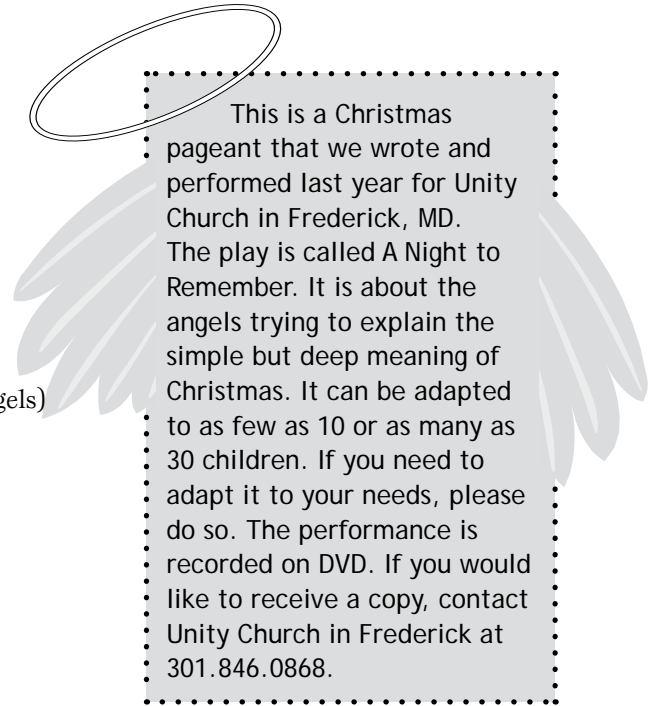


# A Night to Remember: A Christmas Pageant for Children

by Charlie Novic, Youth Education Director  
Unity Church in Frederick, MD

## Characters:

Narrator	Mary
Harold (1st Angel)	Joseph
Star Angel (2nd Angel)	Delivery Angel (8th Angel)
East Angel (3rd Angel)	6 Gifts Angels (9th through 14th Angels)
Mary's Angel (4th Angel)	Story Angel (15th Angel)
Joseph's Angel (5th Angel)	Littlest Gift Angel (16th Angel)
Gabriel's helper (6th Angel)	The End Angel (17th Angel)
Gabriel (7th Angel)	The Beginning Angel (18th Angel)



This is a Christmas pageant that we wrote and performed last year for Unity Church in Frederick, MD. The play is called A Night to Remember. It is about the angels trying to explain the simple but deep meaning of Christmas. It can be adapted to as few as 10 or as many as 30 children. If you need to adapt it to your needs, please do so. The performance is recorded on DVD. If you would like to receive a copy, contact Unity Church in Frederick at 301.846.0868.

**Narrator** enters before the song.

**Harold, Star Angel, East Angel, Mary's Angel** enter as song is being sung by the congregation or choir.

Song: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

**Narrator:** Each year, the traditional Christmas story stirs believers and non-believers alike, not only because it celebrates the birth of the Christ child—the baby who grew into the man whose life and teachings changed the course of history and shaped the mind and culture of the Western world—but also because it appeals to the very depths of our being. It stirs us because the Christ Child represents the higher Self, the true Self of everyone. That Child is within us and in our depths; we know that at some time we are destined to take the mystical trip to our inner Bethlehem, the birthplace of our own higher Self. On a metaphysical level, the story is an invitation to a mystical journey to the place within ourselves where we can find our full humanity and our own divinity—the inner Christ or our higher Self.

The higher Self is called the Christ because the word Christ comes from a Greek word for anointed or chosen. The Hebrew equivalent is messiah. Either word denotes the image of God, the spiritual idea or pattern for the Self of every human being, male and female. In that sense, each of us is chosen to express the image of God. The image of God within imbues us with life and intelligence and eternally connects us to the source of all power and substance.

**Harold (1st angel):** Did any of you understand what she just said?? I didn't think so! Why is it that humans make things so complicated when they are really so very simple? Well, we angels had a meeting and decided to try one more time to help you to understand the simple meaning of Christmas.

**Star Angel (2nd angel** said with lots of spunk): Well, it all started when the Boss a.k.a. God had an Idea! We knew it was going to be a big one because God requested me . . . of all angels . . . to announce it with a star! Now I know, personally, that God only uses a star when it's a really big idea and he wants to get the humans' attention first.

