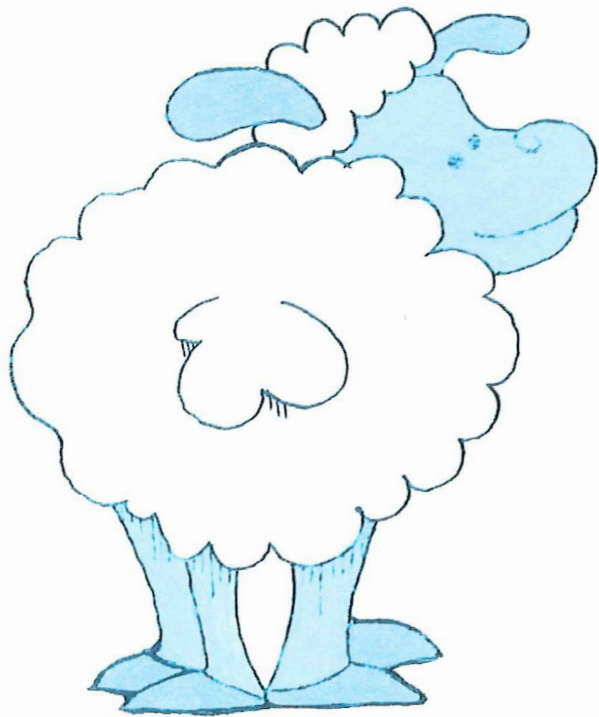


The Sheep Whisperer

A
Shepherd's
Life



*All I Want
for Christmas
Is Ewe!*

The Sheep Whisperer

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PLEASE

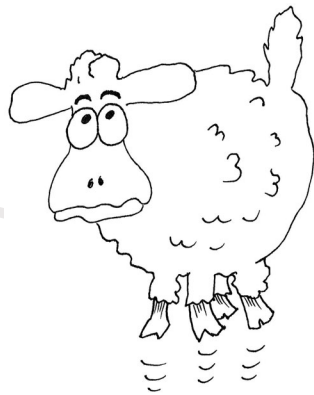


A Shepherd's Life

All I Want For Christmas Is Ewe!



“All of us,
like sheep,
have gone astray.
Each of us
has turned to his own way,
yet the Lord laid on Him
The sins of us all.”



Isaiah 53:6



Long, Long Ago

Winds through the olive trees
Softly did blow
'Round little Bethlehem
Long, long ago.



Sheep on the hillside lay
whiter than snow.
Shepherds were watching them
Long, long ago.



Then from the midnight sky
Angels bent low
Singing their songs of joy
Long, long ago.



Soft in a manger bed
Cradled so low,
Christ Came to Bethlehem
Long, long ago.



The Sheep Whisperer

A Shepherd's Life

Step into the life of one Bethlehem shepherd as a boy, teen, adult and older man. How was he raised? What did he see on that Bethlehem hillside? Was that our shepherd standing at the Cross of Jesus?

Easy to Prepare. Easy to Present.

Laugh, sing and be inspired to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Simple lighting, props and costumes bring one Bethlehem shepherd to life. This one life touched another and another and another to proclaim the good news of the angels, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

How Do We Do Such A Thing?

1. **Time Frame:** 45 minutes or less depending on program choices.
2. **Participants:** Children, teens grownups.
3. **Presentation:** NO memorization, read segments.
4. **Music:** Audience Carols, special talent music.
5. **Party:** Feature a WHISPERS OF GOD'S LOVE PARTY.

Adapt!

Consider group size and group talent.

Small church? Condense segments, take out what can't be used, add favorite music with talent. **Large church?** Include everyone! Props, costumes, lighting, sound, party planners...make it fun!

These pages contain plans and script for a unique Christmas program designed to change lives.

*Open Carefully!
Let Christmas Begin!*



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SNEAK PEEK: FAQ'S

All the questions you want to ask but don't want to make the phone call and you don't want to feel dumb even though we would never think that at all and we love talking to you when you need us!



WE HAVE A SMALL CHURCH. HOW MANY PEOPLE DO WE NEED?

Adapt the program to use available people. Eliminate or combine segments. Small groups may participate more than one time. Use the same people several times. Do not worry about segment age groups or the number of people suggested. Participants speak more than one time.

Hot Tip: Divide the master copy on a table, segment by segment. Decide what to keep and what must be eliminated.

WE HAVE A LARGE CHURCH/SCHOOL. CAN WE INVOLVE OUR HUGE GANG?

There is more than enough material to involve everyone in your church or school.

Hot Tip: Divide the master copy on a table, segment by segment. Add artists, costume helpers, leaders, musicians, special musicians, party planners.

IS THIS A FORMAL MUSICAL? IS MUSIC AVAILABLE?

This is not a musical. We offer an inexpensive, optional small music package ~ 3-4 songs (Double Channel CD with performance tracks and sample voice tracks, piano sheet music and lyric sheets.) Listen at our web page.

Hot Tip: Choose your own easy to teach Christmas songs, Special Music and Audience Carols as desired.

HOW MUCH REHEARSAL TIME IS INVOLVED?

You decide! No memorization is required so rehearsal can take place in small groups with one dress rehearsal.



**Hot Tip: Some churches/schools perform with NO REHEARSAL.
We recommend at least one rehearsal if you want to sleep at night!**

HOW LONG IS THE EVENT?

This depends on what is eliminated or added to the event. The best timing is 45-60 minutes. It can be as short as 20 minutes as desired.

Hot Tip: Party Time Not Included.

DO WE HAVE TO INCLUDE CANDLELIGHTING AND PARTY?

No. Include the inspirational, fun Christmas traditions that fit your local group. That may mean a short sermon by pastor, more Christmas Carols, gifting for the needy, candy for children, etc.

Hot Tip: Add what makes Christmas feel like Christmas to your gang!

HOW DO WE GIVE OUT SPECIFIC PRINTED PARTS?

Do not write on the Master Copy. Make as many individual copies as needed from your copier for everyone involved. Use simple folders to hand out small group parts to each teacher/leader.

**Hot Tip: The PDF cannot be printed on the computer multiple times.
If desired, scan the program portion and make a Word Document.
Insert names, take out what cannot be used, add fun traditions.
(We cannot do that but we give permission for your individual group.
All others must purchase separately from our web site.)**

HOW WILL WE FEEL WHEN THIS IS OVER?

Happy! The event is divided into short segments performed by small groups. Once organization is complete, the program comes together easily. Keep it simple OR make it a grand event. Your choice. At the end you will feel like "you have done well good and faithful servant!"

**P.S. OUR TOLL FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 1.888.236.5433.
IF WE DON'T ANSWER, IT MEANS WE ARE TALKING TO
SOMEONE, SHIPPING, WRITING OR IN A MEETING.
MAYBE WE ARE TAKING A NAP.
(GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH US YET.)
LEAVE A MESSAGE AND PHONE NUMBER!**





OUR Main Sheep Herder! AKA: Christmas Director

*“A Leader is one who Knows the way,
Goes the way and Shows the way”*

~John C. Maxwell

Create a unique memory in the best way from beginning to end.

Ask for help!

Keep the Master Copy unmarked. Copy program segments and individual speaking parts. Consider Sunday School classes, committees, small friend groups and willing individuals.

Lead Them!

NO MEMORIZATION!
FOUR ACTORS TO REPRESENT EACH LIFE STAGE:
BOY, YOUNG MAN, ADULT (BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD),
SENIOR ADULT.

When All Else Fails, Follow Directions

Let them lead! Small group leaders organize individual short segments complete with props and costumes.

Help as needed.

Is Your Heart Ready?

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

Do it for those folks!

Baby Steps

Are you thinking, “Why me? I cannot do this!” Dive into this humorous, meaningful presentation of the life of one common shepherd experiencing Jesus up close and personal.

No fear!

You Can Do Anything, But NOT Everything!

Trust your staff. Check in often. Surround yourself with the best people. Do not interfere unless needed

Delegate!



Be Positive, Patient and Persistent

It is worth extra effort in the middle of personal holiday preparations, parties and travel. **All things are difficult before they are easy.**

Plug Your Ears!

If the Christmas Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully! **Keep that famous sense of humor!**

"We can't do it."

"We never did it this way."

"No one wants to do it!"

"My back hurts."

Think of it this way: "Today I was told I am Pretty. The full statement was actually, 'You are pretty annoying' but I only look at things positively!"

Prayers Go Up. Blessings Come Down!

God Is In Control

Take details before the Lord and then - Relax! **Do the 'next thing'.**

Prepare For Success ~ Adapt!

Do today's work well!

