



TEACHER SCORE

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ABOUT THIS WORSHIP SERVICE

Among Christian circles, we see more and more signs that say “Put Christ in Christmas” and “Jesus Is the Reason for the Season”. That pretty well sets the theme of *A Reason to Celebrate*. The service is built around three parts.

Part 1: OUR CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHINES MUCH BRIGHTER

Part 2: OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT IS MUCH BETTER

Part 3: OUR CHRISTMAS JOY LASTS MUCH LONGER

NARRATOR

This program includes parts for three narrators, although you can make any adjustments you feel are necessary and workable in your situation.

RECITATIONS:

Sections marked Recitation include Scripture passages recited by various groups or individual children. Each Part also includes a four line verse for younger children.

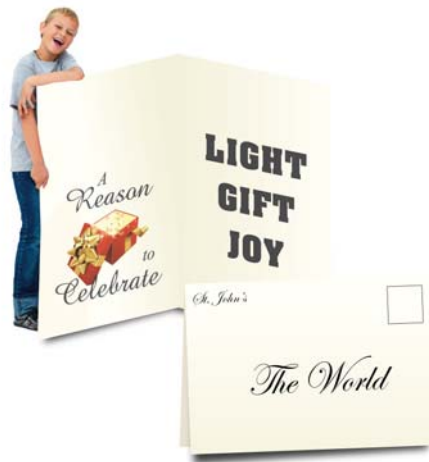
NOTE: Sections marked with an (*) may be deleted from the service without sacrificing the impact of the message.

SONGS

This service includes a theme song plus four more selections for the children to sing. Various traditional carols are included for the congregation. The theme song is sung at the beginning and at the end.

GIANT CARD VISUAL AID

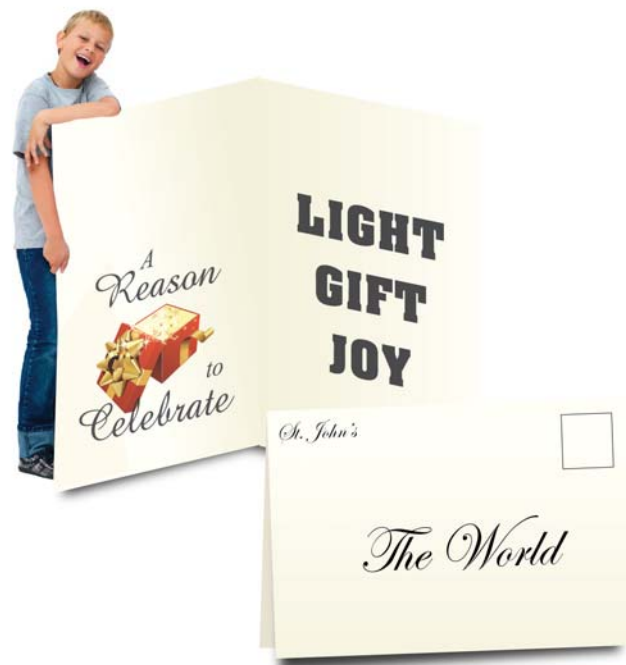
Instructions are included for you to make a large Christmas card to set at the front of the assembly. Words are added to the card as each part of the service is introduced. You will also make a large envelope to hold the card that is addressed to The World.



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GIANT CARD/ENVELOPE VISUAL AID



Card

Use a large piece of corrugated board to make a giant card displayed at the front of church. On the left panel place the logo provided. The right side begins blank. Use letter stencil sheet (with this file) to trace and cut out the words LIGHT, GIFT, and JOY. At the beginning of each part, add the next word. You may attach them easily with Velcro.

Envelope

Using a large piece of white paper, fold together an envelope. On the upper left of the envelope (return address) place your school/church name. The envelope should be addressed to The World.

A REASON TO CELEBRATE

(Note: (*) parts that may be deleted for smaller schools and Sunday schools.)

Processional by Congregation

Invocation

Responsive Reading:

P: Let us join our hearts and voices together this night, for we truly have a reason to celebrate.

C: *We light a thousand candles bright
Around the earth today,
And all the beams will shine across
The heav'ns grand display.*

P: We have a reason to celebrate because Jesus, our Christmas Light, shines much brighter than all the lights of this world.

C: *Dear bright Star in Bethlehem,
O let your precious light,
Shine on with hope and peace toward men
In every home tonight.*

P: We have a reason to celebrate because Jesus, our Christmas Gift, is much better than the gifts that man could ever hope to give.

C: *Now let us all with gladsome cheer
Go with the shepherds and draw near
To see the precious Gift of God
Who has His own dear Son bestowed.*

P: We have a reason to celebrate because the Christmas joy we find in the manger will last forever.

C: *Yes, over land and sea tonight
The joy filled message brings
The birth of Him, our Lord and Christ,
Our Savior and our King!*

Christmas Prayer

Gracious Lord, be with our worship today as we set aside the commercial distractions this Christmas and focus on the real reason for our celebration. Warm our hearts with the joy, comfort and realization that as you came as a Man, you lived a perfect life so you could die in our place and take away the consequences of sin which we so much deserve. This Christmas joy is ours today and throughout the year. We pray in the name of the One who was born in the Bethlehem manger, our Lord, our Savior, and our Brother. Amen.

