

*Still,
still, still*



Be still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

STILL, STILL, STILL

For many years people have loved singing both the German and English translations of the simple Austrian carol, "Still, Still, Still". Although the author is no longer known, the song continues to remind us of that first Christmas night in Bethlehem, when God became man to save us from the curse of sin. This worship service takes the listener back to Bethlehem as they hear those closest to the event tell their story. The songs are sing-able, the characters are believable, and the setting is enjoyable as the children deliver the same message that God gave us in Psalm 46: "Be still, and know that I am God."

EDITING: All materials in this worship service have been edited by WELS educators.

AGE LEVEL: This worship service will work well with any size group, preschool to eighth grade.

BANNER: This program comes with a banner design for a "3-D Banner" that includes a full length banner draped beneath a wooden manger box that is identical to the manger shown on the worship bulletin. There is also a pattern provided for the manger box. A spotlight would be very effective on this banner.

PROCESSIONAL: Children will enter singing the theme song, "Still, Still, Still". It is recommended that during the processional the lights are dimmed and each child carries a battery-operated candle. (Available for a very reasonable price at Kremer Publications.) These lights can be collected at the front of church and kept with the teacher until they are once again given to the children for the recessional.

NARRATION AND SPEAKERS: This service is designed to have a narrator, pastor, and six costumed parts: Joseph, Mary, 2 Angels, 2 Shepherds. All parts marked RECITATION are for group recitations.

SONGS: Besides several congregation-sung carols, there are five songs sung by the children. They are: "Still, Still, Still"; "Quiet, Quiet Town"; "His Name Is Jesus"; "Just Like Me"; and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" (Sung with a different melody. Reproducible sheet music has been provided to share with the congregation if you wish to have them join in this song. Trumpet music is also provided.)

ITEMS AVAILABLE:

REPRODUCIBLE TEACHER/STUDENT SCORE

These pages include all text and sheet music for students and teachers and they may be reproduced in whole or in part in the worship program. The disk is formatted in PDF and Word documents.

SING ALONG AND ACCOMPANIMENT

The music CD includes the children's songs in both sing-along and accompaniment only. ("Still, Still, Still" does not have a sing along soloist on the music CD.)

COMBO OF THE ABOVE

You can order both of the above to save on cost.

BATTERY TEA CANDLES

Reliable, inexpensive and safe, these small battery operated LED tea candles come with an on-off switch and battery. Estimated 72 hour life.

WORSHIP BULLETINS

The worship bulletins are designed especially for this worship service.

SPECIAL THANKS: Special thanks are in order to Mr. Paul Wilde for the use of "Just Like Me" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"; to Mr. Charles Cushinery for the song arrangements and beautiful accompaniment music; Tina Smith for the Sing Along songs; and Mr. Arlyn Boll for editing.

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Still, Still, Still!

Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God."

Processional: Congregation and Children: "Still, Still, Still" (Children enter darkened church holding tea candles. When they reach the front, teachers collect them, keeping them on hand for the recessional.)

NOTE: If using the accompaniment CD there is a full verse introduction before the children begin singing.

*Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!
The virgin's tender arms enfolding,
Warm and safe the Child are holding,
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!*

*Dream, dream, dream, he sleeps the Savior King.
The night is peaceful all around you,
Close your eyes let sleep surround you.
Dream, dream, dream, he sleeps the Savior King.*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep.
While angel hosts from heav'n come winging,
Sweetest songs of joy are singing,
Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep.*

*Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!
The virgin's tender arms enfolding,
Warm and safe the Child are holding,
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!*

Pastor: Be still, and know that I am God,
Congregation: *I will be exalted among the nations,*

All: *I will be exalted in the earth.*

Pastor: Sing to the Lord a new song,
Children: *For he has done marvelous things;*

Pastor: His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him,
Congregation: *The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.*

