We know He hears us when we pray.
REPEAT CHORUS

TEM ONORO

EXIT STAGE

SPECIAL EASTER MUSIC: AUDIENCE SINGS:

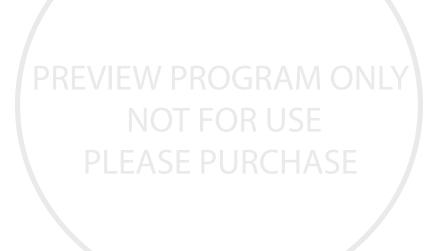




You are my sum-shine, my on- ly sum-shine. You make me hap- py when skies are gray,



You'll ne- ver know, dear, how much I love you. Please don't take my sun- shine a- way.



Act 2: The Good Shepherd

The Narrator

(Stand In The Middle Of the Sheepfold)

Sheep in Bethlehem were not any 'run of the mill' wooly sheep. Bethlehem sheep were raised to be the perfect sacrifices God required to forgive people's sins.

Do you know how to recognize a 'good' shepherd? Watch him search for a lost lamb. "When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing." (Luke 15:5)

A good shepherd does not drive the poor, weary sheep home. He stoops down and lifts it up, lays it on his own shoulder and carries it back to the sheepfold.

People loved Jesus because He was good, kind and was a wonderful teacher. He healed the sick, helped the poor and taught about God's Kingdom.

People **hated** Jesus because He was good, kind and was a wonderful teacher.

It's confusing that the very same qualities create opposite reactions. What has remained through the ages is that Jesus is The Good Shepherd. That's right! Jesus CARRIES his people on his own shoulders all the way home to Heaven!





Shepherd

(Stand or sit in the middle of the sheepfold.)

(Thoughtfully....) "When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing." (Luke 15:5) This very week Jesus is going to carry our sin to the Cross. He WANTS to carry our sins, burdens and cares.

Jesus wants us to picture a shepherd carrying a found lamb and to think of Him. The Good Shepherd is REJOICING as He goes to the Cross to pay for our sin.



NOT FOR USE

I will never understand how Jesus has enough interest in any human being on this earth to die and rejoice about that. The thought overwhelms me.

We can understand a shepherd's rejoicing carrying home a found sheep. We can understand a mother's joy when her lost child is brought home. But the heart of Jesus rejoices to find us and bring a back home. It seems too amazing to be true!



Grades 1-2: Baa-Baa God's Sheep Jesus Followers

Grade 1-2 students dress in Holy Land costume. Divide speaking parts between available participants. **NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED.**

Actors: Teacher, Students, Shepherd, Peter (teen or adult)

TEACHER: Hurry! We have no time to waste, brave followers. We must find Jesus before something terrible happens! Shepherds always know the latest news. Let's see if we can get directions at LAMBS.R.US.

Student #1: Shalom, Shepherd. We are followers of Jesus.

Student #2: He's in big trouble and we are trying to get to town quickly to help Him.

Student #3: We follow Jesus no matter what!

Student #4: Yeah, we're not scared of anything!

Student #5: Can you direct us to Jerusalem?

SHEPHERD: Shalom, Travelers! It is refreshing to find an enthusiastic group of Jesus Followers. You know, I saw Him first. I was one of the shepherds that saw God's angels. It's my job to tell everyone I know how to find Jesus!

Student #6: Well?

SHEPHERD: Well, what?

Student #7: Well, where is Jesus?

SHEPHERD: I'm afraid you are too late. They have taken Jesus away to crucify Him outside Jerusalem. I'm sorry to give you the bad news.

ALL STUDENTS: No, no, no! It's not true!



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

TEACHER: If we hurry, we can fight our way through the soldiers and rescue Jesus! Let's go! We said we will do anything to follow Jesus. Time to prove our courage!

Student #8: Wait a minute. Let's think about this.

Student #9: I know I SAID I would follow Jesus but I'm scared of soldiers.

