



JESUS IS BORN

A Service for Little Ones

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The lyrics to the following titles: "The Angel Gabriel Came"; "The Angel Appears to Mary"; "Joseph Went to Bethlehem"; "The Shepherds went to Worship Him"; "After the Shepherds Praised the Lord"; "We're Wise Men Coming from Afar"; "The Wise Men" are protected by copyright of

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Teacher Notes

This service program is ideal for preschool classes, early childhood centers, and kindergarten classes. It may be used with a group as small as seven and as large as fifty children. When used in a multi-age setting, even children as young as 2½ years old may participate and be involved with older children. The Scripture readings allow involvement of your staff or school-age children and may be done as readings rather than memorizations.

Cast of Characters:

- One (1) Joseph
- One (1) Mary
- One (1) Donkey
- One (1) Star
- Shepherds**
- Sheep (optional) **
- Cows (optional) **
- Angels **
- Three wise men
- Camels (optional) **

**The number of children assigned to these roles will vary depending on the size of your class.

If your class is a multi-age group and you plan to use this service for more than one year, you may consider having your younger children play the roles of the animals and assign the older children the roles of Joseph, Mary, star, shepherds, wise men and angels.

Materials:

In addition to those items listed in the costume guide you will need the following:

- Manger
- Baby doll wrapped in swaddling clothes
- Small cards with a picture of each character on it that you tape down to the floor showing where each child will stand and sit during the service. This helps the children find their places more easily.

Positioning of the Characters:

Mary, Joseph and the donkey are in the center of the group. If possible, place the wise men and camels to the east of the family, together with the star. Between the wise men and camels will be the cows. The shepherds and sheep are on the opposite side of the family. Position the angels on a step above and behind the rest of the children if possible. (*These positions may be adjusted as needed to work best within your space.*)

Author's Note:

When writing this service I struggled with how to include the wise men and still keep true to the facts of the Christmas story. My children learned that Jesus was about two years old when the wise men came to visit him and I wanted to portray that accurately in the service. For that reason you will note the direction to remove the baby and the manger prior to the entrance of the wise men, and the emphasis in the wise man finger play that they found "*the young boy Jesus*".

Also, with the exception of "*Away in the Manger*" and "*Do You Hear What I Hear*", we had the children sing each of the songs twice. This helped get all the children on board to help with the singing.

Costume Notes

The costumes are very simple. On the following page you will find a Costume Guide for Parents regarding the clothing the children should wear for dress rehearsal and for the performance day. You will notice the Parent Guide is very general in nature. It is suggested that the teacher provide the additional detailed items as seen in the following list. That way you will have the costume parts on hand for rehearsals and there will be some conformity in your children's costumes. Check with a seamstress you have in your congregation or a classroom parent who might have available scraps of material.

- Joseph—brown pants and shirt; cane or stick for his shepherd's staff; piece of fuzzy material that is worn as a tunic and tied around the waist with a rope or second piece of material; strip of material tied around the forehead as a head band
- Mary—dark, solid colored jumper with a white shirt; two larger pieces of material, the same color if possible, one to be worn over the jumper as her simple dress and the second to be worn over her head as a head shawl and tied below the chin
- Donkey—either gray shirt and pants or dark brown shirt and pants; large photocopied and colored face of donkey attached to a strip of paper worn around the forehead
- Star—either yellow pants and shirt or white pants and shirt; large cardboard star painted yellow with circle cut out in the center for the child's head to pop through (consider gluing a gold garland around the star)
- Shepherds—dark shirt and pants; piece of dark material that is worn as a tunic and tied around the waist with a rope or second piece of material; cane or sticks for shepherd's staff
- Sheep—either white shirt and pants, black shirt and pants, or brown shirt and pants; piece of wool or wool-like material worn similar to a tunic and tied around the waist; large photocopied and colored face of a sheep attached to a strip of paper worn around the forehead
- Cows—white shirt and pants; piece of black and white spotted material worn similar to a tunic and tied around the waist; large photocopied and colored face of a cow attached to a strip of paper worn around the forehead
- Angels—oversized white shirts and white tights or leggings; strand of gold garland to tie around the waist; strand of gold garland to wear as a halo on top of head
- Wise men—purple, blue, or red shirt and dark pants; piece of material (red, blue or purple in color if possible) worn as a tunic and tied around the waist with some type of sash; crowns made out of construction paper and aluminum foil
- Camels—light brown shirt and pants; large photocopied and colored face of a camel attached to a strip of paper and worn around the forehead