Print a Director's Copy. DO NOT write on this master copy! Mark areas requiring special attention on that copy. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide or combine parts. Make segment copies for speakers.

Assign small group practice to each leader.

No Memorization!

"My memory is bad." "How bad is it?" "How bad is what?"

Some groups enjoy memorization. Others avoid it. Except for the youngest non readers, read speaking parts.

Memorization requires lead time and rehearsal.

HOT TIP

DECORATE INDIVIDUAL PARTS WITH COLORFUL PAPER, STICKERS AND (HEAVEN HELP YOU) GLITTER!

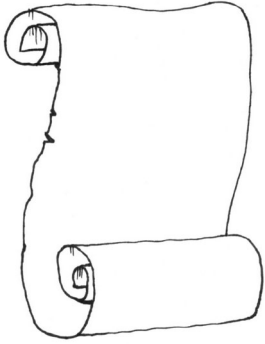


Under Construction!

Thank You For Your Patience!

Keep It Simple!

This is an **EVERYBODY JOIN THE FUN** Production!
Involve adults as readers, musicians and leaders.
Adapt your program using available participants.



Reflect Your Favorite Local Christmas Traditions!

You won't hurt our feelings.

Really, change anything you want!

Add audience carols and special music performed by children, teens, grown ups.

Small Church

"Do not despise small beginnings..." Zechariah 4:10 NLT

Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts. **Don't worry about suggested ages.** The segments are meant to be performed as needed. **Feature your favorite parts.**

HOT TIP: USE THE SAME PEOPLE TO PRESENT MORE THAN ONE SEGMENT. TEENS AND ADULTS ARE CRUCIAL FOR THE SMALL CHURCH PRESENTATION. PEOPLE PARTICIPATE SEVERAL TIMES.

Medium Church

"Do not wear out doing good.

At the right time we will reap if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

Choose segments you like best. The goal is to tell the Christmas story. Don't leave out anything important **-Like the BABY!**

Large Church

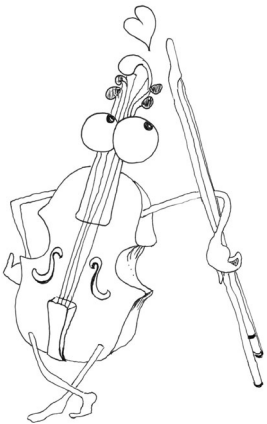
Get a large group of people to do a few simple things.

Organize! Musicians, snack makers, servers, prop masters, sound/lighting crew and talented volunteers make the event visually exciting. **Go Big!**

'Whisper God's Love' Party

A chosen group decorates, plans and cleans up. If time does not allow a social gathering, plan a great program and forget the party!





I & Christmas Music

*The best way to spread Christmas Cheer
Is singing loud for all to hear!*

Coordinate music with the music director, pianist, organist, praise band. Choose Christmas Carols to sing with the audience and stage participants.

*Include Christmas Carol lyrics in a printed program
or project lyrics on large screen.*

PURCHASE 'THE SHEPHERD WHISPERER MELODIES'!
Spark up the music! We offer four original songs by Glory Sound Studios and Jonathan Miller! Music package arrives with Double Channel CD for rehearsal and performance, printed piano sheet music and lyrics!
Ship or Download ~ Your Choice!

Christmas Carols

You can't sing 'em all! Choose a few favorite Bethlehem Shepherd carols. Intersperse them in the program. We suggest: "The First Noel", "Silent Night", "O Come All Ye Faithful", "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear", "Go Tell It On The Mountain", "Do You Hear What I Hear", "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks",

YOUR CHOICE --Add More!

Talent! Choose talented people to sing solos, duets, trios, choir, praise and worship, beginning instrumentals, hand bells, chimes, children's chorus, all instrumental. This is the perfect moment to let musicians shine!

Who will you choose?

Enjoy Contemporary Christmas praise music.

Have fun choosing contemporary songs your group enjoys!



“All The World’s A Stage”



Bring this simple stage presentation to life with a minimum of props. Small groups carry personal props. Set the stage with inexpensive, easy-to-find items. Light the area dramatically.

Keep It Simple!

Set Up

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

Feature them!

Staging

Stage a mini nighttime Bethlehem hillside. Include greenery, handmade sheep (we show you how to do it), wood for a campfire, rocks, etc.

Be ‘sheepish’!

Seating

Reserve participant seating. Assign helpers to sit with children in the audience. Each small group gathers on stage to present their short segment.

Follow program instructions.

Sound System

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

Speak up!

Lighting

Create a night time, dark, feel with white twinkle lights across the back, small lights on the floor and a light inside the campfire wood pile in the middle of stage. Lighting is important.

Create lighting ambiance!

“All the world’s a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed.”



Props ~ The "Sheep"

Create a flock of cardboard sheep.

Lighthearted images are terrific!

Enlarge patterns (See End of Master Copy)
on cardboard/posterboard to desired size.

Duct tape a paint stick to the back of each sheep.

Children carry with stick attached. Place more 'sheep' propped on stage.
**FOLLOW SEGMENT INSTRUCTIONS. THE SAME SHEEP CAN
BE PASSED BETWEEN GROUPS OR DISPLAYED ON STAGE.**



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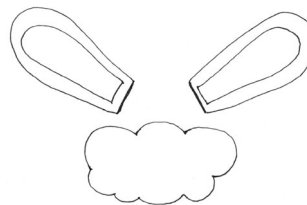
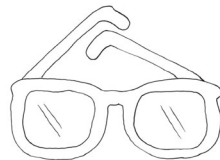
Would you like to Create Little Lambs?

Here is an easy-peasy plan.

Buy each student a pair of inexpensive sunglasses
(Dollar Tree or www.orientaltrading.com)

Make and attach ears to top of glasses with strong glue. They can be easily made with black/white/pink felt on posterboard. Make the 'puffy fluff' with a posterboard base and hot glued cotton balls. Just before the program, paint little black noses on children.

Waa-Laah! The Sheep Are In The House! ~ The Lambs are in the flock!



Costumes

“When Given the Opportunity, Wear a Costume.”

Everyone is in the shepherds' field. Wear common Holy Land costumes. Nothing fancy.

Wise Men! Dress up as kings.

Follow directions in each small group segment.

Create simple Holy Land costumes using available materials. Costuming a large group? Ask each participant to provide their attire. Parents of young students may be willing to supply necessary costumes.

Wear robes, tunics, long t shirts belted at the waist with rope or men's neck ties. Fabric wrapped around head and looped down the front, overabundance of jewelry (pins, bracelets, necklaces) on wise men. White angel tunics and tinsel halos.



HOT TIP

CHECK WWW.ORIENTALTRADING.COM
THIS COMPANY OFFERS A FULL ARRAY OF HOLY LAND
COSTUMES AT AN INEXPENSIVE PRICE. SO CUTE TOO!!!



*Costuming is a huge part of getting into character.
Your body soaks in what you're wearing,
and you "become" someone else.*

**LISTEN TO YOUR CREATIVE HEART. ORGANIZE!
A TEAM OF 2 OR MORE VOLUNTEERS IS HELPFUL.**

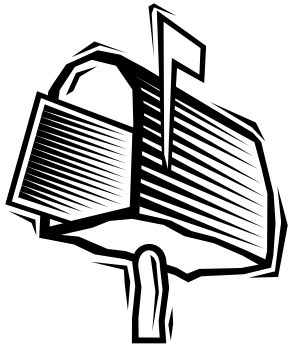


Publicity!

Just this once, Gossip is okay!

Communicate!

Announce "The Sheep Whisperer" in the newsletter, weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.



Bulletin and Newsletter

Announce in November and December newsletters. Let people know there will be a Christmas celebration including food following the program. **Tell Everyone!**

Local Newspaper

Don't Just Read The News, Make The News!

Include an announcement with holiday publicity. Talk to a news reporter and photographer. **Request a feature article.**

Television and Radio

Television and Radio stations have free spots available as community service. Contact your local television news room and request a short feature. **Try It!**

Social Networks!

Web Site - Face Book - Instagram - Twitter

Does your church/school have an online presence? This is the perfect opportunity to 'tell your world'. Take pictures, include a short description, dates, times and party plans! **Woo-Hoo!**

Christmas Card Invitations

Send Family Invitations.

Send real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside. This is effective for non-involved families. **So sweet!**



Leaders!

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more,
learn more, do more and become more,
you are a Leader.”*

~ John Quincy Adams



Prepare Your Small Group!

Take time to practice speaking parts, organize props and costumes for your group. **Memorization is not needed unless preferred.**

Show Up With A Smile!

Dress in costume. 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 need help. Follow script details.

Relax!

