

# THE LIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

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*... Let There Be Light!*



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*Let There Be Light!*



## We're Dreaming of a Light Christmas!

*"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light;  
Those who live in a dark land, the Light will shine on them."  
Isaiah 9:2*

Hail, hail to the newborn king  
Let our voices sing him our praises.  
Hail, hail to the Guiding Light  
that Brings us tonight  
to the Savior

Come now, there it Shines so Bright  
To the knowing light of the stable  
Lean close to the Child so dear  
Cast aside your fear and be thankful."

*"Light of The Stable" Emmylou Harris lyrics*



It's time to LIGHT up Christmas! What happens when a glitch in your Christmas program causes all the lights at church to suddenly go out? Oh no! It's a disaster! The audience is in place, the children are rehearsed, the stage is set. The only thing missing is LIGHT! How can you go on?

*The Bethlehem story is told in spite of the darkness and a perfectionist Director challenged with a serious case of last minute imperfection. Creative children, teens and grown ups bring the story of Jesus to life and the Director survives. Funny and serious, spiritual and inspirational.*

"The Light Before Christmas" is a delightful way to remind everyone to SHINE even when the task seems too big to handle. Merry Christmas!

*These pages contain plans and script  
for a unique Christmas program  
designed to deLIGHT young and old.*

**Open it carefully!**

*Let Your Little LIGHT Shine!*



This is the year to present an enLIGHTening Christmas program. From youngest child to oldest adult, include everyone willing to take to the stage to tell the Bethlehem story, to cradle Baby Jesus, to thrill to the Reason for the Season! And afterward? "Party On" at the **Born To Shine** Christmas Party!

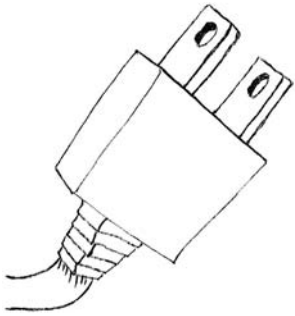
***Gather your church family!  
An adventure ...of LIGHT and LIFE...  
can be as close as Christmas!***

*Sound like fun?  
Turn the page... Let's get started!*

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## The Christmas Light Director

Organize this *enlightening* Christmas celebration. No age limits! Assign small group leaders who agree to take charge of individual segments.

*Make program copies. Assign segments to Sunday School classes, church committees, small groups of friends and willing individuals who agree to become part of The Light Before Christmas.*



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## Follow Directions

Leaders organize their small group complete with props and costumes. Be prepared to help. Individual leaders should handle their material. The Bethlehem story of Jesus is powerful and changes lives every time it is told.

## Prepare Your Heart

For some church members, holiday programs comprise most, if not all, of their Christmas celebration. Do it for the Lord! Do it for those folks!

## One Step At A Time

It is possible that you are thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside. Dive into the appealing presentation of Christmas as experienced by a frazzled Christmas Director, a gang of kids and an unwitting audience thrust into the dark. The audience and participants experience the adventure of a lifetime.

## Delegate!

Leaders become involved by preparing their small group. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Check in with them often.



## Be Positive!

It is worth extra effort in the midst of personal preparations, parties and travel to make Christmas events sparkle.

*Statements like, "We can't do it", "We never did it this way" or "No one wants to do it", are inappropriate. If the Christmas Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!*

## Pray!

Take details before the Lord and then—RELAX! Carry out the tasks at hand. God is in control!

## Plan!

Print a working copy. (*Do NOT write on this master copy!*) Mark areas requiring special attention. Adapt as needed. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide parts or combine parts as needed. Give teachers and participants copies of their segment in a colorful folder.

## Prepare!

Hopefully you have ordered The Light Before Christmas with more than a month lead time. Assign responsibility for small group practice to each teacher/leader.

## No Memorization!

Some groups enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, it is possible to read all parts. Memorization requires lead time and intensive rehearsal. Think about decorating each person's short part with a Christmas styled backing that faces the audience. Their script segment can be placed inside for easy reading.

**This is an ALL CHURCH/SCHOOL Production!  
Involve adults as readers, musicians and leaders.  
Adapt the program using available number of participants.**



## Adaptations

*The Light Before Christmas lasts about forty five minutes depending upon music and personal choice additions or eliminations made to the original program. The Born To Shine Christmas Party is not included in this time frame. Adapt the program to fit your favorite Christmas traditions. **It can be completed in less time.***



### Small Church

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts. Don't worry about correct ages for the segments. The segments are meant to be performed by any age as needed. Feature your favorite segments.

*OR, use the same few people to present more than one segment. Teens and adults are crucial to the small presentation. Some people participate several times.*

### Medium Church

Adaptation takes the form of personal preference. Choose segments you like best. The goal is to tell the Christmas story so don't leave out anything important.

### Large Church

Involve as many people as possible. Organize musicians, snack makers, servers, prop masters, sound/lighting staff and talented volunteers who make the program visually exciting.

## Born To Shine Christmas Party

Ask an adult Sunday School class, parents or group of friends to complete party plans. They decorate, plan and prepare food and clean up. The **Born To Shine** party is a fun option. If time does not allow for a social gathering, plan a great program and eliminate the party!





## Christmas Music Tips



*Coordinate music with music director, organist/pianist. Choose favorite Christmas Carols for audience participation. Include lyrics in a printed program or on a screen. Choose Christmas music your group knows and enjoys.*

### Carols

Select traditional and contemporary Christmas songs from your personal church music collection. The entire audience sings this music. Insert carols in the program wherever desired.

### New Music: The Light Before Christmas Melodies

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES is pleased to present three original Christmas songs composed by Jonathan Miller of GLORY SOUND STUDIOS in Winston-Salem, NC. Use these songs as desired (solo, group, audience, background).

