



TEACHER SCORE

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ABOUT THIS WORSHIP SERVICE

It all began One Night in Bethlehem. On that one special night, God's plan of salvation began to unfold before our very eyes. Just think, on that night, and in that place, God came down to earth as a person just like us. This worship service revisits that night and that place. The setting, the sights, and the sounds were all part of the events carried out by a loving and gracious God. Through the use of the special songs and the DVD slides, the theme is reinforced throughout the service. The parts of the service are as follows.

Part 1: BETHLEHEM – THE SETTING

Part 2: BETHLEHEM – THE SIGHTS

Part 3: BETHLEHEM – THE SOUNDS

Part 4: FROM BETHLEHEM WITH LOVE

NARRATORS

There are parts for three narrators (A, B and C). These could be three students, teachers, pastors, etc.

RECITATIONS

The parts marked Recitation are Scripture passages which may be recited by smaller groups or entire classes. The (*) sections may be deleted from the program without detracting from the total impact.

SONGS

The theme song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" will be sung as verse one only by the children at the beginning of the service. The entire song will be sung by the congregation as the recessional at the end. Three other songs are included for the children. Traditional carols are placed throughout for the congregation to sing. Make any additions or deletions as you wish.

VISUAL AIDE – SLIDES ON CD

A number of slides are included with this program that may be used throughout the service. You may show them as CD slides or put them into a PowerPoint program.



SUGGESTION

In keeping with the theme of the sights of Bethlehem, it is suggested that students dress up in "Bethlehem" costumes to distribute worship bulletins prior to the service.

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One Night in Bethlehem

(Parts labeled (*) may be deleted for smaller schools)

[Keep Nave Lights Off]



(Slide 1: Logo)

Processional: *(Children and Congregation)*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

(There is a two stanza introduction on CD - children join in singing only verse one on the third time through. Verses 1-4 will be sung by entire congregation at end of service).

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Invocation

Responsive Reading

P: In Eden mankind lost the perfect image of God and fell under the curse of sin.

C: *Our loving and merciful God sent his only Son to this earth to live in our likeness that he might rescue us from our own transgressions.*

P: And so the Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:5: For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

C: *And so the Bible says in Isaiah 7 verse 14: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call his name Immanuel.*

P: And so the Bible says in John 1:14: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

C: *And so the Bible says in Colossians 2 verse 9: For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

P: And so the Bible says in Philippians 2:7: [Jesus] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

C: *And so the Bible says in Matthew 3 verse 17: And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

Christmas Prayer

Heavenly Father, on that first Christmas Eve in the little town of Bethlehem, you gave us your one and only Son to be our Savior. We give you thanks for this most precious gift. Help us to clearly see again our Lord and Savior in the Baby of Bethlehem. And help us to clearly tell the story of His wondrous birth. Let the news of that One Night in Bethlehem gladden the hearts and

give renewed hope to all who hear. Use us to spread the true message of peace on earth to all who need to know. We pray in the name of Bethlehem's Child, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Nave Lights Off]



(Slide 2 – Map of Palestine)

Pastor: Tonight we will travel to a tiny town many miles from here. It's a town which 2000 years ago looked much like other small Judean towns. Its few dusty roads and colorless buildings were located just southwest of the bustling city of Jerusalem in the hill country of Judah about a mile off the main highway from Jerusalem to Hebron and Egypt. Although once referred to as Ephrath and Ramah, it later took on the name of Bethlehem. Tonight we will travel back in time to this small town, and witness the greatest miracle ever, for 'the hopes and fears of all the years were met in Bethlehem one night.'

(Start CD or organ to song: One Night in Bethlehem)

(Slide 3 – Prophet at Bethlehem)

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

Song: *(All Children)*

One Night in Bethlehem

One night in Bethlehem
The stars came out to shine.
There fast asleep in manger bed
The gracious Lord divine.
One night in Bethlehem
A stable stood forlorn,
While there no jewels or robes were found
The King of Kings was born.

Refrain:

One night in Bethlehem
Was much like ours today;
Except my heart now has a room
For Jesus Christ to stay.

One night in Bethlehem
God's promises were kept.
Immanuel had come to earth
One night as Bethle'm slept.
One night in Bethlehem

No cradle could be made;
But there among the ox and hay
God's baby boy was laid.

Refrain

One night in Bethlehem
The shepherds watch did keep,
They left the comfort of the night
To still their restless sheep.

One night in Bethlehem
The hillsides were aglow,
As angels sang of peace and joy
To all the earth below.