Student #10: ..with spears!

Student #11: ...and swords!

Student #12: ...and mean faces!

SHEPHERD: I know a fellow who was in the same situation as you. Peter is a true Jesus Follower and he was scared too. I think I can arrange to have you meet him. He comes to visit every day about this time. I have a feeling he will be more than sad today.

PETER: (Enter with head down, wiping eyes with sleeve. Do not interact with anyone on stage. Speak as if talking to self and then leave stage.)

I have to find a place to hide-fast! I'm such a failure. Who would think I would end up being such a coward. I'm a strong person. I know the power Jesus had and yet I let those soldiers take Him away. I was there when He healed people, raised the dead and fed 5000. How could I deny Jesus not once, not twice but three times.

When that rooster crowed, I thought I would lose heart. I followed Jesus and I failed Him. How can I ever lift my head again? I, Peter, am not worthy to be called a follower of Jesus. He died and I could not save Him. (Leave the stage quietly.)

Student #13: We're too late. Jesus is dead.

Student #14: All is not lost! Jesus said He would rise from the grave in three days! Let's believe that!

TEACHER: Our spirits are low but if we sing we will feel better. Let's praise God! After all, our Good Shepherd said he carries us on His shoulders when we can't carry ourselves. We're God's sheep!



Baa, Baa God's Sheep

(Tune: "Baa, Baa Black Sheep" - sing a capella)



Baa Baa God's Sheep Have you any Praise? Yes Lord. Yes Lord, For all my days.

I'll praise You in the morning When the sun is shining.

PRH'll praise You in the evening With the pale moon light.

> Baa Baa God's Sheep Have you any Praise? Yes Lord, Yes Lord For all my days.

> > **EXIT**



BAA-BAA BLACK SHEEP

TRADITIONAL Arranged by DAN COATES



Grades 3-4: Hope Is Alive!

Grades 3-4 students dress in Holy Land costume. Divide speaking parts between available participants. **NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED.**



Actors: Teacher, Students, Shepherd, 2 Marys

TEACHER: My Mary friends said to meet them here at the sheepfold. We're late but I'm sure they will meet us. They never break a promise.

SHEPHERD: Shalom, friends. I've been stuck here with the sheep. I heard Jesus died but where is He now? What's the latest news out of Jerusalem?

Student #1: Have you seen our friend, Mary Magdalene?

Student #2: Have you seen our other friend, Mary?

TEACHER: Don't be confused, shepherd. We have two friends named Mary and they told us to meet them at LAMBS.R.US sheepfold today. They have news of Jesus!

Student #3: We don't know what happened. When Jesus died we ran away and hid in the cave over the hill.

Student #4: (Sadly....) All hope is lost. Our Jesus is dead and we have no Messiah.

SHEPHERD: I would not give up hope so fast, young one. God has a plan. I am convinced there is more to this story than you know.

Student #5: Look! Here they come!

FROM BACK TO FRONT OF AISLE, OUT OF BREATH AND EXCITED!

Mary Magdalene: He's Alive! He's Alive!



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

Mary: Jesus is alive! We saw God's angel at the tomb! The soldiers fell over like dead men and the angel talked to us!

Student #6: It can't be true. You must have been dreaming!

SHEPHERD: Give them a chance to tell their story. Ladies, I am an angel expert. Tell me, what did he look like?

Mary Magdalene: First the earth rocked under our feet! Then God's angel came down from Heaven and came right up to where we were standing.

Mary: He rolled back the stone covering the tomb and sat on it.

Student #7: Now I know you were dreaming. Do you know how big that stone is? No one could roll it back.

SHEPHERD: God's angels could do it. I've seen them do amazing things in my time! What did he look like?

Mary Magdalene: Well, he kind of...sparkled...no...shined...no...blazed with shafts of lightning coming out of him. Very impressive!

Student #8: Wow, I wish I had been there. Did the angel do anything? Say anything? Sing a song?