*Piano and lyric sheets and double channel CD (sample voice + accompaniment only tracks). Call 1-888-236-5433 or order directly from our web site: [www.cemlife.com](http://www.cemlife.com) Listen to samples in our online Music Catalog. This is an option for all groups desired extra music. Instant Download or Shipping available. Your choice!*

### Special Music ~ Make It Personal!

Feature local church talent. These musical options are NOT in the existing program. Choose music from your own collection. Consider time limitations during planning stages. Talented people from church or community can make your program sparkle!

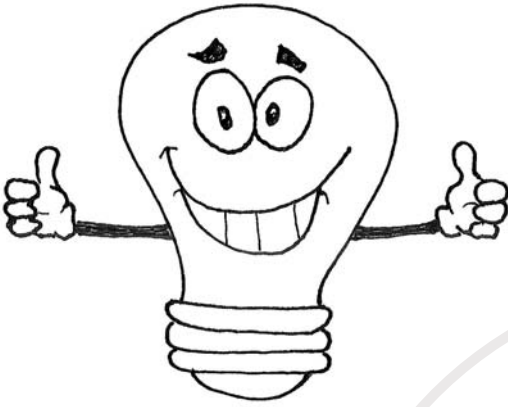
VOCAL SOLO  
VOCAL GROUP  
CHILDREN/ADULT CHOIR

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE  
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR  
INSTRUMENT SOLO/GROUPS



## Stage and Props

*The Light Before Christmas is a unique stage presentation using a minimum of props. Small groups carry personal props. This stage is set simply with inexpensive, easy-to-find items and lighting. Keep it simple!*



### Set Up

Christmas trees, Nativity, twinkle lights, poinsettias and candles in the sanctuary add to the festive atmosphere. Leave them in place.

### Staging

Your stage becomes a stable in Bethlehem. Include traditional items: manger, bench, green plants, pillows, blankets, pottery, baskets and other items to make the stage look like a Nativity scene.

### Seating

Reserve small group seating. Assign assistants to sit with young children. Participants sit in the audience and come to the stage to present their short segment. Follow program instructions.

### Sound System

Place several microphone stands across the stage. Attach personal microphones to the main speakers. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

### Lighting

Lighting OR LACK OF LIGHTS is important. Follow the directions for turning off existing decorations, overhead lights and floor spot lights. Assign people to pull plugs and flip switches at the right moment when the program begins. Lighting will be re-introduced at the right time.



## Costumes



Some participants become Bethlehem people and others wear modern clothing. Follow our suggestions for Holy Land costuming or create your own costumes.

*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.*

### Costume Suggestions

**Pillow Cases:** For small children, cut a neck hole in the pillow case. Cut up the front to the neck hole. Cut arm holes in the sides. This makes a long, vest costume. Sometimes plaid or striped flannel pillow cases are available and work great for little 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.

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

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



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



### After The Show

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

Notes:

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## Publicity

*Publicize The Light Before Christmas through all normal church/school communication channels. Announce it in the church newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.*



## Bulletin and Newsletter

Inform the congregation/parents about this special Christmas event. Print an announcement in November and December newsletters. If planning The Born To Shine Christmas Party, let people know there will be a Christmas celebration including food following the program.

## Local Newspaper

Include an announcement with church holiday publicity. Talk to a reporter and photographer to see if a feature article is possible. Prepare to be interviewed.

## Television and Radio

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

## Social Networking ~ Web Site

Does your church/school have a web site? This the perfect opportunity to advertise the Christmas event. Take pictures, include a short description. Include dates, times and party plans!

## Christmas Card Invitations

Send family invitations home with students. This is effective for families who are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside. Children could make Christmas cards as a project and attach the invitation to be placed in their take home papers or backpack.



## More For Teachers ~ Your Leadership Is Valued!



### Show Up With A Smile!

Meet your small group. Dress in appropriate costume, line up and enter the program area as directed. Sit with your group in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your speaking part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they have problems. **Stage fright is not uncommon!**

### After The Program

Stay for the **Born To Shine Christmas Party**. Collect props and materials before the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle and enjoy the experience with the students and their families.

### If You Need Help

The Director is available to help. Prepare your small group so they are ready to take to the stage. The program comes together with little formal large group rehearsal.

### Enjoy The Experience

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



## Just A Word About Memorization!

### To Memorize ~

Some groups love the process of rehearsal and memorization. If that is true in your situation, take extra time to stage the program and memorize all parts.

**Consider longer lead time and more rehearsals.**



### Or Not To Memorize ~

Memorization is not necessary. This event is designed to be a full church, inter-generational experience. Base group organization on Sunday School groups. Ask children, friends, older adults and people who may not normally participate to join the fun. It makes the event much more fun!

*If there is a limited amount of practice time, consider allowing the participants to hold their parts and read them. Practice sufficiently in small group settings so that everyone is familiar with their part and can speak with confidence.*

Carry printed materials on stage in creative ways. Depending on which segments are being performed, scripts can be backed with colorful paper, decorated with appropriate images.

Or, make copies of the parts that each person can hold on regular paper. After a few minutes, the audience does not notice. It does not affect the quality of the program.

**Whatever presentation method you choose,  
This is a great Christmas experience.  
Have fun!**



# Main Characters

Have fun with folks who want to have fun.  
Their enthusiasm will spread to the entire audience!

## Narrator

**1 Actor:** Older teen or adult, female or male.



The Narrator holds the program together, telling the Bethlehem story and making side comments to add humor. Become the steady voice of reason at the microphone, keeping everyone calm when the lights go out. Use a flashlight to read the script from behind a podium or at the edge of the stage. Never leave that spot.

## Director

**1 Actor:** An adult, male or female, in charge of the entire production. This could be the REAL director or an actor portraying the part. Dress in modern clothing appropriate for a dress up Christmas event.

Have fun becoming the perfectionist who is suddenly thrown into chaos. Direct the groups on and off stage with enthusiasm and humor. Carry a clipboard with the full script. Highlight speaking parts and practice aloud before the event.

The program revolves around the frazzled director becoming comfortable with events not working out the way they should...just like Mary and Joseph the day Jesus was born in a stable, miles from home, no family to help with strangers coming and going.