**East Angel (3rd angel** jumps in enthusiastically): And then Star emailed me stating she needed my help to host her star. She said it just HAADD to come from the East because that meant it was a "spiritual" notice. She said the humans would eventually get the "east/new beginnings" thing. Well, of course, I said YES so the next deal was where? And who? And how? But in the end, God had that all worked out too. Once the ol' girl gets on a roll, there is no telling where it will lead.

**Mary's Angel (4th angel):** Well, I have to say I was really honored that my Mary was chosen . . . After all, I have watched her for eons and she is the most loving soul in every sense of the word. She would be just perfect . . . but . . . I worried a little. What would happen to her, how would the humans treat my special Mary? And what would her fiancé think? I've got to go find Joseph's guardian angel.

**Joseph's Angel (5th angel** coming up to Mary's angel as she starts to go find him): Well, Love, you know Joseph will just about think this thing to extinction. I never saw a human think more than he does. He knows everything happens for a reason and he is very wise but sometimes that thinking part blocks what he knows in his heart. We may have to catch up with Gabriel and have him come in at dream time to help persuade him that Mary needs his support and that this is all God's idea ... really.

(All angels huddle and jabber together except **Harold**. He stands at his short "podium" and holds his poise. **Gabriel** and **Gabriel's helper** enter, with the helper preceding **Gabriel**, announcing him.)

**Gabriel's helper (6th angel):** Gather round ... gather round ... Gabriel's here! Gather round ... gather round ... Gabriel's here to fill you in on the details.

**Gabriel (7th angel):** This is really going to be interesting so you will want to hear this! The Boss wants to give the humans a metaphor for a "fresh start" so God has decided to extract a piece of God and it will be the baby born to Mary and Joseph. It's new, it's fresh and it is so divine! Now he is not going to come into a world of privilege. She wants to be born into humble beginnings so the light of divine love can be a shining symbol to the humans. She is sending along many others gifts to the humans that night as well ... so we will all be very busy ... busy ... busy.

**Narrator:** And so let's begin with light.

(**2nd angel** lights the candle for the star.)

**Narrator:** Light is a recurring symbol for spirit and divine intelligence and wisdom. God is considered the primordial light. Jesus, the archetype for the higher self, was said in the Gospel according to John to be "the true light that enlightens everyone." Jesus exhorted His followers to let their light shine, in other words, to let their spiritual selves, the image of God, express both within themselves and out into the world.



**Harold (1st angel):** And that's how it all began. Let's take a look at that one night that changed the history of the world . . . and see what gifts the Boss had in mind for humankind.

(**Mary** and **Joseph** enter, as the congregation/choir sings "Away in a Manger," walking toward the "star" candle. They sit at the star as a manger scene. **Mary** is tired and **Joseph** is worried and trying to make her comfortable.)

(A flurry of **gift angels** comes in and surrounds **Mary** and **Joseph** so the audience cannot see what is happening. They are each holding boxes of beautifully wrapped presents.)

(The **Delivery angel** enters alone and walks down the aisle with the **Baby Jesus**. The **Gift Angels** move behind **Mary** and **Joseph** as the **Delivery angel** nears.)

**Delivery Angel:** Mary and Joseph, God has sent this child to show humankind the way. She has given Him into your care this night.

(**Gift Angels** move one at a time to the front of the manger scene, place the gift box on the floor and announce their gifts.)

**Gift Angel-9th:** Mary and Joseph, I bring to you and to humankind the gift of family.

**Gift Angel-10th:** And this night I bring to the world the gift of eternal love.

**Gift Angel-11th:** I bring the world the gift of wisdom for all.

**Gift Angel-12th:** I bring to the world, through the Christ child, the gift of peace. May all humans learn the lesson of peace by watching the life of this child.

**Gift Angel-13th:** I bring the gift of kindness to each other.

**Gift Angel-14th:** I bring the gift of generosity to all people.

**Story Angel-15th:** (opens a beautiful book and reads): Let me tell you a story of long ago. The Creator gathered all of creation and said, "I want to hide something from the humans until they are ready for it. It is the knowledge that they are divine and they create their own reality."