Mary: He talked to us. He looked right in our eyes and said....

SHEPHERD: He said, "Do not be afraid", didn't he?

Mary Magdalene: Yes! That's exactly what he said. How could you possibly know.

SHEPHERD: (Smiling) I think I met that angel one night, long ago on a Bethlehem hillside.

Mary: The angel said more than that. He said "I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross."

Student #9: You mean the angel knew Jesus was dead and he still rolled the stone away from the tomb?



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

Mary Magdalene: He told us Jesus wasn't there. I remember the exact words, "He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place." I looked and the grave clothes were in place but no body, no Jesus. The cave was empty!

SHEPHERD: Did the angel give you any instructions like "go tell everybody you meet that Jesus is born? That the Messiah has arrived?"

Mary: Our instructions were to go quickly and tell his disciples, "He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there." That was the message. I remember every word.

Student #10: Did you tell the disciples? Because if you are here at LAMBS.R.US and you didn't go tell the disciples you are in big trouble!

Mary Magdalene: We ran as fast as our feet would fly. Before we got to the disciples, guess what happened?

Student #11: You fell down? You tripped and skinned your knee, didn't you?

Mary: (Excited, jumping up and down) We saw JESUS!!! There he was in the middle of the road. And do you know what he said? He said, "Good Morning". Good morning! Can you believe it? Two wonderful words! Good----morning!

Mary Magdalene: We fell down and hugged his feet! Jesus said, "Hey, you are holding onto me for dear life. Don't be so afraid. Go tell my brothers that they are to go to Galilee, and that I'll meet them there."

SHEPHERD: What a wonderful Savior. The baby I saw born in Bethlehem is truly the Son of God. I knew it was true. All these years I knew Jesus was the Messiah, Savior of the world and Savior of me.

Student #12: God gave us HOPE. Hope is alive and well and living right here at LAMBS.R.US. Hope will be alive forever because Jesus is alive!



Psalm 23

(Tune: Mary Had A Little Lamb - Sing A Capella)

The Lord is my shepherd, shepherd, shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

The Lord always leads me, leads me, leads me. The Lord always leads me, and gives me rest.

The Lord restores my soul, my soul, my soul. The Lord restores my soul and guides me in right paths.

The Lord always comforts me, comforts me, comforts me.
The Lord always comforts me, Lwill not fear.

The Lord anoints my head, anoints my head, anoints my head.
The Lord anoints my head, my cup overflows.

The Lord will let me dwell with Him, dwell with Him, dwell with Him.

The Lord will let me dwell with Him, forever and forever.



EXIT

SPECIAL MUSIC: AUDIENCE SINGS:



Mary Had A Little Lamb

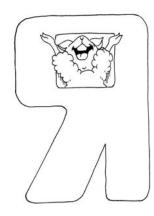




Act 3: Follow That Shepherd!

Narrator

(Stand in the middle of LAMBS.R.US Sheepfold)



Usually the Easter story begins with the events that lead up to Jesus' death on the Cross. We hear about the donkey and the palms and the Last Supper and the government trials and the horrible Friday Jesus died. Today we are letting our Bethlehem Shepherd hear all the wonderful things that happened after Jesus rose from the grave.

Can you imagine how any of the surviving shepherds felt that week? After all, they were part of Jesus' birth and now they are watching, from a distance, the end of Jesus' earthly life and the beginning of God's great plan for the salvation of earth.

Our Bethlehem Shepherd seems quite pleased with himself. He was part of the story and as far as he concerned it was mostly about him. But really, it's mostly about God and His great love for us. In fact, God had 'flocks of love'-get it? 'Flocks'? 'Lots'? Oh, forget it. I'm a Narrator, not a comedian!

There is a bit more to observe from the people who were there after Jesus rose from the grave. Let's peek in and see what is happening at LAMBS.R.US Sheepfold.