Along the way, the audience experiences Jesus' birth through the eyes of the people who were in Bethlehem and have a story to share and through the eyes of the director who eventually see the joy of presenting an imperfect program with all the Christmas joy intact!





## The Gang!

Choose segments according to the number of available people. From preschool to adults, include as many people as possible.

Divide speaking parts between participants. If a segment suggests 10-15 speakers and you have 2 people, they speak back and forth.

Eliminate segments as needed. Don't worry about ages. Mix it up. The segments are flexible.

People come from the audience to perform their parts and either remain on stage as directed or return to their seats. No one waits behind stage. Everyone becomes the audience!

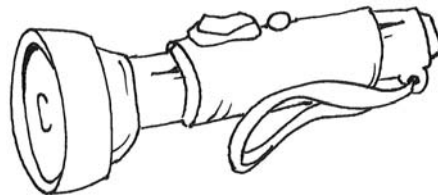


## Musicians!

Choose special music as desired from local talent. From children to adults, make this a fun event that includes music! Think about children, teens and grown ups who enjoy singing or playing instruments.

Think about the time allotted and plan just enough to round out the event.

## Notes:



## Staging Suggestions

The stage becomes a humble stable in Bethlehem.

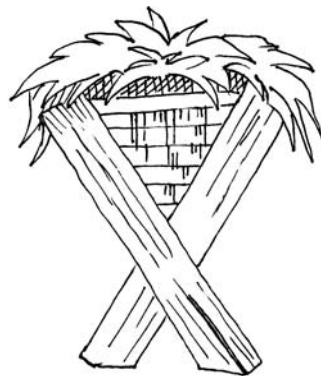
Include traditional stable items to bring the story to life. A manger, bench, pottery, plants, pillows, blankets, animals, wooden items.

**The LIGHT is the main feature of the stage.**  
Place one large spot light on the floor  
shining up at the manger, center stage.

When the lights go out,  
**ALL LIGHTS MUST BE TURNED OFF,**  
including the spot light.

*Consider stationing specific people at all electrical outlets  
so all lights go out and turn on at the right times.*

Do not purchase items. Collect objects to place on stage.  
Keep it simple and leave space for small groups to enter  
the scene easily and exit without turning over props.



# The Light Before Christmas

## ...Let There Be Light!

### At A Glance

Adapt and organize your program based on the number of available participants. Insert Christmas Carols and Special Music wherever it is appropriate. Consider the total time. Eliminate or combine segments as needed. This is a sample peek at the full event. **Change as needed.**

#### Prelude Processional

#### ACT 1: This Little Light Of Mine!

Preschool: Heart Glow

Kindergarten: This Little Light of Mine

Grade One: De-Lights of Christmas

#### ACT 2: Angel Light!

Grades 2-3: Shepherds/Hello Baby!

Grades 4-5: Star Light

#### ACT 3: We Can See Clearly Now!

Grade 6: Stable Light

Teens: Born To Shine

#### CONCLUSION Light In A Manger

Audience Conclusion: Christmas Carols

Candle Lighting Ceremony (Optional)

Closing Prayer

IT'S TIME FOR A FANTASTIC  
BORN TO SHINE CHRISTMAS PARTY!



# The Light Before Christmas

## ...Let There Be Light!

### The Prelude

Church musicians (organ/piano/keyboards) play Christmas music as the audience gathers.

*If using our original music, THE LIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS MELODIES, (CD, 3 songs, piano sheet music, lyrics) consider having those songs played during the prelude. The audience hears the new melodies and becomes familiar with the choruses.*



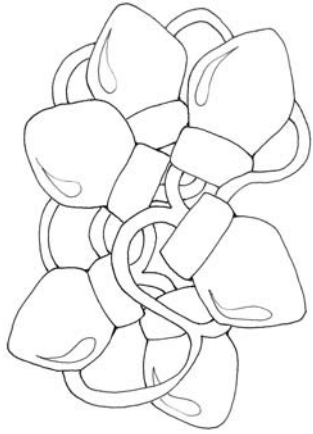
### The Procession

Gather costumed participants in an outer room.  
Light ALL existing sanctuary lights.  
The space should be as light and bright as possible!  
Existing holiday lights are left burning.

As participants file to their seats, the audience sings a Christmas Carol of your choice. The participants may sing the theme song if you have purchased the music.



# ACT 1: This Little Light of Mine!



## Director

*Props: Carry a clipboard, flashlight and pen/pencil behind one ear. Full script is on the clipboard. Read from the script.*

### Alone on Stage.

Welcome to "The Light Before Christmas". This is the most perfect Christmas program you will ever attend. The children are ready to amaze you. The grown ups add their voices to make the Bethlehem story of Jesus' birth come to life like you have never seen. Prepare to sing and become part of the story. We will tell you when to sing!

I have not left one detail undone. After many sleepless nights, nervous days and prayer, prayer, prayer, it is time to show you the results of all the effort. Perfection! Yes, that is the goal. Let the story of Baby Jesus in a manger begin! Did I mention 'perfection'? We are telling the story of the 'perfect baby' and nothing less than absolute perfection in our program will do. Enjoy! Lights, Camera, Action! Narrator!

## Narrator

*Dress in modern clothing. Carry a flashlight.  
Stand at a podium at one side of the stage.  
Read from the full script on the podium.*

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."  
Isaiah 60:1

"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."  
John 1:5

Jesus said, "I AM the Light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the Light that leads to life."  
John 8:12 NLT

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven."  
Matthew 5:13-16 Matthew 5:14 NIV



## Suddenly All Lights Go Out!

(Prearrange people stationed in various spots to turn off overhead lights, Christmas tree lights, candles, etc. Whatever is lit must suddenly darken.)

### Director

*Rush to stage center in a panic.*

Stop! Everyone calm down! This is just a momentary glitch. I'm certain the lights will return quickly. These things never last a long time. Audience, stay where you are. Children, stay where you are. Musicians, don't move!