*Stage fright is not uncommon!
Sometimes kids get scared too!*

Stay For the Party!

Enjoy the experience with students and their families. Encourage them with compliments. **Meet and greet parents and family members.**

Ask For Help!

The program comes together with little formal large group rehearsal. If helpers are needed, do not hesitate to ask.

The Christmas Director is available.

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!



To Memorize or Not to Memorize? That Is The Question!

To Memorize

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

Consider longer lead time and more rehearsals.

Not To Memorize

This event is designed to be a full church, inter-generational experience. Base group organization on available small groups. Ask children, friends, older adults who may not normally participate to join the fun.

The event is more enjoyable if people relax without memorization.

Participants hold their printed parts and read. Practice in small group settings so everyone is familiar with their part and read with confidence.

Gather once to rehearse the full team.

HOT TIP:

CARRY PRINTED MATERIALS. USE COPY PAPER THAT BLENDS WITH BACKGROUND.

CONSIDER TAN OR PALE GREEN IF AVAILABLE.

EACH PRINTED PART MAY BE BACKED WITH A SMALL SHEEP.

This is a memorable Christmas experience.

Have Fun!



Main Speakers

*Have fun with folks who want to have fun.
Their enthusiasm spreads to the audience!*

Narrator: Teen or adult, male or female

Variety of Narrators

The Narrators hold the stage story together. Dress in **modern clothing**. Stand at one side of the stage to speak. Read the Narrator segments.

OPTION: Choose several people (teen, adult) .



Readers

Choose people of all ages to read "Readers" segment with small lights. They scatter in the aisles and on stage. Modern clothing.



The Sheep Whisperer (4):

Boy Shepherd ~ Young Shepherd

Bethlehem Shepherd ~ Shepherd Of The Hills

These 4 actors of various ages portray the same shepherd at different stages of his life. Ask boys and men. If girls/women are available, ask them to be a female shepherd at different stages of life.



Shepherd's Bag: BOY SHEPHERD carries a cloth/leather bag slung over one shoulder like a hobo bag. **Use available bag:** over the shoulder, backpack, ragged tattered tote. **Choose what is available.**



HOT TIP: THE SHEPHERD SCARF!

Each shepherd actor may wear a different looking Holy Land costume. **BUT** ~ Provide ONE **IDENTICAL** long, colorful scarf that each one passes to the next. It can be a long, wide fabric without hems (ragged edges) or bright plaid. Colorful, if possible. The same scarf is passed between them before they go on stage. They decide whether to wear it wrapped around their head or tied over their shoulders or around their waist. Whatever their choice, the scarf will identify them as the same person in different life stages.

Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus Teens or Adults, Swaddled Doll/ Real Baby

Act 3: No props needed. They stand quietly as a small family one side of stage. Actors participate (no speaking lines) and then leave the stage. **Holy Land Costumes.**



Wise Men and Servants (Teens, Adults, Children)

Ask people of any age to portray the Wise Men. If available, add servants who carry the 3 gifts but do not speak. **Holy Land Costumes.**

The 100th Sheep ~ One Lost Sheep

This speaker appears mid aisle at the Conclusion to tell their story of being lost and found. **Modern Clothing.**

Teachers and Parents

Some teachers have speaking parts. Some teachers accompany their group and become part of on stage appearance.

Involve Parents with younger children.



The Sheep Whisperer

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A Shepherd's Life

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS EWE!



The Sheep Whisperer: At A Glance

Adapt based on available participants. Insert Christmas Carols and Special Music wherever appropriate. Eliminate or combine segments as needed.

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

INTRODUCTION

Narrator: Uncommon Shepherds

Preschool: Jesus Is A Little Lamb

ACT 1: BOY SHEPHERD

Narrator: Skills Of A Shepherd

Kindergarten: Junior Shepherds: Lost Again!

Grades 1-2: Care and Feeding Of A Shepherd

Narrator

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL ~ SPECIAL MUSIC

ACT 2: YOUNG SHEPHERD

Grades 3-4: The Lord Is My Shepherd

Young Shepherd: Rod and Staff Comfort Me

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL ~ SPECIAL MUSIC

ACT 3: BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD

Narrator: Shepherds Abiding In the Fields

Grades 5-6: Angel Choir ~ Fear Not!

Bethlehem Shepherd: Joseph, Mary and Jesus

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL ~ SPECIAL MUSIC

CONCLUSION: SHEPHERD ON THE HILL

Narrator: The Rest Of His Story

Shepherd Of The Hills: Wise Men From Afar

FOUR SHEPHERDS: The Life Of A Shepherd Relived

Narrator: The Bummer Lamb

Conclusion: I Am The Lost Sheep

AUDIENCE: CANDLE LIGHTING AND CAROLS

WHISPERS OF GOD'S LOVE PARTY!



The Sheep Whisperer

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY



Introduction



THE PRELUDE

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

THE PROCESSION

Music in Background.

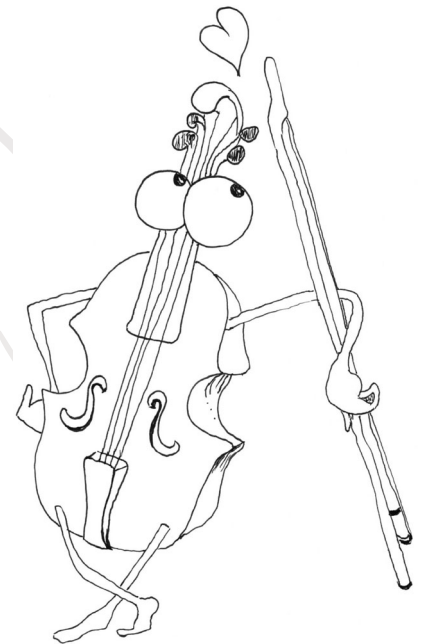
Gather costumed participants in an outer room

Participants walk to their reserved seats as
small groups. Teachers/leaders/helpers
enter with them.

Walk along the center aisle so the
audience can see the costumes.

Adjust the entrance as desired.
Consider the shape and size of the room
and the seating arrangement.

Think about photography
and video opportunities
for excited families.



SHEPHERD WHISPERERS' ENTRANCE

Four actors enter together after the participants are seated. Walk slowly, two by two along the center aisle to the center of the stage.

Carry the long scarf that identifies each shepherd through the program. BOY SHEPHERD wraps the long scarf around his neck and stays on stage. The other 3 actors walk back the aisle until their turn to participate.



Uncommon Shepherds

Narrator

One or More Speakers



In Bible times, those called to tend sheep were usually teenage boys around the age of 14 or 15. Being responsible for the flocks was kind of like a rite of passage for young men, who would be given a bunch of sheep, not only belonging to their own families, but also to others in their village.

It was a big responsibility for those who were called, and in a way, their pride was on the line. Shepherds were earning their place as men in society by fighting off lions and bears and protecting little lambs. A shepherd knew his flock so well that he typically had a name for each sheep.

When one of the sheep in his charge went missing, he would call it out by name. Even if he had to search all night, once he found his lamb, he would go running into town and tell everyone that the flock was complete again. Upon hearing the news, the people of his village would just as happy as he was – **it was a big deal!**

First century reporters wrote that up to 265,000 lambs would be sacrificed in Jerusalem's Jewish Temple at Passover. The Passover lamb was called "The Lamb of God". **'Fluffy' went to the Temple?**

Those lambs had to meet strict Jewish faith regulations. They had to be male, one year or less, without spot or blemish. They were born in controlled flocks and inspected for defects before being raised in special conditions. **Ah-ha! Now we're on to something!**

Where did they get that many lambs? Sacrificial animals had to be born within five miles of Jerusalem. Bethlehem is just five miles from Jerusalem. **There's a hint!**



The hills around Bethlehem were a first century lamb farm factory. When the lambs were born, they were wrapped in strips of cloth to protect them and then placed in a stone feeding trough in the birthing barn until the priest came by to inspect them.

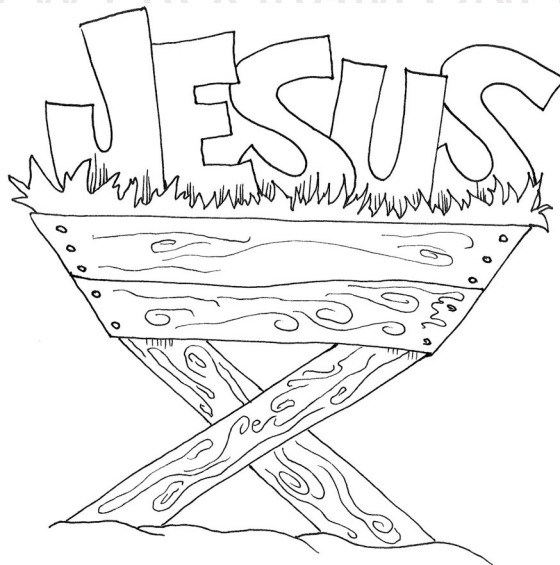
Sound familiar?