Narrator 1: Merry Christmas everyone!

Narrator 2: Seasons greetings, dear friends!

Narrator 3: Happy Holidays!

Narrator 1: Do these words sound familiar? We've been hearing these wishes for nearly the past two months. Perhaps you heard several of them today. They tell us that Christmas is here.

Narrator 2: Thoughts of Christmas usually show up first in our television commercials and newspaper ads. Then we begin to see them in store windows and hanging from the ceilings in the malls.

Narrator 3: They are printed and written in every conceivable type style on the cards we've been receiving in the mail for weeks now.

Narrator 1: Everyone is getting into the Christmas spirit, spending many hours preparing for the great celebration.

Narrator 2: And if history repeats itself, this year we'll be buying more, eating more, and spending more than ever before.

Narrator 3: Much of the economy here in the United States is based on how much we celebrate Christmas. And celebrate we do!

Narrator 1: Tonight we're going to celebrate. We want to pull out all the stops and open our hearts and voices in grand celebration. This celebration is going to center around lights and gifts and joy.

Narrator 2: But wait a minute! Perhaps we should explain that there are two ways of celebrating Christmas. The world has grabbed onto the festival of Christmas to get rich, get gifts, and get happy. But that's not what our celebration is all about. We want to show tonight that our celebration goes much deeper than that. As God's children we've got a real reason to celebrate.

Song (*All Children*)

We've Got a Reason to Celebrate

It's a time for celebration, it's a time to love and care
People stop to say, "It's a special day",
There's excitement in the air.

It's a time for celebration, friends have come from far and near.
People everywhere, joy and laughter share
With acquaintances so dear.

Refrain

But we have a special reason that our joy is set apart;
There would be no cheer without Jesus here
Deep within my Christmas heart.

It's a time for celebration, trees are trimmed so carefully.
Ornaments divine make the tinsel shine;
What a blessed sight to see!
It's a time for celebration decorations everywhere
As the candles bright take away the night
With a glow that seems so rare.

Refrain

But we have a special reason that our Christmas has no end,
For our praise we lift to a special Gift,
It's my Savior and my Friend.

It's a time of celebration; smiling faces all around,
As the carolers sing and the church bells ring
With a joyful Christmas sound.
But we have a special reason that we celebrate today,
Since that baby small in the cattle stall
Came to take my sins away.

Part 1: Our Christmas Light Shines Much Brighter

Narrator 1: We love to celebrate with lights! Just think of the many lights that are shining during this Christmas season. Neighbors try to outdo neighbors with strand after strand wrapped around their houses. And how many lights twinkle on our trees, and the Christmas candles we place around the house?

Narrator 2: We love to celebrate with lights! They brighten up our Christmas with flashes of color and warmth. But wait! Surely there is a reason for using lights at Christmas time.

Narrator 3: Of course, we shine lights at Christmas to take away the darkness.

Narrator 2: Sadly, anyone who does not know Jesus is living in terrible darkness. It's the darkness of sin and death and hell. No matter how many lights they burn at Christmas, their lives will remain dark.

Recitation: It says in Proverbs 4:19, "The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble."

***Recitation:** Romans 13:12 says, "Let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Recitation: (All children) We've got a reason to celebrate because our Christmas Light shines brighter!

Recitation: (Small children) *We celebrate this Christmas night
For darkness was our way
But Jesus Christ is now our light
Who makes a brighter day.*

(Put the word "LIGHT" onto the giant card)

Recitation: Psalm 27:1 says, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation."

***Recitation:** Isaiah wrote, "Your sun will never set again...the Lord will be your everlasting Light."

Recitation: And John wrote, "God is light; and in Him there is no darkness at all."

***Recitation:** Now we have this light in Jesus our Savior. Let us follow the words of Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians, "For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."

Narrator 3: While the world goes about lighting up its Christmas, we remember that our Christmas is different. We've got a reason to celebrate because our Christmas Light shines much brighter!

Song (Upper Grades)/[Repeat underlined words]

Quiet, Quiet Town

1) 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 dare comes nigh
Quiet, quiet town.

2) 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 heart-
Lovely, lovely girl.

3) Peaceful, peaceful place
For a baby boy.

Only 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.

4) 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: Our Christmas Gift Is Much Better

Narrator 1: What are you getting for Christmas? What have you been wishing for? How long did it take you to wrap the gifts you're giving? How much did you spend on gifts this year?

Narrator 2: Certainly giving gifts at Christmas time is a wonderful tradition. Yet isn't it sad that so

many people have no idea why they do it? Our Christmas gifts are different because they have the real meaning of Christmas behind each one of them.

Recitation:(All children) But we've got a reason to celebrate because our Christmas Gift is much better.