Wait for it...wait for it...the lights will be back on....Now! (Wait...) Now! Ok, is someone kidding me? Turn those lights back on right now! (Wait.)

(Whine) I should have known. It was too good to be true. All I wanted was the perfect Christmas program. Just once, a perfect Christmas program from beginning to end. Is that too much to ask? Didn't I agree to be the Director? Didn't I make all the copies, gather all the costumes, set all the props, rehearse all the kids? Didn't I?

Now look at us. We are sitting here together in the dark doing nothing. I can hear you laughing at me and, yes, it hurts. I know I'm a perfectionist but I can't help it. I take my church work seriously. After all, I AM doing it for God!

**Narrator:** I don't think the lights are going to come back. Should we cancel the program?

**Director:** Noo, so much work. It's such a Christmas-y program. We can't cancel it.

**Narrator:** What do you suggest?

**Director:** Let me think....



## Audience Member

*"Plant" one person in the audience who stands and speaks.*

I traveled all the way here from my house in this weather to see a Christmas program. If I get a vote, I say let's have the program. There must be flashlights around. What do you say, audience? (Encourage the audience to chant "We want Christmas! We want Christmas". Let this go on for a few seconds before interrupting.)

## Director

Hush the crowd.

Okay, I hear you. No matter what, we will have Christmas. I cannot promise perfection. We will do the best we can in the dark. There were no electric lights the night Jesus was born. All the light came from God's Light shining in the darkness. I think we can pull this off. Flashlights ready! Candles ready! Let the show begin!

## Narrator

*Repeat the 'Light' scripture verses.*

*Read with a flashlight.*

*Be careful not to shine flashlight into audience.*

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."  
Isaiah 60:1

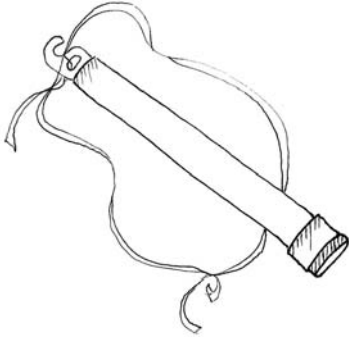
"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."  
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Matthew 5:13-16 Matthew 5:14 NIV



## Preschool HEART GLOW!



**Props:** Purchase as many glow sticks (large and small) as possible from a discount store. "Crack" them so they are glowing before the children get on stage. Let each child hold one or two. If some glow sticks are necklaces, put them around each neck when they get on stage (or just before). Prepare a few large glow sticks to leave in the on stage manger. Place them so the audience can see them glow throughout the program.

**Parents accompany very young children. Hold infants and carry small toddlers. Preschoolers do not have to speak.**

**If a song is sung, ask several helpers to sing with the little ones.**

TEACHER: We didn't know the lights would go out. We are ready! It's a good thing we are shining our glow sticks. Maybe He can't find His way in the dark. Let's 'glow' for Baby Jesus. Look how shiny we look to peek in the manger. Do you see a baby in the manger yet? Has Jesus been born?

**Everyone gathers around the manger on stage and peeks inside.**

**CHILDREN: (In Unison) No Baby Jesus!**

PARENT: The first thing our little ones learn about Jesus and Christmas is; "Jesus Loves Me, This I know". The whole reason we come to the manger every Christmas is because Jesus loves us. That makes me glow!

TEACHER: Jesus doesn't need light because Jesus IS the light. When we ask Jesus to be in our life, our hearts start to glow with His love.

PARENT: Look at how we are glowing right now. Even if the baby Jesus is not in the manger yet, we can leave a little of our 'glow' behind for the baby to enjoy.

TEACHER: Who cares if the lights went out! We know how to make our hearts glow when we love Jesus! Jesus is the only Light we need.





**SONG:** This is a familiar little song based on the old melody, "Glow Worm". Sing without accompaniment or find the sheet music on [www.musicnotes.com](http://www.musicnotes.com) Sing as much of the melody as children can sing. Teach them the song in the weeks preceding the program.

### HEART GLOW

(Tune: "Glow Worm")

Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
To the manger we will wander  
Love's sweet voice is calling yonder.  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
Light the path below, above  
And lead us on to love.

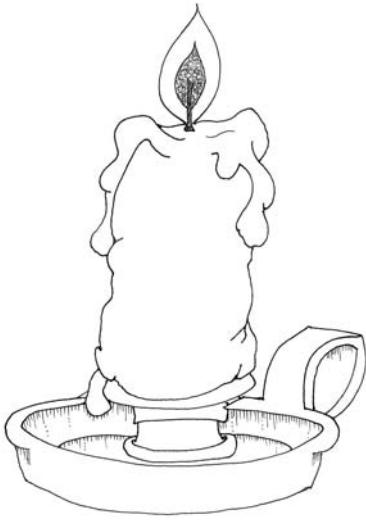
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
This dark night could use some brightnin'  
Bring Your Light that's bright as lightnin'  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
Glow, Baby Jesus, We do love you  
When you glow, you gotta glow,  
So come Baby Jesus, Glow!

*Leave large glow sticks in the empty manger to show the way.  
Let the children keep their personal glow sticks.*



# Kindergarten This Little Light of Mine

**Props:** One large, lit pillar candle carried by teacher.  
One tall table to leave the lit candle on stage.  
One Baby Jesus doll wrapped in blanket.



Kindergarten group stands in the back of the room.  
They walk to the stage with one student carefully carrying doll.  
Teacher carefully carries lit pillar candle.  
Musicians: Play the children's chorus,  
"This Little Light of Mine" as they walk.

TEACHER: We are very brave to tell the Christmas story in the dark. I brought one big candle to light our way. *(Place the candle on a tall stand or table.)* Look at that candle. It looks much more beautiful in the dark, gloomy space. When the lights are on, we almost lose the flame because it is so little. Look again! The candle light shines in the darkness.

CHILD: I don't like the dark.

CHILD: I need the light to stay here.

CHILD: The candle light is beautiful in the dark.