Refrain

One night in Bethlehem
The stars came out to shine.
There fast asleep in manger bed
The gracious Lord divine.
One night in Bethlehem
A stable stood forlorn,
While there no jewels or robes were found
The King of Kings was born.

Part 1: Bethlehem - The Setting



(Slide 4 – Caesar Augustus)

Recitation: Luke 2:1-5

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

All Children: Let's travel into Bethlehem
To see what we can find.
It looks like any other town,
But God had plans in mind!



(Slide 5 – Bethlehem)

Narrator A: Bethlehem was just a sleepy little town. Its population was probably in the hundreds, yet without the knowledge of the few folks who lived there, it was soon to become the most important village with the most important stable which was visited by the most important young couple that gave birth to the most important baby ever born.

Narrator B: The name Bethlehem means “house of bread.” Traveling by car or bus today, you could be at many famous places within just a few minutes drive from Bethlehem. Five miles to the northeast is Bethany where Jesus raised Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha.

Narrator C: Ten miles to the northwest is Gibeon, the place where Joshua, with the help of God, made the sun stand still, and fifteen minutes to the southwest is Socah, the dreaded valley where David killed Goliath.

Narrator A: Less than a thirty minute drive to the south is Hebron, the home of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Narrator B: In the winter and spring the terraced countryside around Bethlehem is green with vines and olive, almond and fig trees.

***Narrator C:** Bethlehem is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 35:19. Here we find the account of Jacob, who dearly loved Rachel, the girl he waited fourteen years to marry. She was mother to Joseph and Benjamin, but she died a young woman in childbirth. This is what the Bible says:

***Recitation:** “So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is Bethlehem). Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.”

***Narrator A:** Did you know there is a startling prophecy about Rachel in the book of Jeremiah where Bethlehem is called Ramah? This is what the Bible says:

***Recitation:** “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.”

***Narrator B:** But why was Rachel weeping?

***Narrator C:** Because shortly after Jesus was born, King Herod gave orders to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem. That’s why she was crying, and why her children were no more.

Narrator A: Bethlehem was the home of another well-loved lady of the Bible.

Narrator B: Ruth had seen Rachel’s burial pillar many times, because Ruth also lived in Bethlehem. Here she gleaned in the fields around Bethlehem and eventually married Boaz. This is what the Bible says in Ruth 1:22:

Recitation: “So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the harvest was beginning.”

Narrator C: There Ruth and Boaz raised a family and became the great grandparents of another very famous man of God who also lived in Bethlehem.

Narrator A: This man was a shepherd in the same hills surrounding Bethlehem that have become so famous. He was a warrior and a hero.

Narrator B: This man was a leader, a musician, and a king.

Narrator C: And it is because of this man, David, that Bethlehem came to be known as the “Town of David.” This is what the Bible says in 1 Samuel 17:12:

Recitation: “Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah.”

[Nave Lights On]

Song by Congregation: *“Once In Royal David's City”*

Narrator A: Eventually God felt that the time was ready to cause a Roman emperor who had barely ever heard of Bethlehem to issue a decree for all the people to be counted.

Narrator B: God felt the time was also ready for Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, to be ready to give birth to the Son of God.

Narrator C: And God felt that the time was ready for her and her new husband Joseph to travel south to the city of Ephrath, the town of David, Bethlehem. This is what the Bible says in Galatians 4:4:

Recitation by All Children: “When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law.”

Song: *(Middle Grades)*

Quiet, Quiet Town

Quiet, quiet town, Bethlehem sleeps well.
No one is around; none could ever tell.
Just a Baby's cry from a distant cattle stall.
No one dares come night, quiet, quiet town.

Lovely, lovely girl, by the Father blest.
God's own priceless Pearl held against her breast.
Guarding every word deep within her humble heart.
Every whimper heard, lovely, lovely girl.

Peaceful, peaceful place for a baby Boy.
Only by God's grace, there could one find joy.
Jesus find my heart such a well-kept room within;
There to be a part. Peaceful, peaceful place.

Priceless, priceless Gift sent from God above.
Now our voices lift praises of his love.
Filling all the earth with the sound of happiness;
Telling of his birth - priceless, priceless Gift.

Part 2: Bethlehem - The Sights

[Nave Lights Off]

(Slide 6 – Mary, Joseph and Jesus)

Recitation: Luke 2:6,7

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

All Children: Now open wide your eyes to see
The manger bed so small
‘Cause there the Prince of Peace is laid,
The One who loves us all!

Narrator A: But our story today would be empty if it was just about a city. We’re here to celebrate tonight because of what happened there. That’s what’s really important!

Narrator B: The Bible gives us a few details about the town of Bethlehem when Jesus was born. We do know it had fields nearby where shepherds kept their sheep.