Common Holy Land shepherds may have been young but THESE Bethlehem shepherds were a cut above. They were TEMPLE shepherds most likely trained from childhood. Like David before them, these people lived a life of dedication and faith.

And then came Jesus.

Exit

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY



Jesus Is A Little Lamb

Pre School

Actors: Youngest children, Teacher, Boy Shepherd
Costumes: Long t-shirts, colorful scarfs around waists.

Variety of Props: Sheep on Sticks or Lamb Eyeglasses
(See PROPS instructions to enlarge).
Children may carry plush lambs.
No Memorization. Be familiar with words.



BOY SHEPHERD ON STAGE.
(Wearing long shepherd scarf)
ASLEEP IN THE BACKGROUND.

TEACHER: Jesus was born near here in a little village called Bethlehem. Come with me. See all the sheep in the field? Look! There are lots of sheep in this Bethlehem field.

CHILDREN: (Wiggle their 'stick' or plush sheep.)

TEACHER: What do sheep say?

CHILDREN: (Wiggle sheep—Bleat LOUDLY) Baaa-Baaa-Baaa!

TEACHER: This sleeping boy looks like a shepherd. No one is keeping watch over his flocks by night! We better keep an eye on his little lambs. Are the sheep still "talking"?

CHILDREN: (Wiggle sheep) Baaa-Baaa-Baaa!

TEACHER: The sheep didn't wake up the Shepherd Boy. Let's not frighten him. We better whisper "Wake Up Shepherd Boy".

CHILDREN: (Wiggle sheep - Whisper) Wake Up Shepherd Boy!



TEACHER: Jesus was born in an animal stable not far from here. His mommy was brave. She wrapped her baby in long strips of cloths and put him in a manger so he wouldn't be cold or afraid. A manger is a food dish for animals when they get hungry. Are your sheep hungry?

CHILDREN: (*Wiggle sheep - Whisper*) Baaa-Baaa-Baaa!

TEACHER: (*Quietly*) We are 'sheep whisperers'. Sheep get very afraid. They are shy. Shepherds know how to whisper to their sheep in calm, quiet voices so the sheep are peaceful.

This shepherd has to wake up so he can watch his flock of sheep when we leave. Sing our song and see if he wakes up.

Sing quietly so we don't frighten the sheep. We don't want to frighten them. Our shepherd looks so tired.

BOY SHEPHERD REMAINS ASLEEP AS CHILDREN SING QUIETLY.
(*Children wiggle sheep and sing the song several times*)

JESUS IS A LITTLE LAMB

(*Tune: "Mary Had A Little Lamb"*)

Jesus is a Little Lamb,
Little lamb, Little lamb.

Jesus is a little lamb
Born on Christmas Day.

Shhhshhhh!

BOY SHEPHERD STRETCHES, YAWNS,
RUBS HIS EYES AS HE WAKES UP.
AS THE LITTLE CHILDREN LEAVE THE STAGE,
SHEPHERD BOY STANDS, LOOKS SURPRISED
AND WAVES TO THEM.
CHILDREN EXIT



Act I

The

Sheep

Whisperer

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Boy Shepherd



Skills of A Shepherd

Readers

Actors: Narrator and Readers--ALL ages. (Use available readers.)

Costumes: Modern Clothing

Props: "Skills of A Shepherd" Script.

No Memorization. Be familiar with words.

Narrator

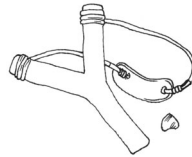
And so we begin the life journey of our shepherd. We don't know his name. We call him "Bethlehem Shepherd". His life prepared him for that amazing night when angels announced God's Messiah, our Savior, had finally arrived.

Do shepherds relax at their campfire eating food on a stick, poking sheep, fighting off wolves every once in awhile? Maybe. Shepherds had skills ingrained in them since before the days of David, the shepherd boy. Modern shepherds have those skills. All Christians are called on to have the same skills as a shepherd. Do you have 'shepherd skills'

...for the sake of the flock?

Readers

All ages. Divide between available people
Stand along every aisle, front to back, to speak.



TOUGH AT HEART: Sweet lambs, green pastures, grazing sheep. Sometimes, but shepherd life is survival of the fittest, making life and death decisions that will tear your heart apart **...for the sake of the flock.**

HARD WORK: Moving fences, moving sheep, lifting 40 pound bales of hay. Shepherds do hard things. They lead with their heart and make hard decisions. They stay in the sheep field when they would rather be home. They let their gut be their guide **...for the sake of the flock.**



BE HUMBLE: Proud people need not apply. If there is anything that can bring you to your knees, it is shepherding. Do it wrong, overlook the obvious, an attack happens. Forgive yourself and move forward. Do you think you know it all? Shepherds know there are days when they have much to learn
...for the sake of the flock.

LEARN NEW SKILLS: Shepherds learn new skills in a new way every day. When medical skills are required, the shepherd dives in and gets messy. If you don't want to learn new skills, do not be a shepherd. You will be taken out of your comfort zone and will step forward and do things others will not do
...for the sake of the flock.

ENDURE: Shepherds work in all kinds of weather. Rain, sleet, snow, freezing temperatures, extreme heat and humidity --all while keeping the sheep alive! No sleep, little strength, weak knees
...for the sake of the flock.

OBSERVE: Shepherds often stand in the middle of the field and watch their flock quietly. When asked, they say, "I am getting to know my sheep". It takes great observation and getting to know what normal looks like and to identify what is NOT normal. **...for the sake of the flock.**

BE PATIENT: Sheep look for ways to test the shepherd. Shepherds learn to outwit, outplay, outlast them. Once you think you have them figured out, they are at it again. The shepherd never gives up on those rascals
...for the sake of the flock.

READER: We think about shepherds at Christmas. Let's meet ONE very special shepherd from his childhood to the twilight of his life. What did that shepherd learn? What did he experience? How did he become part of God's Great Plan? Imagine we are in a common, quiet sheep field just outside a tiny village, Bethlehem. Our shepherd grows up there.
...for the sake of the flock.





Kindergarten

Junior Shepherds: Lost Again!

Actors: Young Students, Shepherd Boy
Speaking parts divided between available participants.

Costumes: Basic Holy Land tunics,
scarves, sandals

Be familiar with words. Read as Able.

Students Enter From Back.

BOY SHEPHERD On Stage.

Walk to the stage, Search with hands over eyes, Call out
“Here Sheep!” “Where are you, Sheep?” “Don’t be lost, Sheep”.

Shepherd Boy: (Look surprised) I have sheep right here on this hill. Who are you?

TEACHER: We lost our sheep. Have you seen them?

Student #1: We are shepherds.

Student #2: We lost our sheep.

Student #3: Our sheep lost us!

Student #4: Do you have our sheep?

Shepherd Boy: I have lots of sheep. Sshhh, whisper. (Whisper) My sheep are sleeping. You will wake them up.

(Calling out kindly) I see you over there, Fluffy, put your head baa-ack down and go to sleep. Nothing to see here.

(Whispering Loudly) Now, what happened? Where are your sheep?

TEACHER: You are a wonderful sheep whisperer! Can you teach us to whisper to sheep like that? We are desperate!



Student #5: Those sheep really listen to your voice!

Student #6: We know what to call our sheep! LOST SHEEP!

Student #7: *(Loud!)* I am lost without my sheep!

Shepherd Boy: *(Whispering)* Sshhhh, too loud! Did you look in the valley on the other side of Bethlehem?

TEACHER: We looked in the valley. We looked on the mountain. We walked through Bethlehem. We even walked the dirt path to the sheepfold. We are exhausted. And our sheep are....

Student #8: LOST SHEEP!

Shepherd Boy: *(Whispering)* Did you really search the village? Maybe in the dark alleys? Sometimes they run to the old stable because they know hay is in the manger there. They are afraid. Sheep will hide in the strangest places.

Student #9: LOST SHEEP!

Shepherd Boy: *(Whispering desperately)* Don't Panic! My dad told me this kind of thing happens all the time. And my dad is the best shepherd in all of Bethlehem. *(Proudly)* I am a "Shepherd In Training". I know what to do! Follow me!

(Creep silently as a group to one side of the stage.)

Sshhhh, Whisper. When they show up we have to catch 'em ...quick!

TEACHER: There they are! I see them. Over there! In the dark!