"Give it to me," said the salmon. "I will hide it on the bottom of the ocean."

"No," said the Creator. "One day they will go to the bottom of the ocean and they will find it."

"Give it to me," said the bear. "I will take it into the mountain."

"No," said the Creator. "One day they will dig into the mountains and they will find it before they are ready."

"Give it to me," said the eagle. "I will take it to the moon. They will never find it there."

"No," said the Creator. "One day they will go to the moon, and they will find it even there before they are ready."

Then Grandmother Mole rose. Everyone became very quiet. They knew that although she had no physical eyes, Grandmother Mole lives in the heart of Mother Earth and sees with spiritual eyes.

"Put it inside THEM," she said.

"It is done!" said the Creator.



(**Story Angel** closes the book and pauses before saying:) This night I bring the knowledge of the divinity of all humankind. It is in the soul of every human being and this baby has come to stir its long-forgotten memory.

Song (sung to the congregation by the children.): “Angel, Angel”  
(By Karl Anthony; found on *Unite With Me in Song*.)

**Harold:** And so we end this night with a hope that you understand that YOU are God’s greatest miracle. And you have inside of you the spark of divinity that has always made you one with your Creator. Please remember . . . remember it always . . . There really is a reason that this simple story of a birth in a manger has lasted over 2000 years. And now. . . .

(The **Littlest Gift Angel** comes running down the aisle shouting enthusiastically.)

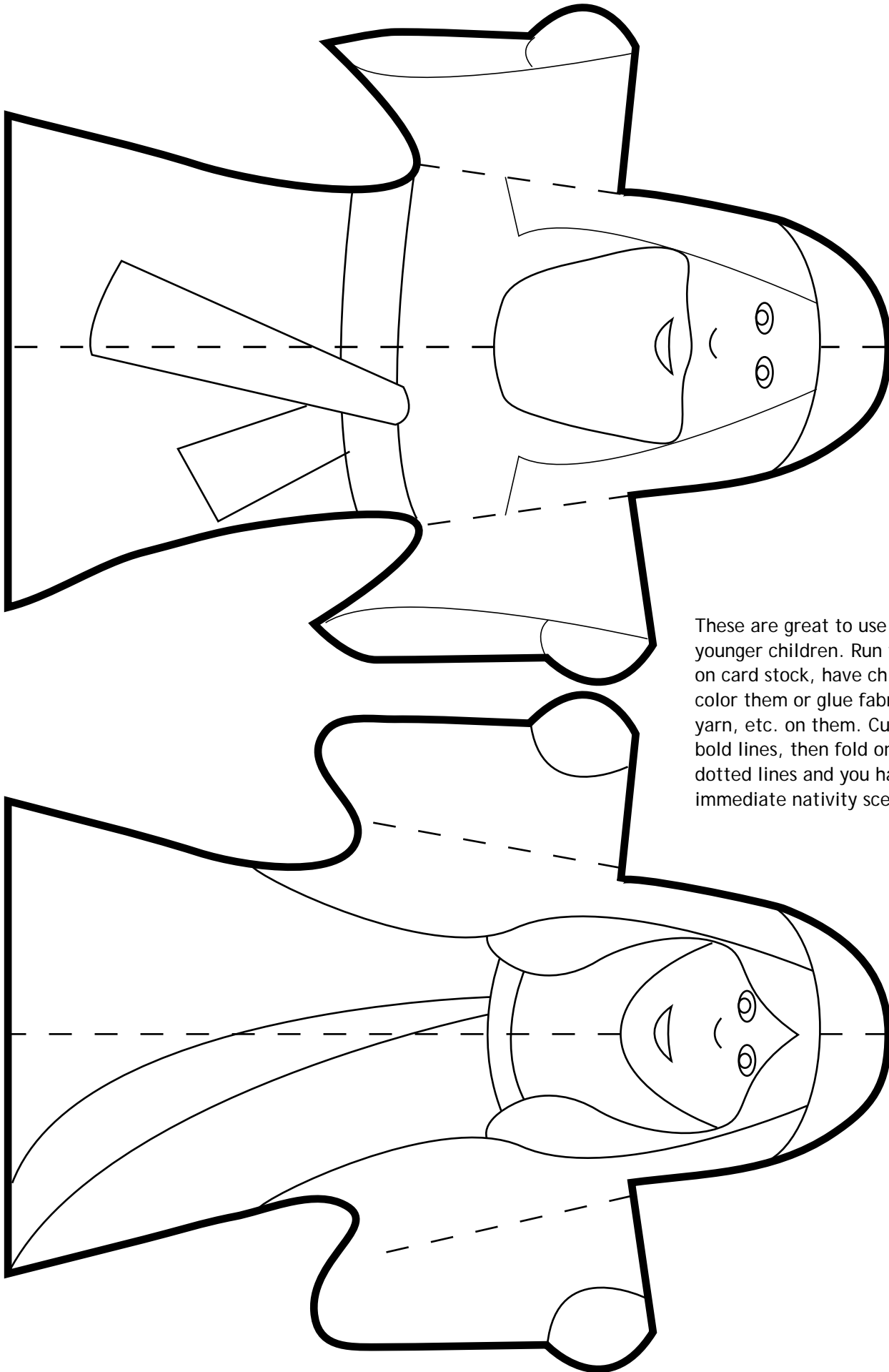
**Littlest Gift Angel (16th angel):** Wait ... Wait ... I’m here now ... I have my present all ready .... We can’t forget my present .... It’s the most important ... I give the gift of joy!