TEACHER: There will come a moment when our electric lights will turn on. Jesus' Light is the only light shining forever in the darkness. In a little while there will be Mary and Joseph, shepherds and angels, wise men and an innkeeper filling this stable. Listen to their stories. Be amazed that God sent His only Son into a very dark world.

CHILD: But...Jesus isn't here.

CHILD: (Holding doll) I brought Baby Jesus. Should I put Him in the manger?

CHILDREN: (In unison) Yes!

TEACHER: Before all those people can come to the manger, Baby Jesus has to be here. Let's put Him in His spot so He can light up the world.



CHILD: (Place doll in manger.)

CHILDREN: (Gather around the manger to look at the baby.) Tell us a story!

TEACHER: The Bethlehem story is short and sweet:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.  
That whoever believes in Him should not perish  
*but have everlasting life.*" (John 3:16)

That's the truth, the whole truth. That's God's light in the world. Jesus came as a Baby to be our Savior. He is the Light of the world!

**Song:** Children sing this favorite children's song, "This Little Light of Mine" with a Christmas verse added. They can sing without accompaniment or with piano/organ.

### This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel, NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel, NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, let it shine.

Jesus came at Christmas time  
Let His little light shine  
Jesus came at Christmas time  
Let His little light shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

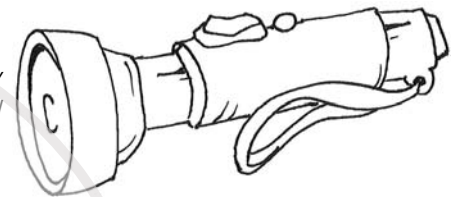


# Grade One ...and the Innkeeper De-Lights Of Christmas

*Props: Students carry flashlights. (Give instructions that they must not shine the lights into the audience.)*

*The Innkeeper: (Teacher, teen or adult) Dress in Holy Land costume. Come with a sense of humor and playfulness.*

*Students: Costumes **not** needed. Divide speaking parts between available students.*



INNKEEPER: (With attitude) Hey! I did not bargain for the dark. Who turned off the lights? I quit! I'm not going to stand on a stage in the dark!

**STUDENTS Stand up from seats in audience, flip on flashlights aimed directly at the Innkeeper. Move to the stage, standing around the Innkeeper.**

INNKEEPER: Wait a minute. Turn off those lights! Too much light! Stop! No more light! Who are you anyway?

Student #1: We are kids. Kids from the future.

INNKEEPER: What a tall tale! I don't believe you. Turn off those silly lights.

Student #2: We can't. We have to light the stable. It's our job.

Student #3: Baby Jesus is in the manger. He needs light.

**OPTION: Students sing "Away In A Manger"  
Shine flashlights upward to ceiling while singing.  
Add audience if desired.**

Student #4: Talk to us. Who are you...really?

INNKEEPER: I made this whole story happen. Isaiah said, "For a child is born to us, a Son will be given to us, and the government shall rest upon His shoulders and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,



Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9)

Little did I know that on that dark night, the Messiah would come to MY Inn in MY little town. It never occurred to me. I was just....busy. Too busy to see what God wanted.

Student #5: We call you the ‘old’ innkeeper. Maybe you weren’t old at all.

Student #6: We call you the ‘mean’ innkeeper. Maybe you weren’t mean at all.

Student #7: You cared about Mary and Joseph.

INNKEEPER: (*Sniffing*) No room at the Inn. I had to say it. There was an animal shed, but....

Student #8: Your stable is not much to look at.

Student #9: Kind of dirty and...smelly! Fresh hay is a nice touch.

INNKEEPER: Mary was going to have that baby in the street if she couldn’t rest in the stable. Everybody sit down. For goodness sake, turn off those lights. Try not to sit on each other. I know it’s dark but I think you can do it.

**Students find a place to sit on the stage floor near the manger.  
Flashlights turned off.**

Present the Innkeeper’s monologue.  
Stand center stage near seated students.

**OPTION: Read monologue from a handmade tattered scroll.**

(Retold from a short interview by John Scalzi.)

INNKEEPER: I’m retired now. The animal shed is still there. I got a lot of flak for that night. People still criticize me. They say, “You couldn’t give a pregnant woman a room? She had a DIVINE Child and you had NO ROOM? Couldn’t even spare a broom closet for the Baby Jesus?”

That hurts. I tell them to check the records. It wasn’t just me. Every Inn in Bethlehem was full. The city was packed. We had reservations for months. When Joseph said it was an emergency and a baby was about to be born I said, “I don’t care if he’s the Son of God, I don’t have any rooms!!!” Little did I know.



I said, "Hey, I've got a spare spot out in the shed. You can sleep there." He said, "We'll take it." What could I do? In they go, baby born, put in the manger, animals staring. You do realize a manger is an animal food box. I am convinced the cows are thinking, "Hey, why's there a baby in our food?" To be fair, Joseph and Mary were new at this 'parent' thing. People look at me funny when I say, "Having a Christmas carol called 'Away in A Hotel Room' doesn't have quite the same ring to it."

You probably think that was the end of the story. That shed had a swinging door the way people kept coming and going. Shepherds walked right in and pushed the animals around. A few guys showed up saying they were wise. At least they brought baby gifts.

Did I benefit from all this? Well, I got some mileage out of telling the story about this crazy young couple renting my shed and the visitors and the baby, but it was mostly for friends around the campfire.

Just before I retired someone tells me of this hippie preacher in Jerusalem who got in trouble with the Romans. And I say, hey, I think I know that guy. I think he got born in my shed. And then...well...you know what the Romans did to him. Romans. (hmp)

Then I sold the inn and retired to Joppa. By the time Jesus became really famous I was out of the game. And then they sold the Inn and they put that church there. Funny. They named it The Church of The Nativity. I liked my Inn better.

Innkeeper wanders off down the aisle alone to back of room.

Students rise and leave the stage.  
Two young students remain.

Student #10: I think he made that up.

Student #11: Me too.