Students: *(Each student as they catch their pretend, invisible 'sheep')*
Got him! Got him! Got him! Oops, missed him! Got him!

Catch all the invisible sheep. Pretend they are wiggling while children 'hold' them.

Shepherd Boy: *(Normal Voice)* Good job Junior Shepherds! Who says we're just kids. We can be good shepherds even when we are young. This is not the first time sheep have wandered away from the shepherd.

(Bragging) My dad, who is the best shepherd ever, always told me, "Never leave one lamb behind!" The Good Shepherd searches for his little lost sheep.

EXIT



Grades One and Two Care and Feeding of A Shepherd

Actors: Grades One/Two Students

(Divide speaking parts between available participants.)

Costume: Shepherd tunics/ bathrobes, head gear

Props: Fill the BOY SHEPHERD'S bag with items shepherds need.

No Memorization. Be familiar with words.



Shepherd's Bag

Prepare a shepherd's shoulder bag with items (or pretend items) a Bethlehem shepherd may need while watching a grazing flock.

BOY SHEPHERD: Who goes there? Make yourself known! Come into the light! I warn you. I have my sling and it's ready to put you down! (Swing an imaginary 'sling'.)

Shepherds enter from the back of the room.

Rush to the stage. Surround the BOY SHEPHERD.

Students: (Together, speaking over each other in chaos) Help us! Save us! We're in trouble!

BOY SHEPHERD: Hold it. Calm down. Back off. What happened?

Student #1: (Shouting) We were robbed!!!

#2: It was awful. He was a big guy. All mean looking.

#3: (Make 'muscles') He had big muscles! He stole our whole flock!

BOY SHEPHERD: Where is your shepherd's bag? Why didn't you grab something to fight him off?

#4: He snuck up on us in the middle of the night. We were sleeping. He took our shepherd's bag. Everything we need is in that bag!



#5: Did someone mention he had big muscles?

#6: I liked that bag. It was my favorite bag. It was big. My lunch was in that bag! My mom's gonna kill me!

BOY SHEPHERD: A good shepherd is always prepared to protect the flock. You never know when an emergency pops up and you can't get back to Bethlehem for help.

#7: If I had a sling, I could have 'slinged' that robber. He took my sling.

#8: David had a sling and he killed the giant. David was a great shepherd boy. Maybe it was a great sling.

BOY SHEPHERD: Maybe David had a Great God. I always carry an extra sling in my bag. I am a two handed slinger.

#9: Our smooth stones were stolen. We can't do anything.

BOY SHEPHERD: Got ya covered. Extra stones--in the bag. You never get a second chance. Practice, practice, practice.

#10: He took my harp. I play music for everyone. They like my singing.

BOY SHEPHERD: Take my mini harp. Trust me. Your sheep will fall asleep quickly when you play this little beauty. It's in the bag!

#11: We are kind of hungry. Our lunch was peanut butter sandwiches today. My favorite!

BOY SHEPHERD: Food? I have never heard of this butter of nuts. I have a few extra raisins. Share amongst yourselves --in the bag.

#12: Our shepherd bag had sheep kibbles to tease a lost sheep back to the flock. How will I get my sheep to come back to me?

BOY SHEPHERD: Your sheep should come when they hear your voice. In the meantime, use the kibbles-- in the bag.



#13: One of my lambs has a cut leg. The thief stole my swaddling strips and medicine.

BOY SHEPHERD: No problem! Strips of clean cloth and a little ointment—in the bag!

Take my shepherd's bag. Find those sheep. Get going. That thief has no idea what is waiting for him. Muscles don't matter when God's on your side. Check the manger in Bethlehem. Sheep herders tend to end up there. It's a meeting place. Remember, sheep love it when you whisper to them.

Students Exit

BOY SHEPHERD

I am learning to be a good shepherd like my dad and like King David.

"God chose David to be His servant and took him away from the sheepfolds. He brought David from following the ewes, to be a shepherd over Jacob his people and over Israel His inheritance. So David shepherded them with a faithful and true heart and guided them with the skillfulness of his hands."

(Psalm 78:70-72)

I dream about God's plans for me. I'm just a Shepherd. God may give me a special job. Who knows? I better check up on those shepherds. I'm heading for Bethlehem. If there is a big, muscly robber there, they are going to need experienced 'back up'.



Exit along center aisle.
Hand the Shepherd scarf to Young Shepherd.



Narrator

The moment Jesus said, "I am The Good Shepherd" people nodded their heads. Everyone understood the life of a shepherd. Sheep surrounded them. Sheep were every day animals. Sometimes sheep were pets.



People wove clothing from wool, cuddled up in fluffy sheepskin blankets, loved little lambs, ate the mutton (that's sheep meat). They followed God's plan of sacrificing perfect lambs. Well, maybe they didn't understand perfectly but they knew that far back in the olden days, God has a plan for a Special Lamb.

The people waited for their Messiah, their Savior. The people thought they were waiting for a fancy, grown up king in a palace. Little did they know that a baby without a crown or a big house or money or power would be God's Plan.

People did not know that shepherds would be the first eyewitnesses to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. They did not know that God's big plan was all about a lamb, the Lamb of God. They did not know ...YET!

Shepherds just kept walking the fields, faithfully taking care of their flocks and waiting....just waiting.

Exit

AUDIENCE: Sing Christmas Carol

SPECIAL MUSIC: As Desired



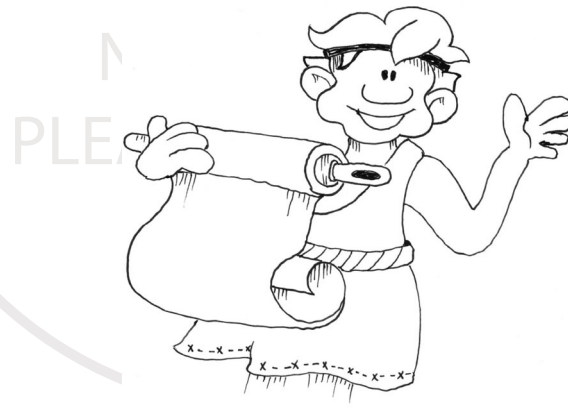
Act 2

The

Sheep

Whisperer

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Young Shepherd



Grades 3-4

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Actors: *Students (Divide speaking parts between available participants.),
Young Shepherd (teens or twenties)*

Student Costumes: *White shirt, white sweater, white blouse.
Add poinsettia boutonniere.*

Props: *Script, battery candles or tea lights)
No Memorization. Be familiar with words.*



Young Shepherd walks slowly to stage
along the center aisle,
wearing the Shepherd scarf.

Bow in prayer center stage while students read Psalm 23.

Students stand in aisles, wearing white, carrying small lights.

*Speak slowly with meaning
so the audience hears every word.*

Psalm 23

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still water.
3. He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.



4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and they staff they comfort me.
5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

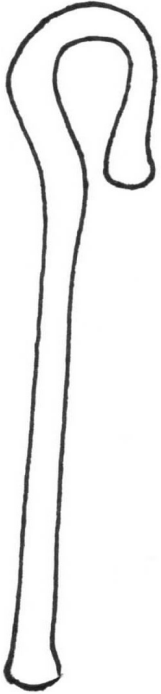
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*Students walk TO the stage.
Stand in a semi circle around the shepherd.
Keep little lights on.*



Young Shepherd Rod and Staff Comfort Me

Props: Long shepherd scarf, Hiking stick, Script



Shalom! I was a very young Shepherd when, in my brilliant mind, I thought I could get out of work at home if I watched our family flocks. Sitting on the grass under a tree sounds very nice. Instead, my muscles ache and I smell like sheep. My mother is never happy with me. My father makes me do hard work in the field. He's always yelling "Get on your feet! Do it for that sheep on the edge. Do it for the flock!"

I'm Young and being a shepherd is boring. Bethlehem is so small. Same people, same food every day. I want to be with my friends. I want to see the world. I have big plans!

Bethlehem is the "City of David", the "House of Bread". King David was born here. I watch sheep in the same fields. Jacob buried his wife, Rachel, in the tomb along the road. In the other direction is the field where Ruth from Moab picked wheat to feed Naomi, her mother-in-law. I pull water from the same well where David's warriors drew water for him during battle with Saul. That's the end of my Bethlehem history tour.