Recitation:(Small children) *Our hearts are happy on this day
As voices now we lift
For cradled in that manger hay
Is my best Christmas gift.*

(Put the word "GIFT" onto the giant card)

Narrator 3: Our loving Father has been filling our lives with gifts ever since we became his children. And his gifts are so much better than anything this world can give us.

***Recitation:** Jeremiah says God will give us a very special gift, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Lord. They will be my people and I will be their God."

***Recitation:** Ezekiel spoke about another special gift, "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them."

Recitation: Luke said that God would give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Recitation: Matthew tells us about a much needed gift we've been given, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

***Narrator 1:** Let us listen to what Joseph and Mary and the shepherds thought about this Gift.

(Portions of Part 2 were deleted in this sample)

Part 3: Our Christmas Joy Lasts Much Longer

Narrator 1: Christmas is a time of so much happiness! People enjoy the tasty cookies and special meals. They enjoy the visits of family and friends and the seasonal carols. We could add to that the decorations and glitter and bows and ornaments and bells and candles and vacation days and cards and well wishes.

Narrator 2: (Interrupts Narrator 1) But most of the songs are put away on December 26, the gift wrap ends up in the trash, the cookies all get eaten, the trees will be taken down, and the stores will advertise their spring fashions. How brief the joy really is?

Narrator 3: But our Christmas is different. Even though we also celebrate Christmas with all these good things, our celebration isn't going to end with the tree and wrapping paper and cookies.

Recitation: (All children) We've got a reason to celebrate because our Christmas joy lasts much longer.

Recitation: (Smaller children) *The smiles on our faces bright
Are just a sign, you see
Of joy we've found this Christmas night
That lasts eternally.*

(Put the word "JOY" onto the giant card)

Recitation: David wrote about this joy in one of his Psalms, "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasure at your right hand."

Recitation: Psalm 5:11 also says, "Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy."

***Recitation:** And Psalm 43 tells of special joy, "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight."

Song (Sung by groups of children, always adding to the volume with each verse.)

Busha Bye

1) On a dusty road, busha bye, busha bye,
Came they down to tiny Bethlehem to find
a place to have a child, busha bye, busha bye,
Sing noel, dear Bethle'm, sing noel.
Sing noel, dear Bethle'm, sing noel.

2) In a stable bare, busha bye, busha bye,
There among the ox and lamb they found a
bed of straw in manger crude, busha bye, busha bye,
busha bye,
Sing noel, God's creatures, sing noel.
God
Sing noel, God's creatures, sing noel.

3) Mother Mary smiled, busha bye, busha bye,
With the father, Joseph, lifts a silent prayer
of thanks to God on high, busha bye, busha bye,
Sing noel, blest Mary, sing noel.
heart
Sing noel, blest Mary, sing noel.

4) Hear the angel choir, busha bye, busha bye,
Chanting praise to God in highest heaven and
on earth good will to men, busha bye, busha bye
Sing noel, ye angels, sing noel.
Sing noel, ye angels, sing noel.

Offering/Prayers/Benediction

Narrator 1: Yes, we know how to celebrate Christmas. We really celebrate it because we know why there is a Christmas. Take away all the glitter and shopping and trees and gifts, because we've still got a reason to celebrate. And our celebration lasts longer than just a few weeks. Our celebration lasts an eternity!

(Interlude)

5) See the shepherds run, busha bye, busha bye,
Feel excitement pound in every footstep that they
take along the way, busha bye, busha bye,
Sing noel, O shepherds, sing noel.
Sing noel, O shepherds, sing noel.

6) Pour ye forth this song, busha bye,

Let the hills and valleys shout for joy for

hath sent Immanuel, busha bye, busha bye,
Sing noel, dear Christians, sing noel.
Sing noel, dear Christians, sing noel.

7) Ponder all these things, busha bye, busha bye,
Let them dwell within the very center of your

forevermore, busha bye, busha bye,
Sing noel, forever, sing noel.
Sing noel, forever, sing noel.
Sing noel, dear Bethle'm, sing noel.
Sing noel, dear Christians, sing noel.
Sing noel, forever, sing noel.

Narrator 2: Now we want to share this message with the world. We want everyone to see the real reason for Christmas.

(Put giant letter into the envelope and turn toward congregation that they may see the front of the envelope.)

Narrator 3: We want to share the message that we've got a reason to celebrate.

All children: Because our Christmas Light shines much brighter!

Narrator 1: Now we want to share the message that we've got a reason to celebrate.

All children: Because our Christmas gift is much better!

Narrator 2: Now we want to share the message that we've got a reason to celebrate.

All children: Because our Christmas joy lasts much longer!

Song (*Entire congregation and children*)

We've Got a Reason to Celebrate

It's a time for celebration, it's a time to love and care
People stop to say, "It's a special day",
There's excitement in the air.
It's a time for celebration, friends have come from far and near.
People everywhere, joy and laughter share
With acquaintances so dear.

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With a joyful Christmas sound.
But we have a special reason that we celebrate today,
Since that baby small in the cattle stall
Came to take my sins away.

Recessional: (Students exit while music continues.)