Shepherd (Sitting Alone in the Sheepfold)

What a day! It's almost time to put these sheep to bed. We have traveled up and down the cliffs and ended up at LAMBS.R.US just in time for the strange visitors telling about Jesus' death and resurrection.

I knew it, of course. You cannot fool an old Bethlehem Shepherd. I was there. It was mostly me! That baby boy was exceptional from the moment He was born.



Angels and wise men don't visit just any old baby. You have to be special to get that kind of attention. Although, I do wonder why our king wasn't born in a lovely house or a palace. Of all the places he could have been born, a stable is not the spot I would have guessed. I must admit I have been in some pretty fancy stables in my time....but that falling down, dark, dirty place was not one of them.

NOT FOR USE

Come to think of it, every time I ran into Jesus walking along the paths or teaching in the hills, He seemed quite ordinary...like me. He smiled, spoke gently, led people just like I lead my sheep, with a gentle touch. Of course, He didn't recognize me. After all, He was just a newborn when I met Him. Still, Jesus always seemed like a friend. It may be my imagination but I once thought I saw Him smile at me in that, 'don't I know you from somewhere' way.

My heart is sad to think He was crucified. It's a cruel way to die. I never doubted the angels. They said, "For unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Now go find the baby and then go tell everybody." And we did. And we believed. I still believe.



Grades 5-6: The Dastardly Plan

Grades 5-6 students dress in Holy Land costume. Divide speaking parts between available participants. NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED.

Actors: Students, Shepherd

Students creep along the aisles from the back of the church to the front as if trying to hide from row to row, bending over, running a bit and sshhing each other as they creep.

Student #1: Sshhh, I told all of you to be guiet. No noise. Not one single sound.

Student #2: If our plan is to work, we must be completely invisible.

SHEPHERD: (Calmly....) Too late! Peek-a-boo, I See You! If you need a place to hide just say so. Come over here and hide at LAMBS.R.US. I only charge one drachma per person.

Student #3: (Shouting....) One drachma per person! That's highway robbery!

ALL STUDENTS: (Loudly....) SSSHHHHH! HASE

Student #4: Pay the shepherd and get inside the sheepfold. We have to complete the plan.

SHEPHERD LEANS IN TO HEAR THE PLAN!

Student #5: (Acting as leader....) Here's the plan! First we deny we were ever at the tomb.

Student #6: We can't do that. We are Roman Guards. Everybody knows who we are. Our faces are famous in Jerusalem.

Student #7: Well, we are dressed in disguise. We left our uniforms back in the city with the high priests. No one will suspect us dressed like this.



Flocks Of Love!

Lambs.R.Us

Student #8: I don't know about you but my knees are still shaking. What hit us? We were guarding that tomb as easy as a night on vacation and suddenly, I was knocked out. When I woke up, the tomb was open, the stone was on the ground and Jesus' body disappeared.

Student #9: I was knocked out too! I was sure we were in big trouble. We scattered but you went into the city and told the high priests everything that had happened. What happened?

Student #10: That's the plan we have to complete. Everybody in?

All students put their hands together in the middle of a circle and shout, "We're in!"

Good. This is what we say, "Jesus' disciples came in the night and stole the body while we were sleeping."

Student #11: I'm not gonna say that. That's dumb. Everybody knows a Roman guard never sleeps on duty. We'd get killed for that. I'm NOT going to tell that story.

Student #12: The high priests gave us a whole lot of money as a bribe. We get to divide it up between us!

Student #11: Did Isay I'm not 'in'? I'm in! I'll tell the story.

SHEPHERD: Don't forget! One drachma per person to hide. Forget I'm here. What happens next?

Student #13: Nothing happens next. We met up. We got our money. If anybody asks, the disciples stole the body. People will tell that story forever. After all, isn't it easier to believe in a stolen body than that a dead guy rose from the grave?

SHEPHERD: You haven't been around much have you? Probably haven't seen many angels either or a baby boy born in Bethlehem who is the Savior of the world?

Student #14: What is that shepherd babbling about? Pay him and let's get out of here.