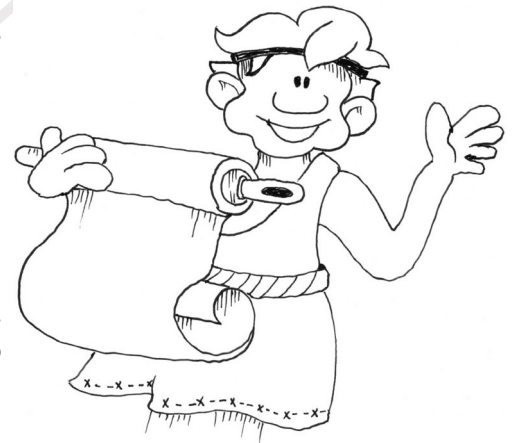
My father calls this "God's Country". (Sigh) I guess it is.

I'm holding God to His promise to send help. I can't be a shepherd forever....or can I? I keep looking for a king to ride into the village on a white horse. That will be an exciting day.

**We'll show those nasty Romans.
(Don't tell them I said that.)**

Until Messiah arrives, rumor has it that a Roman census is being discussed. There might be a huge family reunion if Caesar Augustus orders it. Everyone has to travel to his own hometown to be counted. What a waste of time.

**I don't know when that will happen.
Probably within a few years.**



Student #1: That looks interesting. Is it a stick?

YOUNG: I carry a big stick. It's like a hiking stick. I call it my rod or staff. I lead my sheep out in the country. Rocky ground? Keeps me on my feet. It catches me when I fall.

#2: Is that stick dangerous? Should I back up?

YOUNG: This stick is my weapon. (*Twirl the staff.*) When robbers come, I fight to keep them away from my flock. Wild animals think my sheep are their lunch, I put myself in the middle to scare them away. (*Jump! Shout "boo"*) I protect my sheep. I whisper to my flock.

#3: Do your sheep like your rod and your staff?

YOUNG: Sheep are not very smart. Don't tell them. They think they are brave. They wander off. My staff pulls them back to keep them safe.

#4: God leads us. He keeps us on our feet when the road is rocky.

#5: God fights our enemies and protects us from wild situations.

#6: God is a good shepherd. He finds us when we are lost. I'm sure God's Messiah will arrive at just the right time.

YOUNG SHEPHERD: I am living in the waiting time. No matter how much my Young Shepherd soul wants to see the world, my soul wants to see what happens in our little Bethlehem village.

YOUNG SHEPHERD walks out of the room.

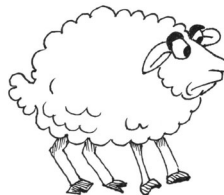
STUDENTS EXIT: Holding their lights, walking two by two.

AUDIENCE: CHRISTMAS CAROL

Suggestions: "O Come All Ye Faithful", "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Special Music as

Desired.



Act 3

The

Sheep

Whisperer

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PLEASE



Bethlehem Shepherd



Narrator: Shepherds Abiding In The Field



In the same country, in the same fields, we find our Bethlehem Shepherd. He has grown taller and wiser. His life is still moving at a slow pace. Wild animals, horrible weather, robbers, sick sheep. He has seen it all. His father is gone now and our guy has become the lead shepherd.

He moved from Boy Shepherd to Young Shepherd to Bethlehem Shepherd. He earned his job. The sheep fields are still calling his name. It appears our shepherd has found his life's purpose.

The sheep hear his voice and follow him. In fact, he doesn't push his sheep out of Bethlehem each morning. He leads the way, calling them by name as they climb the old, familiar hill, wagging their tails behind them. They know fresh water and green grass will be waiting for them wherever their shepherd leads.

Today is different. Our Bethlehem Shepherd passes throngs of tired travelers going the other direction. He turns around, watching them trudging into the village. He knows the Roman census has begun.

Caesar Augustus got his way. Roman soldiers are taking names and looking mean. Visitors scramble to find a safe place to sleep before they begin their long journey home.

Luke wrote, *"There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night."* (Luke 2:8) A day and a night like any other night, just a little more crowded. The shepherds decided to stay far from the tourist crowds. They settled down to sleep with their flocks.

And then...and then....

You won't believe what our Bethlehem Shepherd saw!
I'm telling you, you won't believe it!





Grades 5 and 6 Fear Not!

Actors: Student Angels, Joseph and Mary, Bethlehem Shepherd (Adult)
Costumes: Angel costumes, Holy Land clothing, shepherd wears the scarf.
Props: Twinkle lights, small bright lights carried by angels, script.
No Memorization. Be familiar with words.

HOT TIP

Light strings of white twinkle lights across the stage.
Some angels hold them or are wrapped in them.
Plug in lights NOW!

Bethlehem Shepherd, wearing identifying scarf, Carrying staff,
Walks to the stage from back of the room while Narrator is speaking.

BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD

(Speak to the audience half way along aisle.) The stars are out tonight. It is beautiful on my hillside. It's getting tougher to climb that hill every day. My back hurts a little. I think I've pulled a few too many rascally lambs out of the cliffs. I spend the night with the flock these days. There are so many travelers in the village. Who knew that Bethlehem had so many people born here. The government wants to count us. Here they come over hill and dale. I'd rather be out here anyway. It is so peaceful. A perfect night for prayer. As long as the sheep behave themselves.

CONTINUE TO STAND MID AUDIENCE.

ANGELS

'Fly' onto stage dressed as angels.
Carry small bright, flashing lights or twinkle lights.
Twinkle lights on stage should be lit at this time.

- Student #1: *(While flying to the stage, hands in air)* Fear Not!
- Student #2: Fear Not!
- Student #3: Fear Not!



BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD: (*Backing off, Hands fearfully in front of face*) Fear not! Are you kidding me? I am terrified! Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? Don't hurt my sheep! I am warning you! I have a sling and I know how to use it! Why are you on my hillside?

Student #4-Angel of the Lord: (*Boldly-Hand in the air*) Do not be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." (*Luke 2:8-12*)

ALL ANGELS: (*Waving Lights with hands in the air*) Praise God! Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased".

Angels leave stage waving lights.
'Fly' – Disappear at back of room.

BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD (STAND CENTER STAGE)

(*Shaking in fear*) Was I dreaming? Did that just happen? Where did they go? Were they angels? Wait! I remember when I was growing up my dad told me the words of the prophet,

"But you, Bethlehem..., though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (*Micah 5:2 NIV*)

(*Excited*) It's Bethlehem! MY hometown! My whole life I have been looking for a king on a white horse to ride into Bethlehem and rescue us. I was wrong. It's a BABY! God sent a Baby! He's here! He must be in the old manger, in the stable in the village.

I have to find that baby! What did that angel say? "Born today". He's little. "Bethlehem". Yes! "Wrapped in shepherd's strips of cloth", "Lying in a manger!" I know exactly where he is. I have to go! Now!



JOSEPH, MARY AND BABY IN MANGER

Actors: Teens or Adults, real baby or wrapped doll

Costumes: Holy Land

Props: Manger, seat, baby

WHILE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD IS SPEAKING,
MARY AND JOSEPH ENTER.
MARY HOLDS THE BABY TENDERLY.
MARY AND JOSEPH DO NOT SPEAK.
THEY IGNORE THE SHEPHERD.
THEY GAZE LOVINGLY AT THE BABY.



BETHLEHEM SHEPHERD

Approach Mary, Joseph, Baby with excited, confused surprise.

(To Audience) There they are! I found the baby. God's Son! Our Messiah and Savior! He is as cute as my little lambs.

MOVE EXCITEDLY BETWEEN MARY AND JOSEPH.

TO JOSEPH: You won't believe what just happened! I was with my flock on the hillside andoh, you won't believe it! You won't believe it! I can't say it!

TO MARY: Maybe YOU will believe me! We saw angels, thousands of angels! They were everywhere.... all over the hillside...all over the sky! I can't explain it! They talked to us. Every shepherd was terrified. Except me! I was very brave. Well, maybe I was the most scared.

TO JOSEPH: Are You Listening? Something weird is happening here. I'm a nobody. I take care of Temple sheep. I sit on a rock all day. I chase down sheep. Why would Heaven's angels speak to Bethlehem's Shepherd?

TO MARY: You just had a baby, here in this stable. Oh right, you know that. This is not a good place to have a baby. The angels said to come and look for you. How are you feeling? Are you okay? Can I get you anything? Water? Food? Do you understand what I'm talking about?



TO JOSEPH: *(Slow down, take a deep breath and speak clearly)* The angels said to come to Bethlehem. I left my flock! I ran! The angels said there would be a baby, like this baby. A baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, like these clothes. They said the baby would be lying in a manger, like this manger. I'm in the right place. I am sure of it! It IS this baby! God's own Lamb!

TO MARY: May I hold the Baby? Not a good idea? That's okay. I AM a little ...'sheepy'. The angels said this is the king we have been waiting for to rescue our people. God's Son. Is it true? I know it's true!