Prayer: Gracious Lord God, Father of the universe, ruler of our hearts, and Savior of all people, come to us today with the beautiful and precious sounds of that first Christmas. Fill our hearts with the same joy felt by Mary and Joseph, with the same hope that was enjoyed by the shepherds, and with the same praise that was uttered by the angel hosts. May the sounds of Christmas be heard not only today, but throughout our lives, until we behold the long awaited concert that only heavenly voices can present. We ask this in the name of the Baby in Bethlehem, the Sacrificial Lamb, and the risen King, our ascended Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Little Children: *(Whispered, with finger at lips) Shhh! We must be very quiet! We cannot make a noise! If you listen very carefully, you will begin to hear some special sounds. These are the sounds of Christmas. (Whispered loudly) Shhh! We must be very, very quiet.*

Narrator: Many years ago in the far off country of Austria, a Christmas carol was written that is very much loved today called "Still, Still, Still". This song was used not only as a Christmas song but as a

child's lullaby. Although the melody can be traced back to Salzburg, Austria in 1819, the writer of the text is no longer known.

Tonight we will stroll down the streets of a quiet Judean village named Bethlehem. There we will have an opportunity to listen in on the conversations taking place in a darkened stable just behind a very busy inn. We will also wander out into the fields surrounding this village, and notice to the commotion taking place there.

(Cupping hand over ear.) I think I can hear some sounds – off in the distance. Let's all be still, still, still. I think I can hear a father welcoming a new addition into his family.

ALL CHILDREN: *“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 nigh (dares come nigh) 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 (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 (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 (of his birth), priceless, priceless gift.*

PART ONE: *Be Still, and Hear a Father Welcoming*

(Joseph enters.)

Little children: *As we take a little peak
We hear Joseph start to speak
Tell us all, what do you know
Of that night so long ago?*

Joseph: My name is Joseph. No doubt you've all heard of me and even read about me. I can even imagine that at this very moment you have me standing somewhere near your Christmas tree. In your crèche that's me right beside my wife Mary. We're both looking down at our new baby boy.

The Bible lists my name in the line of my son's ancestors.

Recitation: “Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23)

Joseph: That birth line traces my ancestors for 24 generations - way back to our great King David. Because I am David's descendant, Mary and I had to leave our hometown of Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem, David's birthplace, to be counted in the Roman census.

Recitation: “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.” (Luke 2:1-4)

Joseph: When you hear the story of my son’s birthday, you notice that I was living in Nazareth as a carpenter, and engaged to my lovely Mary. But all was not well. My world fell to pieces when I heard the news that my betrothed was expecting a baby. This was a disgrace that was punishable by death.

Recitation: “This is how the birth of Jesus came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.” (Matthew 1:18,19)

Joseph: But I soon discovered that God had a plan for Mary and me. The situation was well within his almighty hands.

Recitation: “But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’” (Matthew 1:20,21)

Joseph: I can say with all certainty, no man before me or after me has ever been blessed as I was. From that day on my life could never be the same. My future was planned out for me. I was to be the step-father of not only a newborn son, but also of my Savior and my God. I was to raise my King and my Creator in my own Nazareth home, under my own roof. I was to faithfully see to his religious training, teach him my skills in carpentry, and try to do all the things every other father does for his child.

Is it any wonder my mind was filled with all these things as I tended to my pregnant Mary on that 70-mile trip from Nazareth down to Bethlehem? And how my heart sank when I learned there were no rooms available for us. There was no comfortable place for her to give birth. We finally settled in a stable, certainly far from ideal, but at least it was safe and dry. How I scrambled to clean out a cattle trough, to light the few lamps, and to find warm water and clean cloths for my wife and my baby.

But the Lord was gracious to Mary and me, and all went well. And yes, as I looked into those tiny eyes, I quietly turned to Mary and whispered, “His name is Jesus.” (Joseph exits)

All children: “*His Name Is Jesus*” (Congregation joins in the last refrain.)

