



**Children's Christmas Worship Service**

# *The Old, Old Story*

“The Old, Old Story” is perhaps one of the most unique children’s Christmas worship programs yet produced by Kremer Resources. This service is based on a wonderful poem written in 1866 by Arabella Katherine Hankey titled “The Old, Old Story.” (No doubt you have heard a song with that same title that includes a few stanzas from the poem.) This remarkable poem originally included 100 stanzas that told the story of salvation in a simple yet effective way. Our worship service weaves fifty-four of these stanzas between the narrations, carols and songs, and recitations. Your children and congregation will enjoy this presentation of “the Old, Old, Story” which we admit remains ever new.

This service is designed for preschool through eighth grade and will be easily adapted to both large and small schools.

## **THE SPEAKING CHOIR**

Throughout this service you will find sections calling for a “**Speaking Choir.**” To set this poem apart from other recitations or narrations it is suggested that a special spot in the chancel be reserved for these small groups of children who come forward to recite blocks of stanzas of Miss Hankey’s poem. Perhaps special lighting directed to that area would help the assembly realize that more stanzas are about to be spoken.

## **THE NARRATION**

There are parts included for two narrators. Feel free to use any number of children for these parts.

## **RECITATIONS**

Recitation sections always include Bible verses that reinforce the narrator’s point.

## **BANNER**

Artwork and instructions have been provided to make a full size church banner.

## **WORSHIP BULLETIN**

Although a preprinted worship bulletin for this service is not available, this file includes the artwork so you might print your own service folder covers.

## **ABOUT THE SONGS**

Sheet music is provided for “Tell Me the Old, Old Story”, “I Love to Tell the Story”, and “Little Children Can You Tell.” Sheet music w/o text is also included for “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing” (Sussex Carol), and “Hark! What Mean Those Holy Voices”(Stuttgart). There are also several well-known carols sung by the assembly.

## **60 KREMER SONGS TO CHOOSE FROM**

If you would like to explore alternative kids’ songs, Kremer Resources is making available 60 Christmas songs (mostly original) from past children’s Christmas services. Visit the Kremer website at [www.kremerresources.com](http://www.kremerresources.com) and click through to CHRISTMAS & WORSHIP SERVICES > 23 CHRISTMAS SERVICES > OTHER CHRISTMAS PRODUCTS > SHEET MUSIC AND MP3 dropdown. Each song comes with reproducible sheet music, singer and accompaniment MP3. Cost is \$9.99 per song.

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Menomonee Falls, WI

# *The Old, Old Story*

**Processional Congregation & Children:** “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing” (*Sussex Carol*)

On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring;  
On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring:  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful king’s birth.

Then why should men on earth be sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad:  
Then why should we on earth be sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad:  
When from our sin He set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
When sin departs before Your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
Angels and men with joy may sing,  
All for to see the newborn king.

All out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night;  
All out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night:  
Glory to God and peace to men,  
Now and forevermore. Amen.

## **Responsive Psalm selections:**

M: I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart;

**C: *I will tell of all your wonders.***

M: Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you;

**C: *Were I to speak and tell of them they would be too many to declare.***

M: Come and listen all you who fear God;

**C: *Let me tell you what he has done for me.***

M: I will utter hidden things, things from of old – what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.

**C: *We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation.***

M: So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born,

**C: *And they in turn would tell their children.***

## **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. Shine in our hearts once again as we enjoy hearing the wonderful old, old story. We pray in the name of the One who was born in the Bethlehem manger, our Lord, our Savior, and our Brother. Amen

**Pastor:** How many times have we repeated the story or account of the birth of our Savior? Better yet, how many times have you heard or read that story in your lifetime? Luke 2 is certainly one of the most often read or memorized chapters of the Bible. We love to hear the story of Jesus’ birth. It never grows old. Rather it remains fresh and enjoyable for all of us.