Narrator C: And we also know it had at least one inn which was full when Mary and Joseph came into town, one stable which had a manger for animals inside, one house where the Wise Men would later find Jesus, and one grave at the edge of town where Rachel was buried.

Narrator A: If you go to Bethlehem today, you would still see shepherds in the fields, and you can even peek into the church built on the cave where tradition tells us that Jesus was born.

Narrator B: But Bethlehem wasn’t any more special than other towns that God might have chosen. It wasn’t *where* the birth was to take place that was important. It was *why* the birth had to be. Jesus had to be born because of what happened many years before. The Bible tells us in Genesis 3:6,7:

Recitation: “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good...she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband...and he ate it.”

Narrator C: That did it! That one sin was enough to stain all future generations. That includes you and me. The beautiful image of God was lost. Man was at the mercy of God. And that sin would cause us to live an eternity in hell. But our God is a God of love. He found a way to

remove that sin from us. The Bible continues in Genesis 3:15:

Recitation: “God said, ‘And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’”

Narrator A: God chose to send his only Son to earth. He would be born just like other babies. But he would live a life without sin, and die on a cross to pay the penalty we owed. This is how he would crush the devil’s head. This is how he would make a way for us to live with him forever in heaven.

Narrator B: And all that began to unfold in the tiny village of Bethlehem that first Christmas night.

Narrator C: God was going to use this little town as the place to send his son. Jesus could have been born in a palace or a rich man’s house, or a capital city. But God thought otherwise. He chose Bethlehem!

Song: (*Lower Grades*)

What Do You See, Baby Jesus?

What do you see, Baby Jesus, from your bed of hay?
Do you see the heavenly Father smiling as you lay?
Do you see the starry sky, twinkling with delight on high?
What do you see, Baby Jesus, from your bed of hay?

What do you see, Baby Jesus, do you see your throne?
Angels singing with their praises; treasures that you own?
Do you long for your true home? Do you feel so all alone?
What do you see, Baby Jesus? Do you see your throne?

What do you see, Baby Jesus, do you see a cross?
Do you see your loved ones crying; faces of the lost?
Now I know just what you see! Now I know that you see me!
What do you see, Baby Jesus, I know you see me!
What do you see, Baby Jesus, I know you see me!
I know you see me!

Part 3: Bethlehem - The Sounds

(Part 3 has been deleted in this sample file)

Part 4: From Bethlehem with Love

[Nave Lights Off]



(Slide 8 – Cross and thorns)

All Children: From Bethlehem God sends his love
To all the earth below.
His only Son would die for us
Because he loves us so!

Narrator A: It all began in Bethlehem, a sleepy, little, insignificant town about which we know very little.

Narrator B: It all began in Bethlehem, a town which happened to be overcrowded on one particular night, and quite disinterested in the heavenly choir singing just over the hill.

Narrator C: It all began in Bethlehem, the place where God delivered his love letter to the world.

Recitation:

* “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”
(Jeremiah 31:3)

* “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1)

* “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever.” (Psalm 118:1)

* “God is love.” (1 John 4:16)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Song: (All Children) Congregation joins on last “Alleluia” melody

Alleluia Medley

“Alleluia!”

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Angel choirs, hymns are singing! Heav’ns rejoicing, tidings bringing!
Angel choirs, hymns are singing! Heav’ns rejoicing, tidings bringing!

“He Is Lord” (Upper Grades)

Prince of Peace, Prince of Peace!
He was born in Bethlehem our Prince of Peace.
Ev’ry knee shall bow ev’ry tongue confess,
Our Lord, the Prince of Peace.
Praise our King, praise our King!
Let us worship and adore and praise our King!
Ev’ry knee shall bow ev’ry tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is King!

“This Little Light of Mine” (Lower Grades)

This Christmas light of mine, I’m gonna let it, let it shine.
This Christmas light of, light of mine, I’m gonna let it, let it shine.

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

Hold it high so all can see, I'm gonna let it, let it shine.
Hold it high so all can see, I'm gonna let it, let it shine.
Hold it high so all can see, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

"God Is So Good" (Some Children)

God is so good. God is so good.
God is so good, He's so good to me.

(Add more children to increase volume)

He sent His Son, He sent His Son,
He sent His Son, He's so good to me.

(Include all children – high volume)

Coming again, coming again,
Coming again, He's so good to me.

Congregation Rises and Joins: "Alleluia" reprise

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

(Remain standing in silence)

Benediction



(Slide 9 – Bethlehem at Night)

Recessional by Congregation: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in the dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim thy holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ears may hear his coming, but in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Immanuel!