**EXIT**

**OPTION**  
**Special Music:**  
**Audience Sings Christmas Carol:**



## ACT 2:

## Angel Light!

### Director and Narrator

Narrator: (From Podium) How's it going? Any progress on the lights?

Director: None. We need to let the audience go home and try again next year.

Narrator: We got through Act 1. Maybe the lights will come on soon. Let's go a little longer and let the electricians make their magic.

Director: Magic? I doubt it. I'm a wreck. I don't care what anybody says, I am NOT doing this again next year. This is my worst nightmare.

Narrator: Oh, give it a break. You are doing great. Let's get this show back up and moving.

Director: (Sigh) Whatever you say. Lights (yeah, right), Camera, Action. Let the show begin.

### Narrator

(To audience) Ahem, Can you see me? Can you hear me? Let's keep the story going. Let's review what has been happening in Bethlehem since Act One. Be patient. The lights will come on in a few minutes.

**From Luke 2:** There were shepherds taking care of their sheep one night near Bethlehem. Quiet and sleepy, all was calm. Suddenly an angel of the Lord showed up and there was so much light (unlike here and now) that they were terrified.

The angel said, "Keep calm and listen up". They tried their best to stop shaking. "Don't be afraid. I have great news. Once everyone hears it they will jump up and down with joy." At least it sounded like that.

"Over in Bethlehem, the Savior has been born. He's the Messiah you have waited for and you better get over there if you want to take a look at him. I'll give you a hint. He will be a baby wrapped up in simple cloth and, here's the tip off, he's sleeping in a manger. That's right, an animal food box."



They just stood there and watched as bunches of angels came and sang to them. "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all the people of earth because God loves you."

## Two Angels



**2 Teen or Adult Actors:** *Dress in angel costume. Carry lit flashlights. Read from script. Appear and reappear from the back of the room. Before walking to the stage, shine the flashlights over the heads of the audience making sure to move the light as much as possible. Begin speaking from the rear and stop midway up the aisle. Finish on stage.*

Angel 1: Where are we?

Angel 2: I have no idea. We are supposed to be somewhere near Bethlehem. Did you bring the map?

Angel 1: You know we never use a map. Heavenly Father tunes in our GPS (God's Private Sky-map) at Home and we just...fly! I don't know why our Angel Light isn't working. I hope the batteries in these 'doodads' keep working.

Angel 2: Hey, look! There's a manger. That must be where we should be. I heard there would be a manger. "...you'll find him lying in a manger."

Angel 1: Are we too late? Has the baby been born?

Angel 2: I have no idea. Let's find out.

Angel 1: Look! I see some shepherds and they are heading right for us. Be brave. Look 'shiny'.

Angel 2: Let's just give them the message and let Heavenly Father worry about our looks.

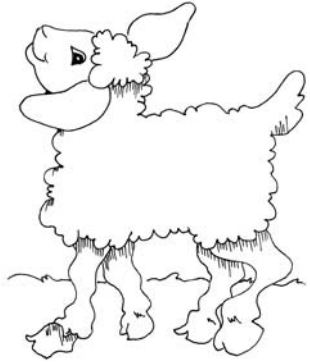




## Grades Two and Three Hello, Baby!

*Students dress as Bethlehem shepherds. Walk along the aisle to the manger on stage. No lights—only Angel Light flash-lighting on stage. If available, a few may carry sheep made of cardboard or stuffed toy lambs.*

*Hey look! Here is a cute one to copy! ----->*



**Actors:** 2 Angels, Mary, Joseph, Students. Divide speaking parts between available students.

Student #1: I found it. This must be the stable where the baby is. Look! He's in the manger.

Student #2: Where is everybody? No mother or father? Where did they go?

Angel #1: (Jump forward with flashlight under chin) Don't be afraid! We bring great news!

Student #3: We know. We heard all about it.

Angel #2: (Step forward with flashlight under chin) Unto you is born a Savior....

Student #4: We know. "...who is Christ the Lord." We already got the word out on the hillside.

Student #5: We got here as fast as we could. We ran. We got lost. What a night!

Student #6: Why would God let **us** see the baby? We aren't important. Folks in town don't like us.

Student #7: I don't care. We are here. The baby is here. Just enjoy the moment.



Angel #1: Shouldn't you be a little impressed to be in the company of angels? I mean we are here, you are here. It's a great situation. Why, it's historical!

Angel #2: (*Aside to angel*) They don't seem to be impressed anymore.

Student #8: Yep, it's hysterical. We have a baby now. Thanks for pointing the way. We can take it from here.

**Angels step back into the corner.  
Raise arms/wings over the manger scene.  
Mary and Joseph enter from the side.**

Joseph: Excuse me? And who are you?

Student #9: We are the shepherds from the hill. You won't believe what happened. Angels! There were thousands of them...they told us to get here as fast as we could to see the baby.

Joseph: Did the angels mention this is God's Son, Jesus? He's a miracle and He's our Savior.

Mary: Don't breathe on the baby. Did you wash your hands?

Student #10: We didn't have time. We'll just stand here and look.

Mary: This has been an exciting time. I will think about all these things and keep them close to my heart. Thank you for coming.

Joseph: Tell everyone you see. This news is too good to keep quiet.

Student #11: As soon as we leave we will tell everyone.

**Students run back the aisle, shouting:  
Good News! Jesus is born! The Messiah is here!**

**Angels, Mary and Joseph exit quietly.**



## Grades Four and Five Star Light!



### Narrator

The shepherds were not the only visitors greeting Jesus. Mary and Joseph stayed in Bethlehem for awhile. We don't know how long it took for their trip. We don't know exactly when they arrived in Bethlehem but there were wise men who traveled from the East to worship the little King.

They followed a sky light. God placed a bright, bright star in the sky. These men, who studied stars for years, knew this was no ordinary star. They went to a great deal of trouble to leave home and travel to a foreign country to seek a king they did not know or understand. God touched their hearts in a very special way.

Along the way, they had a unique adventure. Danger, sneakiness, deception from an evil king stood in their path. Nothing could keep them from their final destination. That bright star shined down and they were determined to discover the secret nearby. And they did!