Song: Congregation or choir sings “Joy to the World.”

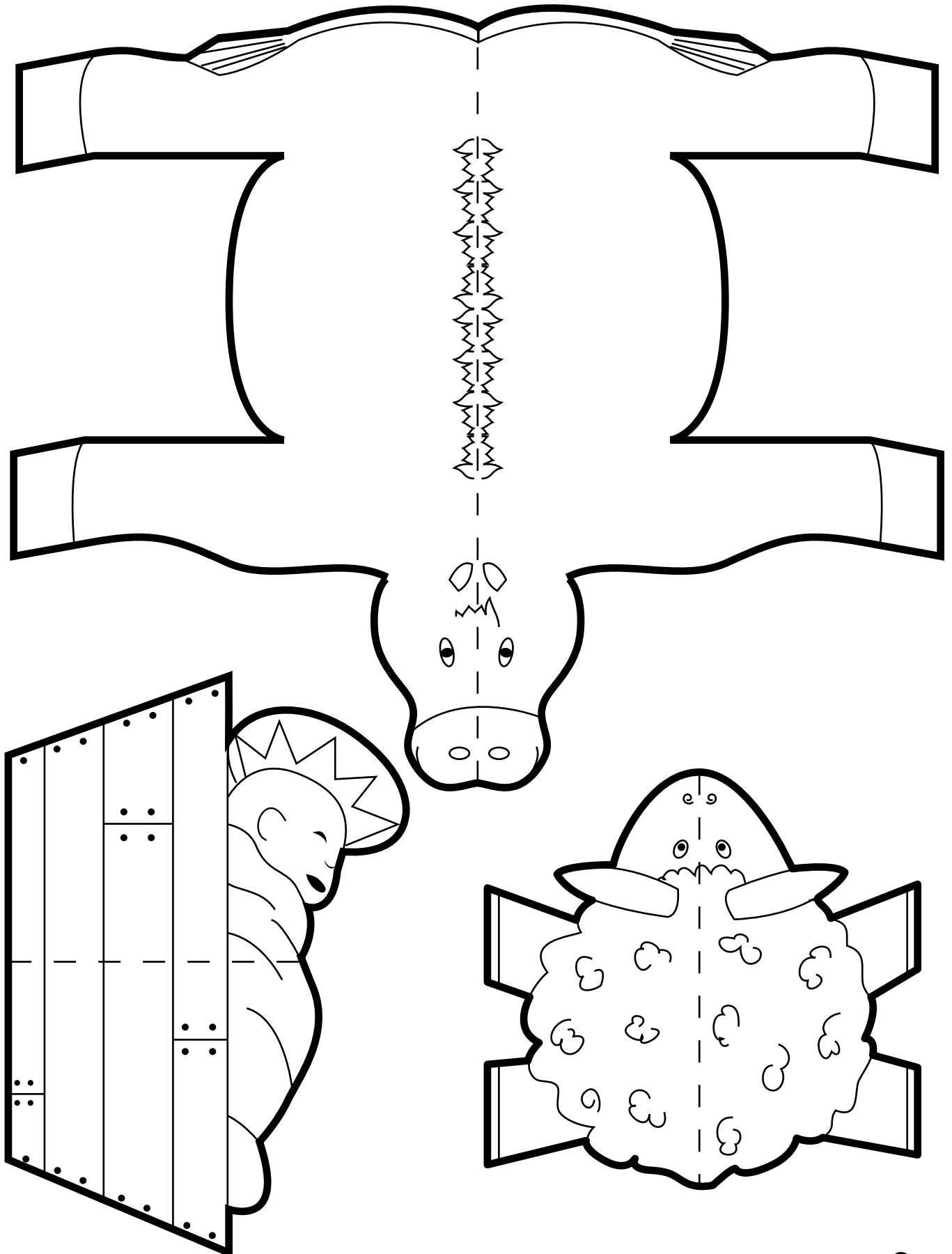
**The End angel (17th angel):** The end. . . .