Costume Guide for Parents

Dear Parent,

We're getting ready for a very special presentation by our children. We will need your help in providing a basic costume for both the dress rehearsal and the main performance. I have highlighted your child's part. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

The dress rehearsal is scheduled for _____.

The presentation is scheduled for _____.

Be certain to invite friends and relatives to join us in our Christmas service.

Sheep—either white shirt and pants, black shirt and pants, or brown shirt and pants

Camels—light brown shirt and pants

Donkeys—either gray shirt and pants or dark brown shirt and pants

Cows—white shirt and pants

Shepherds—dark shirt and pants

Wise men—purple, blue, or red shirt and dark pants

Angels—oversized white shirts and white tights or leggings

Star—either yellow pants and shirt or white pants and shirt

Mary—dark, solid colored jumper with a white shirt

Joseph—brown pants and shirt

JESUS IS BORN

(Children enter and sit)

Reading: Luke 1:26-33

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

(Children stand)

Song: "The Angel Gabriel Came"

(To the tune of "Little White Duck")

The angel Gabriel came, bringing news to Mary,

The angel Gabriel came, promising a Baby.

"Your baby boy will be God's own Son,

The Savior promised for everyone!"

The angel Gabriel came, bringing news to Mary.

A Ba-by boy.

Fingerplay: "Gabriel Appears to Mary"

An angel came to Mary *(looks up to sky and then to side, as if following an angel's path to self)*

And Gabriel was his name.

He had good news to tell her, *(put finger to lips)*

That is why he came. *(nods head)*

"You're going to have a baby, *(rocks baby in arms)*

A little baby boy. *(continues to rock baby)*

He is God's own Son, Jesus, *(points up to heaven and makes cross with fingers)*

And he will bring great joy." *(spreads hands to show wide)*

Then Mary was excited *(smiles wide and claps)*

And overjoyed, you see, *(outlines smile with fingers)*

For God had sent a Savior *(points up to heaven)*

The Savior for you and me! *(uses hand to point to audience and then to self)*

(Children sit)

Reading: 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.

(Children stand)

Song: “Joseph Went to Bethlehem”

(To the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

Joseph went to Bethlehem,
To give the King his name
“I am from King David’s line,
Our families are the same.”

Recitation

All Children: Joseph went walking,
What did he see?
Joseph: “I see Mary looking at me.”

Song: “Joseph Went to Bethlehem” (v.2)

(To the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

Mary went with Joseph too
Because she was his wife.
Their little babe would soon be born
To give us heav’nly life.

Recitation

All Children: Mary went walking,
What did she see?
Mary: “I see a donkey looking at me.”

Song: “Joseph Went to Bethlehem” (v.3)

(To the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

The inns in Bethlehem were full
They had no place to stay.
Yet in a stable dark and bare
They’d sleep upon the hay.

(Mary and Joseph remain standing; all other children sit. Mary places the baby in the manger during this reading)

This star had told them that *(fold hands)*
A king had just been born. *(make crown with hands on head)*
It happened long ago
On the first Christmas morn. *(show one finger for first)*

They followed the bright star *(move arms as if walking)*
To the house of that young King. *(with hand turn door knob and pull as if opening a door)*
They worshiped him and praised him *(fold hands at chest)*
With gifts that they did bring. *(place hands out, palms up, as if giving a gift)*

Song: “Do You Hear What I Hear?”
(sung by staff and students as an echo)

Invitation from the staff for parents to take pictures with a note to leave portions of the costumes at school or church (unless the parents provided the costumes in full).