Our children will again retell the story of Christmas but in a very different way. It will be told using the words of a poem that was written over 150 years ago. Perhaps some of you will recognize some of the stanzas because a few have been put to music. But I want the children to tell you the old, old story.

**Children:** "I Love to Tell the Story"

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true;  
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

**Refrain**

*I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,  
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.*

I love to tell the story; more wonderful it seems  
Than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams.  
I love to tell the story, it did so much for me;  
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee. Refrain.

I love to tell the story; 'tis pleasant to repeat  
What seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet.  
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard  
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word. Refrain.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,  
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long. Refrain.

**Narrator 1:** Arabella Katherine Hankey was born in London, England in 1834, to a wealthy English banker and his wife. As a young girl Arabella loved to share the story of God's love with those around her. In her teenage years she began organizing Sunday schools for girls in London. In her thirties, Miss Hankey became seriously ill, and was forced to rest at home for many months. It was during this time that she devoted her hours to writing a lengthy poem that told the story of sin and salvation. She titled it "The Old, Old Story." Her poem included two parts, the first 8 stanzas were subtitled "The Story Wanted", and the remaining 92 stanzas were "The Story Told." Today, more than 150 years later, we know of 55 stanzas that still remain. Several years after the poem was published two gospel songs were written using parts of that poem. They were titled "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" and "I Love to Tell the Story."

**Narrator 2:** Why are we enjoying this poem today? Certainly Miss Hankey would not wish to bring any attention to herself as you will hear in her words. Rather, we are using this poem because it tells the story of God's grace in such a clear and understandable way. Allow us now share with you "The Old, Old Story"; a story we love to tell!

## *The Story Wanted*

**Speaking Choir:**

1. Tell me the old, old story  
Of unseen things above,—  
Of JESUS and His glory,  
Of JESUS and His love.
2. Tell me the story **simply**,  
As to a little child;  
For I am weak and weary,  
And helpless and defiled.

3. Tell me the story **slowly**,  
That I may take it in,—  
That wonderful redemption,  
God's REMEDY for sin!
4. Tell me the story **often**,  
For I forget so soon—  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon!
5. Tell me the story **softly**,  
With earnest tones and grave;  
Remember, I'm the sinner  
Whom Jesus came to save.
6. Tell me the story **always**,  
If you would really be,  
In any time of trouble,  
A comforter to me.
7. Tell me the same old story  
When you have cause to fear  
That this world's empty glory  
Is costing me too dear.
8. Yes, and when that world's glory  
Shall dawn upon my soul,  
Tell me the old, old story,  
“Christ Jesus makes thee whole.”

**Congregation and Children:** “Little Children, Can You Tell” (*Sheet music is included*)

Little children, can you tell,  
Do you know the story well,  
Every girl and every boy,  
Why the angels sing for joy  
On the Christmas morning?

**Children to end:**

Yes, we know the story well;  
Listen now, and hear us tell  
Every girl and every boy  
Why the angels sing for joy  
On the Christmas morning.

For a little Babe that day  
Cradled in a manger lay,  
Born on earth our Lord to be;  
This the wondering angels see  
On the Christmas morning.

Joy our little hearts shall fill,  
Peace and love and all goodwill;  
This fair Babe of Bethlehem  
Children loves, and blesses them  
On the Christmas morning.

**Speaking Choir:**

9. You ask me for “the story  
Of unseen things above,—  
Of JESUS and His glory,  
Of JESUS and His love.”
10. You want “the old, old story,”  
And nothing else will do!  
Indeed I cannot wonder,  
It always seems so new!
11. I often wish that someone  
Would tell it me, each day;  
I never should get tired  
Of what they had to say.
12. But I am wasting moments!  
Oh, how shall I begin  
To tell “the old, old Story,”  
How Jesus saves from sin?
13. Listen, and I will tell you;  
God help both you and me,  
And make “the old, old story”  
His Message unto thee!