*Tips: Grades Four and Five students wear costumes to become a group of wise men. One student becomes the Star (see costume section for an easy idea.) It doesn't matter how many since scripture doesn't say there were only three men, just three gifts. Prepare three gifts: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh containers carried to and presented at the manger.*

*Actors: Mary and Joseph, One Star, Wise Men.*



**One Student dressed as a Star leads the group.  
Wise Men Group--Slowly Walk to Stage.  
Three Gifts are carried and placed before the manger.**



**Star stands silently behind Mary and Joseph  
with flashlights in each hand shining upward.**

Student #1: The Star went this way! Look it is right behind the manger.

Student #2: We found the baby!

**All Wise Men bow before the manger in awe and reverence.**

Student #3: We bring gifts to celebrate this wonderful child, the king of kings and Lord of Lords.

Joseph: Welcome! We know you have been sent by God. This is too wonderful to imagine.

Student #4: We bring gold. Spend it wisely. It will help you escape from the evil that is chasing this child.

Student #5: We bring a sweet perfume, frankincense. You don't know it now but this child will be God's High Priest. It has healing power.

Student #6: We bring myrrh. You don't know it now but this child will die for the sins of all people. Our gift represents comfort at the time of death.

Mary: Thank you. We know you bring these gifts to honor Jesus. Your reward will be in Heaven.

Student #7: We also bring the gift of a warning. On our way, we were stopped by King Herod. He was interested in Jesus. Too interested. We are afraid he wants to harm this child.

Student #8: Go away. Go now. Find another place to live. Be safe. We will return to our home by another route.

**All Wise Men leave slowly, single file to back of room.**

**Mary and Joseph Carry the Baby Jesus away.**

**OPTION**

**Special Music:**

**Audience Christmas Carol:**



## Act 3: We Can See Clearly Now!

### Director and Narrator ...and Janitor!

Director: Let's wrap this up! I just want to go home and forget this day. How can all the lights go out at the exact moment we need them the most?

Narrator: Lights are over rated. There were no electric lights when Jesus was born and somehow He arrived anyway.

Director: Times have changed. This audience deserves light. They need light. I deeply apologize to all of you for not being able to present the perfect Christmas program. I hope you could see your children in the dark.

Narrator: I'm sure they did.

Director: (To Audience) I hope you could see well enough to sing a few carols.

Narrator: I'm sure they did.

Director: I hope...I hope...Oh, I just feel awful.

*Narrator: Let's wrap this thing up. Then we can have a party.*

Director: Ok. (Sniff) Lights (yeah, right), Camera (Groan), Action (fake excitement)! Let's finish **The Light Before Christmas**...

### **Suddenly all lights come back on.**

Director: Lights! Lights! We have light! How did that happen?



**Janitor enters with an electric cord wrapped around shoulders.  
Hold plug in one hand.**

Janitor: (Shaking head) Oops! I think it was me.

Director and Narrator: You!

Janitor: I tripped when the show started. I think I unplugged the whole shebang. I hope it didn't mess anything up.

Director: (Moaning sarcastically) Oh no. No problem. Everything has been hunky dory. Just a Christmas program. You know...kids, costumes, manger, actors, music, audience. No big deal.

Janitor: (Clueless) Great! I just plugged in the big stuff. I'll find a spot for this little bugger someplace. Carry on! (Exit)

Director: Carry on? What choice do we have? We will carry on.

Narrator: Now, now, I see it in your face. You are about to explode. Just count to....let's see...a hundred and three. I don't think counting to three will do it this time.

Director: (Taking a deep breath to calm down) No, no. I'm fine. Plug it in, he says. Find a spot for the little bugger, he says. Am I in some kind of crazy Christmas nightmare? Lights, Camera, Action! Let the show carry on!



## Grade Six Stable Light!

### Narrator

"And there was light!" We waited a long time for the light to come back. It was a silly mistake corrected by a simple electrical plug. Now we enjoy full light. Pay attention, audience. This story is a life changer!

God knows the importance of light. The very first words in scripture are:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light': and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good." (Genesis 1:1-4)

There is another Light God called good. This light filled the countryside around the little village of Bethlehem. The Light peeked in every crack of a humble stable where a young couple huddled with God's newborn baby boy. Theirs had been an amazing adventure filled with God, angels, shepherds, wise men and a manger bed instead of a cradle made by Joseph's loving carpenter hands.

Later, this Light would say, "I Am the Light of the world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

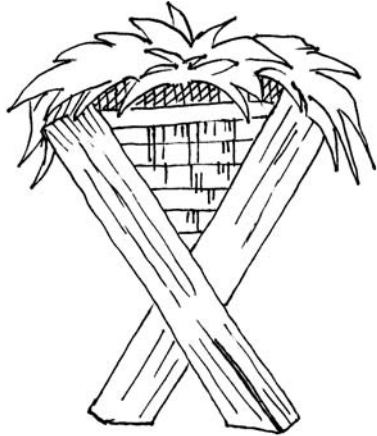
All that comes later but for this moment, just this moment, we enter the stable prepared by God's creative hands for a very special baby boy.

*Tips: Grade Six children do **not** need costumes. Spread across the stage behind and around the nativity scene that is already in place.*

*Divide the poem into segments according to the number of students available. It is written in couplets and can be read back and forth by many people or in larger segments by fewer participants. It can also be read by one person.*



## 'Twas The Light Before Christmas



'Twas the Light before Christmas, when all through the stable  
The creatures were stirring, they were ready and able;

The manger was hay filled, prepared with such care,  
In hopes that a baby would soon rest right there.

The people were nestled all snug in their beds;  
The Inn was jam packed, not a place for more heads.

Mary came looking worried, Joseph begging for rest,  
He'd just found the place for their long winter's nest.

The baby arrived, looking calm, looking sweet.  
The creatures looked on, God's Plan was complete.