TO JOSEPH: Our Savior! Our Messiah! Our Lord! Take good care of Him. I know you will. You look competent...like a real mother and father. He is the One! I have to leave. I have to tell everyone that I have seen the Lord! I have seen our Messiah!

Run out of the room, shouting
"He's Here! Messiah is Here!"

Mary and Joseph and Baby quietly leave the stage.

AUDIENCE CHRISTMAS CAROL

Suggestions: "Hark The Herald Angels Sing"
"Angels From The Realms of Glory",
"O Little Town of Bethlehem", "The First Noel"

Special Music as Desired.



CONCLUSION



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SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS



Narrator: The Rest of His Story

*Narrator speaks as the Older, Bent Shepherd Of The Hills
Walks to the stage.*

Shepherd Of The Hills wears the Shepherd's long scarf.



"So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and He guided them with His skillful hands." Psalm 78:72

"For we are your people and the sheep of your pasture; we will give you thanks forever and show forth your praise from age to age. Ps. 79:13

Years passed. The manger is empty, except for Temple lambs, still swaddled to protect them before they are transported to Jerusalem. Fresh hay is stacked for animals who need shelter and scattered into that old manger year after year. Bethlehem citizens eventually forgot that long ago a baby boy was born there and slept in that very manger.

Life in the small village moves on. Babies are born. People die. People come and go. These things tend to be the stuff of life. Even visits by angels are forgotten along the way.

Except ...for our shepherd....who experienced a night of miracles. This Shepherd Of The Hills saw magnificent angels and heard their heavenly voices. He never forgot the night Jesus was born and God trusted shepherds to make the baby announcement that the Savior, the long awaited Messiah, the Lord had arrived.

Our Shepherd Of The Hills returned to his flocks. Campfire evenings were filled with stories of that angel night and that Baby. Years passed and our Boy Shepherd, called to be a Young Shepherd and then a Bethlehem Shepherd, followed the life of that little one. In old age, he could tell the whole story of Jesus as fresh as the day the baby was born.

It was as if God whispered, "You are going to want to see this."

The Shepherd Of The Hills knows the REST OF HIS STORY.



Shepherd of The Hills: The Rest of His Story

Actors: Teens and Adults , Shepherds,

Costumes: Wise Men, servants Holy Land clothing,

Props: Seat for Shepherd (cover in blanket to resemble a hillside).

Containers for Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh, scripts

No Memorization. Be familiar with words.



Shepherd of The Hills

(Portray an older person.

Walk slowly, bent over to stage seat.

Sit down. Speak directly to Audience.)

These days I sit in the shade and watch my frisky lambs. My thoughts are filled with memories of time gone by.

And what days those were.

The most important day in my life was long ago. How could anything be better than seeing angels in a dark sky? How can I see another baby without seeing His eyes.

Even my lambs remind me of that night in Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary named him Jesus. I will never forget His name. From that day to this day, I tell every person I meet about the night of the angels and Jesus, the baby.

Some believe me and others, well, others think I'm crazy.

Fancy strangers showed up in Bethlehem. They were 'fine' people. Dressed in shimmering robes, riding camels. Their servants were attentive to them as they rode into the village looking for 'my' little family. What a parade.

It looked something like this.



WISE MEN FROM AFAR

BACKGROUND MUSIC: Wise Men walk, musicians play "We Three Kings" slowly in the background. Walk slowly along center aisle.

3 Wise Men 3 Gifts Variety of servants as available.

Wise Man #1: There's the star! It has stopped right here over this house. What a small house. (Clap!) Servants! (Clap!) Bring the gifts!

(As Available: servants, bow and hand gifts to each wise man.)

#2: We got out of Jerusalem just in time. Herod was a mean, crafty little man. I didn't trust that smile. I'm sorry I gave away our secret. I even bowed when I said, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? We have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

#3: Bad choice! It seemed all of Jerusalem rose up in alarm. I knew we were in trouble when Herod smiled, "I have an idea. Go find that baby, so I can worship him too. We like to honor kings around here." King Herod seemed disturbed.

#1: We saw through that slimy lie. I wouldn't be surprised to turn around and find a legion of Roman soldiers following us now. (Look behind.)



#2: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Gifts fit for a King.

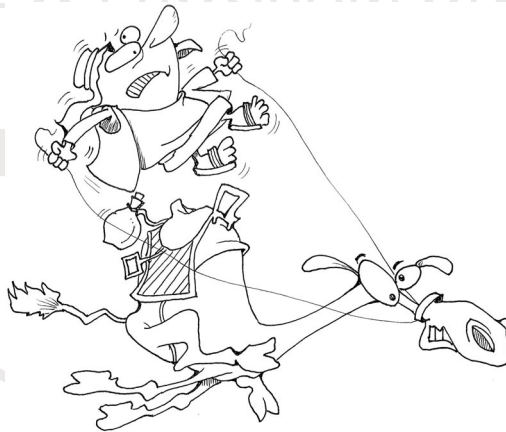
#3: Very valuable. Perfect gifts for a young family who may need to know they are loved. And they may need money pretty soon.

#1: We bring treasures from the East to honor this Child.

(Circle the aisles and leave the room.)

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PLI



A Shepherd's Life Relived

All 4 Shepherds conclude the program.

They stand in line from youngest to oldest and tell the Rest of His Story.

Lay the long Shepherd's Scarf on a bench/chair/prop in front of them.



Shepherd of The Hills

I saw the fancy kings arrive. I saw their caravan heading East. Going home, I presume. I know why they came. The Child from the manger is our Messiah. He grew like a tall shoot. I watched from my hill. Joseph, Mary and Jesus disappeared for many years and I heard nothing. Well, that was that. His story was finished. But....not yet.

Boy Shepherd

The baby born in Bethlehem was healing people, raising people from the dead, performing amazing miracles providing food and changing weather. Many people recognized Jesus as our Messiah. Others hated Jesus. Hated him so much that they set traps for the grown up teacher so they could get rid of him.



Young Shepherd

I eventually got to see the world ...a little. I herded sheep into Jerusalem each year. I met people from all over the world. My quiet country home was the best life. There was a ruckus in Jerusalem. Jesus rode into the city on a donkey. Crowds waved palm branches and threw down their coats. The haters hate Jesus even more.

I walked to Jerusalem to see for myself. I got to the city just as a crowd was weeping and wailing and floating down the street like a wave. In the middle a man was so abused I couldn't tell who he was. Some were weeping his name. "Jesus". Others screamed. "Crucify Him."



Shepherd Of The Hills

I watched Jesus die on a Cross. Where were the angels? I was sure Heaven's angels would rescue him. At any moment they would appear and scare those wicked gawkers half to death. I was positive. I watched for angels in all their glory.

I know they will come!



Boy Shepherd

They didn't come. The world grew dark. Thunder filled the skies. Jesus didn't have to suffer that pain. I know about sacrifice. I offer my lambs as sacrifices in the Temple. I heard Jesus' last words, "It is finished."

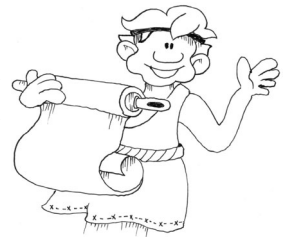
But His story is not finished...not yet.



Young Shepherd

The first days of Jesus' life in Bethlehem's were long forgotten except for a few people, like Mary, who saw Jesus complete His purpose. And, like a Boy Shepherd, now shabby and old on the outside but young and vibrant inside.

I will never forget Jesus, The Good Shepherd.



Bethlehem Shepherd

God offered the ultimate sacrifice and watched His Son on that Roman Cross. From a humble village manger to a cruel Roman cross, God rescued us. It was a hard plan. Jesus was a willing Lamb.

When I think I have God figured out, He shows me one more surprise.



Shepherd of The Hills

An invisible tug kept me in Jerusalem but a new crop of lambs was birthing soon and I was needed. Time to go home to Bethlehem.

When Jesus died I thought, "Well, that's the end of His story." He was born. He lived. He died." I was wrong. As I walked along the path toward home, women came running by me.

Almost knocked me over!





Bethlehem Shepherd

Why God chose me to be a poor spokesman, I will never understand. I honored my assignment. I tell everyone that a baby boy was born in a stable and slept in a humble manger in a little village to a young family.

He grew in wisdom and stature.

Bethlehem Shepherd

The women didn't see me. They shouted: "He is Risen. He's not in the tomb! The tomb is empty! We saw an angel!" Aha! You see? That's where I come in. I understand seeing angels. Angels will send you to your knees. He drew people to Himself and did miracles only God can do. Jesus.

Even His name makes me smile.



PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

Boy Shepherd

I was one shepherd boy out of thousands who was privileged to see God's Plan in real time. Year after year I watched Jesus from a distance. I am certain He did not notice me. I stayed in the shadows and at the back of the crowds. Until the day I see Him face to face, I will shout good news to all people. "For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

And THAT is the Rest of His Story!



Narrator

The Bummer Lamb



No one really knows why, but every once in awhile a ewe will reject her lamb. She pushes the lamb away and even kicks it to reject the poor baby. Once a mother sheep rejects her lamb, she never changes her mind. It's a done deal. **Goodbye Bummer Lamb.**

The little bummer lamb hangs his head so low that it looks like something is wrong with his neck. His spirit is broken.

Poor little Bummer Lamb.

Without the shepherd's help, the lamb will die, rejected and alone. So he takes that rejected little one into his home, hand feeds it and keeps it warm by the fire. He wraps it up with blankets and cuddles it so the lamb can be comforted by the shepherd's heartbeat. **Happy Lamb!**

Once the lamb is strong, the shepherd places it back in the field with the rest of the flock but that little lamb never forgets how the shepherd cared for him when his mother rejected him.

When the shepherd calls his flock, guess who runs to him first? The bummer sheep! He knows his shepherd's voice intimately. It's not that the lamb is loved more, the lamb just knows the one who loves it.

Isaiah pictured Jesus as a good shepherd: "He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young." Isaiah 40:11

Just when we think we've heard it all the Christmas story gets better. Jesus is OUR Good Shepherd. He cares for our every need and holds us close to His heart so we can hear His heartbeat. When you feel like a broken 'bummer lamb', remember you are deeply loved by The Good Shepherd. (Author Unknown)



One Lost Sheep

Actor: One Teen or Adult

Costume: Modern Clothing

*Stand and face the audience,
speaking from the front, center aisle.*



My Heavenly Father is a Sheep Whisperer. God whispers His love so I am not afraid. I hear God whisper every time I trust one of God's promises. I hear Him whisper when seasons change year after year. I feel God's whisper of comfort when I experience sorrow.

Jesus told a story: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:3-7)

God whispers every time a baby is born. Each baby reminds me that one night in the City of David, a baby boy was born and changed the world one person at a time.... starting with shepherds on a Bethlehem hillside.

I remember the day God whispered in my ear: "Come to Me. You mean more to Me than the cattle on a thousand hills or the wealth in every mine."

I am the One Lost Sheep!

EXIT

**CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
CLOSE IN PRAYER**



God Whispers His Love Party

Assign party planning to one small group.

Hand picked friends or Sunday School class.

Offer delicious food, background Christmas music, simple Christmas decorations and casual fellowship.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE PARTY DAY

Menu: Delicious and Fun!

Ask people to share their favorite Christmas dessert.

Provide a variety of beverages.

Christmas Cookies Galore (Cut and frosted in lamb shapes.)

"Happy Birthday" Jesus Sheet Cake

Variety of sandwiches, salads, chips

**A SUNDAY MORNING CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST:
DOUGHNUTS, SWEET ROLLS,
ORANGE JUICE, COFFEE AND TEA.**

Seating: Comfortable and Casual

Decide the best seating arrangement depending upon the size of the anticipated gathering. Position tables and chairs. Serve buffet style.

Guests stand and move around the room to chat.

Group the chairs in small circle for casual conversation.

Background Music: Christmas Melodies!

Fill the room with quiet, Christmas music. Perform live instrumental music with local church musicians or favorite CD performances.

Centerpieces: Keep It Simple!

Poinsettia in a clear vase beside tea lites on white table cloths.

Add shepherd and sheep nativity pieces to each table.



PARTY DAY PREPARATIONS

1. Decorate serving table and guest tables
2. Brew coffee, heat tea kettle, make punch in a large bowl.
3. Set out delicious food!
4. Add special touches as desired.

PARTY TIME HOSPITALITY

PUT ON A HAPPY FACE! Greet guests cheerfully as they come through the serving line. Make everyone feel 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

CLEAN IT UP! The party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help washing dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.



Whisper A Christmas Prayer of Thanks!

Go Home!

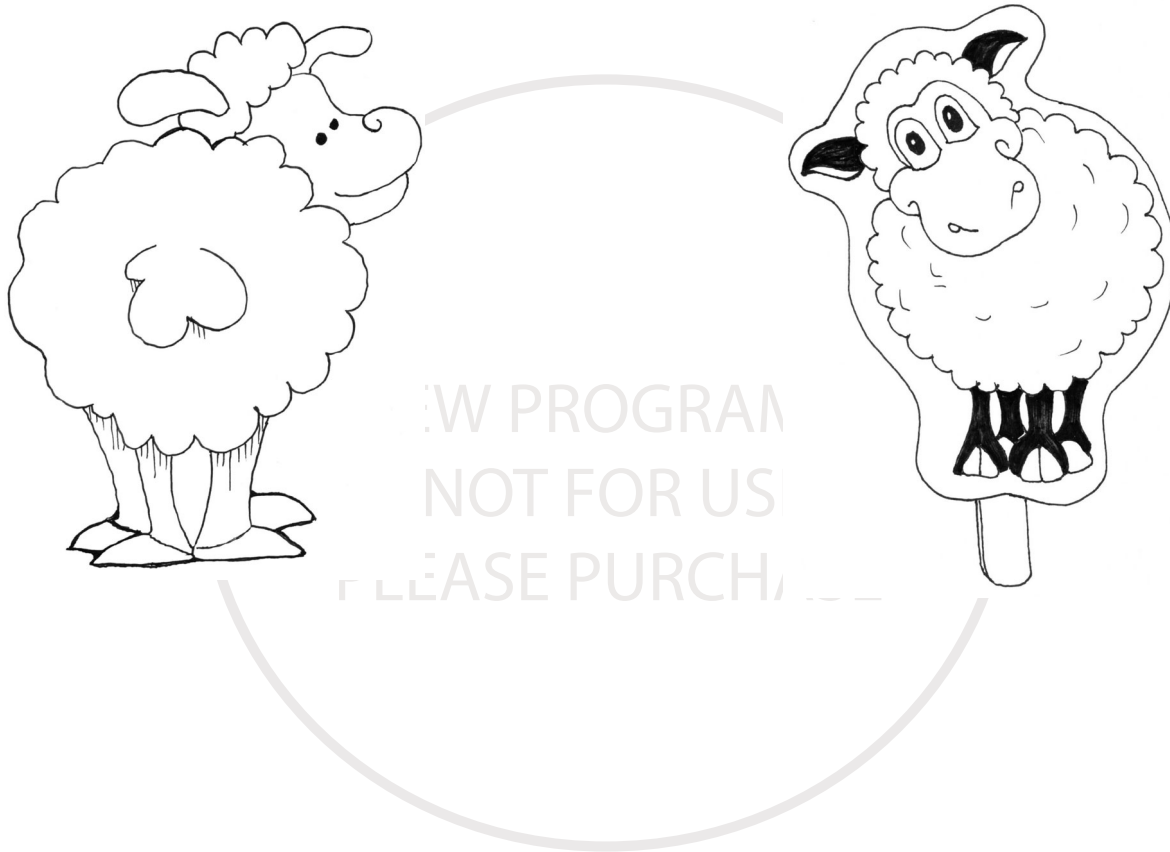


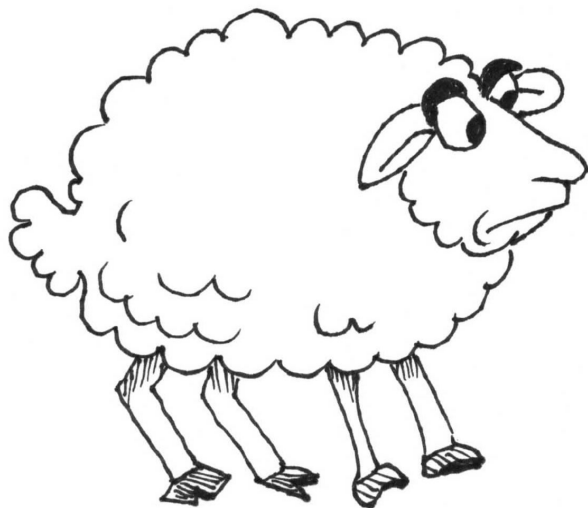
*Keep Christmas With Your Families
Good and Faithful Servants!*



PATTERNS

These whimsical patterns may help set the scene. Enlarge to desired size. If children carry sheep with them, copy them onto posterboard and add a paint stick. If the sheep are propped on stage, enlarge so audience can see them. Add color and cotton batting as desired.





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