**The Beginning Angel (18th angel):** ... or ... the beginning!!!!





These are great to use for younger children. Run them off on card stock, have children color them or glue fabric, yarn, etc. on them. Cut on the bold lines, then fold on the dotted lines and you have an immediate nativity scene.



Introduction by Jacquie Hardesty,  
Southwest Unity Region Children's Ministry Consultant

As youth and family ministry directors, we are always on the look out for that great Christmas play to present to our congregation. It can be a challenge finding a play that will have parts for all ages, is simple, and yet engaging for everyone in the youth ministry. Well, we found one! The play *Christmas in Unity Town* was written by one of our children's ministry teachers at Christ Church Unity in San Diego, CA. The play begins with our minister, Rev. Blair Tabor, in costume with his comfy robe and Disney slippers, and sipping his coffee. Rev. Blair introduces the play, pretends that it is very, very early Christmas morning, and says, "Oh, are the children still asleep?"

Then, in the front of the sanctuary, all the sleeping children, dressed in their pajamas, start waking up, stretching and yawning. (Our little ones loved playing a part in their pajamas.)

Some staging details and suggestions:

- Costumes consist of pajamas and a Santa Claus suit.
- Use older teens for the narrators.
- After the play is introduced by our minister, a smaller child walks across the stage (sanctuary) dressed as a "sun" with sunglasses, demonstrating the sun rising. (It's very cute!)
- We present the play right after the church service.

Have fun and add your own creative ideas!

# Christmas in Unity Town

Christmas In Unity Town

By Bernadete Leal

Unity Christ Church, San Diego, CA

By the sound of a lullaby, all the children come to the altar and lay down pretending to be sleeping.

**Narrator 1** (whispering): Shhhhhhhhh! Quiet! The people of Unity Town are still sleeping! All the children went to bed very early last night because of today. Yes, today is a special day! Today is Christmas Day!

The sun shines and we hear a rooster singing. Children slowly start to wake up.

**Narrator 1:** Look! The children of Unity town are waking up!

Children get up and begin to sing.





**“It’s Christmas!”** (Bernadete Leal/Rev. Blair)

Original song, for music contact Bernadete Leal at: [bleal1@san.rr.com](mailto:bleal1@san.rr.com)

It’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas!  
 It’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas today!  
 It’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, hurray!

It’s Christmas in the morning  
 It’s Christmas in the afternoon  
 It’s Christmas in the middle of night

It’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas today!  
 It’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, it’s Christmas, hurray!

**Narrator 1:** Yeah, it IS Christmas! Look, we have our Christmas tree and, of course, we cannot forget a very special man, Mr. Claus! Here comes Santa Claus!

Santa Claus walks in.

**Santa Claus:** Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!

*Santa Claus gives a little present to each child. All the children show a lot of excitement with their gift.*

**Narrator 1:** The children of Unity Town look very happy with their gifts from Santa Claus.  
 (Toward the children) Are you all happy this morning?

**Children:** Yes!!!

**Narrator 1:** I’m glad to see you are very happy today, but let me tell you something... Christmas is not ONLY about giving and receiving gifts!