*Dear Mary sweet, dear Mary mild
The manger holds your little child.
Dear Mary sweet, dear Mary mild
The manger holds your little child.
Tell, tell us who is that baby boy?
Tell, tell us of your wonderful joy.*

REFRAIN:*His name is Jesus! Gift of God’s love.
The Son who frees us, Hope from above.
His name is Jesus! Born one so small.
Light that still sees us; Savior of all.*

*The angels singing with delight
Of peace, good will to all this night.
The angels singing with delight
Of peace, good will to all this night.
Tell, tell us who is that baby boy?
Tell, tell us of your wonderful joy.
REFRAIN:*

*Oh, shepherds, tell us who lies there
Within the stable dark and bare.
Oh, shepherds, tell us who lies there
Within the stable dark and bare.
Tell, tell us who is that baby boy?
Tell, tell us of that wonderful joy.
REFRAIN:*

*Now people, sing with gladsome mirth
A song to share with all the earth.
Now people, sing with gladsome mirth
A song to share with all the earth.
Tell, tell them who is that baby boy?
Tell, tell them of your wonderful joy.
REFRAIN: (Congregation joins)*

PART FIVE: *Be Still, and Hear the Shepherds Telling*

(Two shepherds enter.)

Little children: *Shepherds ran to see the child
Nestled in that manger mild.
Tell us all, what do you know
Of that night so long ago?*

Shepherd 1: Where do we begin with our story? How could anyone believe what we had seen?

Shepherd 2: Our wives still think we were dreaming!

Shepherd 1: Herding sheep night after night is a lonely and boring job. We had just bedded down for the night. Our sheep were in the fold, and quite content.

Shepherd 2: That was for the time being.

Shepherd 1: We were used to the light of a full moon, and we had seen our share of shooting stars in that dull black sky. But angels were something we didn't quite expect.

Shepherd 2: We never expected to see any angels!

Shepherd 1: It began with one angel who spoke to us. It was bright!

Shepherd 2: But when God's glory shone around us, that sight was awesome!

Recitation: "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." (Luke 2:9)

Shepherd 1: The angel spoke forcefully yet tenderly. He wanted to give us a message. He asked us to leave our sheep, and to run to Bethlehem as quickly as we could.

Shepherd 2: He said the Messiah was born. Tonight. Right there in Bethlehem. This was beginning to sound rather unbelievable. But then he even told us what to look for. He gave us all the details.

Recitation: "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12)

Shepherd 1: Just then my mouth dropped and my knees began to shake as the heavens opened up with a sight I can't begin to explain. All I know is I will never forget it. It was too marvelous to put into words. I still see it in my mind every night as I lie down to sleep.

Shepherd 2: After the angels left, the heavens once again returned to the dark black we were used to. We looked at each other in amazement, and everyone shouted, "Let's go!"

Recitation: "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger." (Luke 2:16)

Shepherd 1: We stayed in that stable for just a short time. We introduced ourselves to the new parents, Mary and Joseph. They assured us this was the one we had all been waiting for. We even touched his tiny hands. They were the hands of our Messiah, Immanuel, the Promised One. No one will ever know the feelings we felt and shared.

Shepherd 2: How do you keep a story like this all to yourself? We were bursting with news to tell anyone we happened to meet – not just that night, but for days – no, for years after it happened.

Recitation: "When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." (Luke 2:17,18)

Congregation: "*While By My Sheep*" or "*While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*"

OFFERING/PRAYERS/BENEDICTION

PART SIX: *Be Still, and Hear God's People Rejoicing*

Narrator: We've heard the sounds of the first Christmas. They came to us from a happy father and a loving mother. We heard them in the soft whimper of a baby and in the glorious noise of all God's angels. These are all sounds that could be heard that first Christmas so very long ago, so very far away, on a still, still night.

And as we return to our hurried lifestyles, our busy homes, and all the worries, cares and problems that are part of our everyday life, we can find great hope and comfort in remembering that on that first Christmas night, God sent a message to the world that we should:

All Children: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Narrator: So tonight, on this still, still night, we can join together sharing the glorious message about our God, who was so filled with love, that on a still, still night many years ago, he sent a Savior.

RECESSIONAL – Congregation: "*Hark the Glad Sound*"