## *The Story Told*

### **PART 1: The Story Begins**

**Speaking Choir:**

14. Once, in a pleasant garden,  
God placed a happy pair;  
And all within was peaceful,  
And all around was fair.
15. But oh! They disobeyed Him!  
The one thing He denied  
They longed for, took and tasted;  
They ate it, and—they died!

**Narrator:** Of course the story of God’s love began in eternity, long before the earth was ever formed. It finally became a reality during the six days of creation as God’s beautiful world unfolded. As the crown of that creation, God made man and woman in his very image, and he placed them in the Garden of Eden where they would live in perfect harmony with him. Yet that all came to an end when Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command not to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree.

**Recitation:** Genesis 3:6 says, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

**Narrator:** Because of this sin, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. Their sinful lives would now be filled with sadness and pain, and end in death. Yet because of his great love, God revealed a plan to send his own Son to earth where he would remove that sin from Adam and Eve and all future generations.

**Recitation:** Genesis 3:15 says, “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.”

**Speaking Choir:**

16. Yet, in His love and pity,  
At once the Lord declared  
How man, though lost and ruined,  
Might after all be spared!
  
17. For one of Eve's descendants,  
Not sinful, like the rest,  
Should spoil the work of Satan,  
And man be saved and blest!
  
18. He should be son of Adam,  
But Son of God as well,  
And bring a full salvation  
From sin and death and hell.

**Congregation:** “Come, Oh Precious Ransom, Come”

Come, oh precious ransom, come,  
Only hope for sinful mortals!  
Come, O Savior of the world!  
Open are to you all portals.  
Come, your beauty let us view;  
Anxiously we wait for you.

Enter now my waiting heart,  
Glorious King and Lord most holy.  
Dwell in me and ne'er depart,  
Though I am but poor and lowly.  
Ah, what riches will be mine  
When you art my guest divine!

Hail, hosanna, David's Son!  
Help, Lord, hear our supplication!  
Let your kingdom, scepter, crown,  
Bring us blessing and salvation,  
That forever we may sing:  
Hail, hosanna! to our king.

## *The Story Told*

### **PART 2: The Story Fulfilled**

**Narrator:** Throughout the Old Testament God repeated that promise. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and on, and on, the Lord assured his people that he would send a Savior who would remove their sins and make them worthy to enter heaven and be with him forever.

**Recitation:** Hebrews 11:9,10 says, “By faith [Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

**Narrator:** All of God's promises pointed to the perfect time when he sent his Son to be born in that Bethlehem stable so many, many years ago.

**Speaking Choir:**

19. Hundreds of years were over;  
Adam and Eve had died,  
The following generation,  
And many more beside.
20. At last, some shepherds, watching  
Beside their flocks at night,  
Were startled in the darkness  
By a strange and heavenly light.
21. One of the holy angels  
Had come from Heaven above,  
To tell the true, true story,  
Of Jesus and His love.
22. He came to bring “glad tidings,”  
“You need not, must not, fear;  
For Christ, your new-born Savior,  
Lies in the village near!”
23. And many other angels  
Took up the story then—  
“To God on high be glory,  
Good-will and peace to men.”
24. And was it true—that story?  
They went at once to see,  
And found Him in a manger,  
And knew that it was He.
25. He whom the Father promised,  
So many ages past,  
Had come to save poor sinners;  
Yes, He had come at last!

**Congregation and Children:** “Away in a Manger” (Stanza 1: Children, Stanza 2: Cong., Stanza 3: All)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.

**All Students:** “Tell us the old, old story from Luke 2.”

**Congregation:** (Luke 2:1-20)

**Men:** 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<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.



**Women:** 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. 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 guest room available for them.