When out on the street there arose such a clatter,  
Joseph sprang from his bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the barn door he flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The light on the street was as bright as the sun  
It was shining above, on every per-son.

That light gave a luster to objects below,  
It looked like noon day, It looked like bright snow.

When what to his wondering eyes did appear,  
But a street filled with shepherds, grinning ear to ear.





They said there were angels and light on their hillside,  
A baby was born near Bethlehem's village-side.

With a little old shepherd so lively and quick  
Joe knew in a moment God's Word was slick!

More rapid than eagles the visitors came  
And Mary remembered each one by their name.

The men from the East, so wise and so giving,  
Came bearing great gifts, it would help with their living.

The Light that shone down must have twinkled so bright,  
The camels and frankincense made a great sight.

As the shepherds and wise men and family turned,  
The baby cried, "Hey, I've arrived! No concern!"

He had a sweet face and a little round belly  
That shook when He laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and cute, a right jolly sweet babe.  
And they laughed when they saw him, not one was afraid.

The Light Before Christmas shone in just the right place,  
The Light of that Babe brought God's joy to each face.

The days were accomplished for God's Only Son,  
The Light had arrived, the future begun.

So let's all exclaim as we leave here tonight,  
"Happy Christmas to all! Let's follow God's Light!"



## Teens Born To Shine!

*Tips: Participants are Middle and High School students as available. If there is a young teen group available, use them to wrap up the formal portion of the program. **No** costumes needed. Divide parts among those available.*

*Each person carries light. Carry a variety of small lights: flashlights, candles, lanterns, solar lights brought from gardens, glow sticks, etc. Students stand along the aisles, front and back of the room. Spread out depending on how many participants are available. They read parts from where they stand.*



OPTION: Soft Christmas music is played in the background as the group speaks.

Student #1: And so we see before us the perfect picture of an imperfect night. Well, we think it was imperfect. Jesus came into a world filled with darkness. That baby could have been born in a palace or a cozy home or a big, gleaming hospital.

#2: Instead, Jesus was born in a humble stable surrounded by humble people. He was born with a purpose, to be Light in the darkness.

#3: He was born to shine. And shine He did!

#4: Some people are born to shine, some to reflect the light and some to blossom from the glow, yet none are complete without the other. God gave an amazing gift as the crown of His great plan to redeem His lost creation.

#5: "When the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent His Son, born among of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that He might redeem those of us who have been kidnaped by the law. And so we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage." (Galatians 4:4-5 TM)



#6: Set Free! That's the key to God's plan. We get to tell this Christmas story every year because our real gift is Light! God's Light! Born in a stable! Born to shine!

#7: The best part of God's plan is that I AM BORN TO SHINE!

#8: Why fit in when you were born to STAND OUT! YOU were born to SHINE!

#9: We're born to shimmer. We're born to shine. We're born to live. We're born to love!

#10: God loved us so much that He gave us His Son. He gifted each of us in unique and important ways. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light. Our Light begins with Jesus.

#11: And our Light doesn't shine so others can see us. We shine so that, through us, others can see Jesus!

#12: Jesus, You are our Rock of solitude and peace. You are our Light that takes away the darkness. You are our strength when we feel weak. You are our shield that protect us. You are the King of Kings.

#13: "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, the Light will shine on them." Isaiah 9:2

#14: "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light." Ephesians 5:8

#15: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." I Peter 2:9

#16: "For God, Who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." II Corinthians 4:6

#17: Jesus said, "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops." Matthew 10:27



#18: Jesus said, "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness." John 12:46

#19: "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." John 1:4

#20: "The Lord make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you." Numbers 6:25

## EXIT

Quietly move to the back of the room and exit, still carrying the Light.

## OPTION

Special Music:

Audience Sings Christmas Carol:

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY  
NOT FOR USE  
PLEASE PURCHASE



# Conclusion

## Light In A Manger

### Narrator and Director

Narrator: Well, it worked out after all. Who needs light. Light is overrated.

Director: I guess so. Even in the dark you can still see the Light. We'll be alright. It's over now. Makes me kind of sad that all the work, all the planning, all the excitement and worry is done.

Narrator: Until next year.

Director: (Looking around, fixing costumes of those in place on stage) Until next year. What adventures will we have in the next twelve months? Will we gather in this very spot again? Will God's Light still shine in the world? Will His Light still shine in us?

Narrator: Jesus is not a baby in a manger anymore. What Jesus did for us proved that the 'Light Before Christmas' was worth every moment that Mary and Joseph relied on God. It was worth the angels' and shepherds' joyful shout, "Unto us is born, In the City of David, on this very night, a Savior Who is Christ the Lord!" Jesus' death on the Cross was worth every mile the wise men traveled with gold, frankincense and myrrh from their far country.

Director: Jesus rising from the grave was worth every mile He walked, every insult hurled at Him, every healed person, every child He patted on the head. I learned a lot when the lights went out.

Narrator: I knew you would!

## EXIT

**Audience Conclusion: Christmas Carols**

**Candle Lighting Ceremony (Optional)**

**Closing Prayer**

**IT IS TIME FOR A FANTASTIC  
BORN TO SHINE CHRISTMAS PARTY!**



## Born To Shine Party!

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

*Offer delicious food, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.*

### Preparations Before Party Day

**Menu:** Plan the menu. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share. Provide a variety of beverages.

*Christmas Cookies galore  
are also a fun Christmas option!*

*If this is a Sunday morning event,  
consider serving a Continental Breakfast  
complete with doughnuts, orange juice, coffee and tea.*

**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. Ask a teen to become the Born To Shine Party DJ! Set up the music on a stage or in a prominent corner!

**Centerpieces:** Cover tables as desired. Feature Lighted Christmas centerpieces on each table. The more light the better!



## Preparations On Party Day

Decorate the serving table and guests tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on the stove 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 helpers 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 with the guests.

## After The Party

The party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

## Go Home!

**Light Up Christmas With Your Families  
Knowing You Have Been Good and  
Faithful Servants!**

**Merry Christmas!**