Students hop off stage and creep back the aisles the way they arrived, sshhing each other all the way.

SHEPHERD: (Laughing and slapping knee....) You sheep are smarter than those guys! I have a feeling their story will be told again and again but that doesn't change the truth. God is in on this, I guarantee it!

Hey! They never paid me my drachma for each one. Those dastardly cheaters!





Teens: Isaiah 53 Angels

Teens dress in angel costumes. Divide speaking parts between available participants.

NO MEMORIZATION NEEDED.

Actors: Students, Shepherd

Isaiah 53 is quoted from the English Standard Version.

Change as desired for your local group.

Teens dress as Easter angels and line the aisles, from front to back depending on how many are available. They each carry this segment of the script in homemade scrolls. Use white paper, gold paper, glittered and bright. Students read their segment in loud, strong voices as if making an important pronouncement.

Option: If someone can play a trumpet, have them introduce this segment with a trumpet fanfare as the angels take their places in the aisles.

SHEPHERD: (Alone on Stage) If only I could see angels one more time in my life, I would be a happy Bethlehem Shepherd. They are most impressive. I will never forget my night in Bethlehem. It was amazing. Even more amazing is knowing God's plan worked. Jesus is our Messiah. He did rise from the grave just as God said. 500 years ago, the prophet Isaiah promised these things would be true.

Angels enter from the back and fill the aisles.

Wait until every angel is in place before reading begins.

ANGEL #1

Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.



ANGEL #2

3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

ANGEL #3

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

ANGEL #4

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

PREVIEW PROANGEL#5 / ON

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him

the iniquity of us all.

ANGEL #6

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

ANGEL #7

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?



ANGEL #8

9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

ANGEL #9

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

ANGEL #10

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

ANGEL #11

12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

ANGELS EXIT SILENTLY

SHEPHERD IS THE LAST ONE TO EXIT BEHIND THE ANGELS, FOLLOWING THEM SILENTLY.

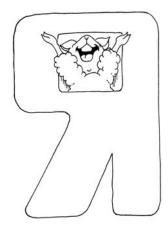
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Conclusion

Narrator

(Stand in middle of LAMBS.R.US Sheepfold)



Do you understand what has happened here? Jesus, that baby Son of God, grew up loving people and changed them from the inside out. Jesus was The Good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep.

This world didn't believe in a God who would rescue people from sin. In fact, those people didn't even believe they sinned at all. They killed The Good Shepherd.

But...that was not the end of the story. Jesus is more than the baby, more than the shepherds, more than a good man. Earth's saddest day and gladdest day were just three days apart. Easter is the demonstration of God that life is spirit and life is timeless.

Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness, weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness. The joyful news that He is Risen does not change the modern world. We must still work and sacrifice, trust and obey. But Easter... Easter... gives us the power to work and sacrifice, trust and obey.

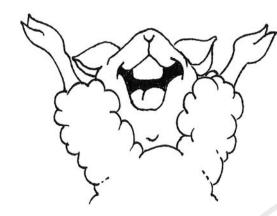
That's why we can joyfully obey Jesus final command as He was going back to Heaven:

"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. Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20 KJV)

EXIT



The Wooly 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.

Offer delicious desserts, background Easter music and casual fellowship.

Preparations Before Party Day

Menu: Plan the menu and prepare a few Easter snacks. A pleasant option may be to ask people to share their favorite dessert. If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with doughnuts, orange juice, tea and coffee.

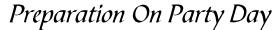
PREVIEW PROGRAMIONLY

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 Easter music. This could be live music performed by local church/school musicians or favorite CD performances.

Centerpieces: Cover tables as desired. Centerpieces should be featured on each table. Consider scattering shepherds and lambs from nativity sets on each table. Or, feature small stuffed lamb toys on each table.







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 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 WOOLY 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.

NOT FOR USE

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

Enjoy The Easter Season!