**Men:** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**Women:** “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

**Men:** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 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.

**Women:** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

**Congregation:** “Silent Night”

Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love’s pure light;  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

## *The Story Told*

### **PART 3: The Story Seen**

**(PART THREE HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR  
SAMPLE PURPOSES)**

# *The Story Told*

## **PART 4: The Story of Victory**

**Narrator:** But God's story wasn't over quite yet. Had Jesus stayed in the tomb his ministry would have been a failure. But we know how the story ends. Three days after he died, Jesus rose triumphant from the grave proving that death no longer has power over us, and that all who believe in his promises will likewise rise from the dead to reign with him in heaven.

**Recitation:** John 11:25 say, "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.'"

### **Speaking Choir:**

26. And now, the work is finished!  
The sinner's debt is paid!  
Because on Christ the Righteous  
The sin of all was laid.
27. Oh, wonderful redemption!  
God's remedy for sin!  
The door of heaven is open,  
And you may enter in!
28. For God released our "Surety,"  
To show the work was done;  
And Jesus' resurrection  
Declared the victory won!
29. And now, He has ascended,  
And sits upon the throne,  
To be a Prince and Savior,  
And claim us for His own.
30. But when He left His people,  
He promised them to send  
The Comforter, to teach them,  
And guide them to the end.
31. And that same Holy Spirit  
Is with us to this day,  
And ready now to teach us  
The new and living way.

**Congregation:** “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world; the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her king;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

**Offering**

**Prayers**

## *The Story Told*

### **PART 5: The Story for Us**

**Narrator:** And so the story continues until we receive our reward in heaven. And in a special way we might say that this “Old, Old Story” is really new every day. What joy we can have in our hearts this Christmas as we look back to when this story began and look forward to when this story will continue.

**Speaking Choir:**

32. This is “the old, old story!”  
Say, do you take it in—  
This wonderful redemption,  
God's remedy for sin?
33. Do you at heart believe it?  
Do you believe it's true,  
And meant for EVERY SINNER,  
And, therefore, meant for you?
34. And if this simple message  
Has now brought peace to you,  
Make known “the old, old story,”  
For others need it too.

35. Let everybody see it,  
That Christ has made you free;  
And if it sets them longing,  
Say, "Jesus died for thee!"
36. Soon, soon, our eyes shall see Him!  
And, in our home above,  
We'll sing "the old, old story"  
Of "Jesus and His love!"

**Children:** "Tell Me the Old, Old Story"

Tell me the old, old story  
Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory,  
Of Jesus and His love.  
Tell me the story simply,  
As to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary,  
And helpless and defiled.

**Refrain**

Tell me the old, old story,  
Tell me the old, old story,  
Tell me the old, old story,  
Of Jesus and His love.

Tell me the story slowly,  
That I may take it in,  
That wonderful redemption,  
God's remedy for sin.  
Tell me the story often,  
For I forget so soon;  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon. Refrain.

Tell me the story softly,  
With earnest tones and grave;  
Remember I'm the sinner  
Whom Jesus came to save.  
Tell me the story always,  
If you would really be,  
In any time of trouble,  
A comforter to me. Refrain.

Tell me the same old story  
When you have cause to fear  
That this world's empty glory  
Is costing me too dear.  
Yes, and when that world's glory  
Is dawning on my soul,  
Tell me the old, old story:  
Christ Jesus makes thee whole. Refrain.

**Benediction**

**Announcements**

**Recessional:** "Hark! What Mean Those Holy Voices?" (*Stuttgart*)

Hark! what mean those holy voices,  
Sweetly sounding through the skies?  
Lo! the angelic host rejoices  
Heavenly hallelujahs rise.

Listen to the wondrous story,  
Which they chant in hymns of joy;  
"Glory in the highest, glory;  
Glory be to God most high!

"Peace on earth, good will from Heaven,  
Reaching far as man is found;  
Souls redeemed, and sins forgiven;  
Loud our golden harps shall sound.

"Christ is born, the great Anointed;  
Heaven and earth His praises sing:  
O receive whom God appointed,  
For your prophet, priest and king.

Let us learn the wondrous story  
Of our great Redeemer's birth;  
Spread the brightness of His glory  
Till it cover all the earth.