**Children:** No?

**Narrator 1:** Not really! Would you like to know a little bit more about Christmas?

**Children:** Yes!

**Narrator 1:** All right! So put your presents away for now and let’s hear a story.



**Narrator 2:** “A long, long time ago Caesar Augustus made a law. He wanted to have a big list with the names of everybody who lived in the whole Roman world. That was the first time it ever happened. They didn’t have a list like that before. So, they all went to their own towns to be listed.

Joseph was engaged to a woman named Mary. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, that’s where Bethlehem, the town of David, was located. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was pregnant. She was expecting a baby!!



Well, something happened when they arrived in Bethlehem. The time came for Mary to give birth to her baby. It was her first baby! They tried to find a place to stay that night, but all the inns, which are like small hotels, were full and there was no room available. So Mary and Joseph had to spend the night at the only place they found, which was a stable.”

**Children:** A stable?

**Narrator 2:** Yes. A stable is a place where animals were kept and fed. And that’s where the little baby boy was born, in a stable! They wrapped him up in large strips of cloth and placed him in a manger. They named the little baby Jesus!

*Little kids come representing Mary, Joseph carrying baby Jesus.*

**Narrator 1:** Now, would you like to know more about Jesus?

**Children:** Yes!!!

**Narrator 3:** Jesus grew up to become a very nice man. Jesus taught us a very important lesson. He taught us that we should love one another and treat others like you would want them to treat you!



Jesus, by living as he did, showed to us how important love is. Love is a gift from God, our Father, and it is the highest and finest emotion! Doing good toward other people is the result of love.

**Narrator 4:** “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not boastful, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it not quick-tempered, it does not brood if someone hurts us, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices always with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.”

**Narrator 1:** Do you understand now?

**Children:** A little bit!

**Narrator 1:** Well, let me make it simple. Love is like a magic penny. You have to give it away, because if you hold it really, REALLY tight, you will end up not having any.

**Children:** Ohhhh!

*Children get up and sing a song.*

**“Magic Penny”**

*From Sing a Joyful Song, Unite With Me in Song, or Wings of Song Hymnal*

Love is something when you give it away  
 Give it away, give it away  
 Love is something when you give it away  
 You end up having more  
 Love is like a magic penny, hold it tight and you won't have any  
 Lend it, spend it, you'll have so many  
 They'll roll all over the floor



**Narrator 1:** Jesus, also, had a wonderful thing in his heart!

**Children:** What?

**Narrator 1:** Compassion!

**Children:** Compassion? What's compassion?

**Narrator 4:** Compassion is this feeling that moves you deeply, inside, whenever you see the suffering of somebody. That's what makes you want to offer a helping hand. When compassion really comes from your heart, it pours from love, that kind of selfless love that makes you forget about yourself for a little bit and inspires you to give your all to help others.

**Narrator 1:** That's what Jesus did, whenever he had a chance, he helped others! And you know what? We can do the same!

**Children:** Really?

**Narrator 1:** Yes, because we all have the spark of this sacred fire called Love in our hearts. It's like a light. But, we have to let it shine--the same way Jesus did!

*Children sing a song.*

**“This Little Light”**

From *Sing a Joyful Song*

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Hide it under the bush, NO, I’m gonna let it shine  
 Hide it under the bush, NO, I’m gonna let it shine  
 Hide it under the bush, NO, I’m gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine



**Narrator 1:** You’ve got it! Now, Jesus was not alone! He had some helpers! He had some people, known as the apostles, who helped him, through compassion, to spread love and help others.

Jesus liked doing things with others, because he knew that when we work together, like a team, we are stronger and we can do wonders! Together, we can do good things in our school, at work, at our church, in our community and in the world. Together. Just like a big family, because we are all part of God and we all belong to this HUUUUUGE family of God!

*Children sing a song.*



**“Doing It Together”** (by Mark Welch)

From Songs for Adult and Teen Group Singing

We’re awesome, supportive, spiritual group  
 With a core of positive energy (2x)  
 Doin’ it together, we’re doin’ it together, we’re doin’ it together  
 Changing our world family

**Narrator 1:** Now, isn’t it great to work together? You know, it feels natural to show everyone love at Christmastime, but Jesus taught us that we could show love toward each other every day.

**Children:** Oh, yeah? How?

**Narrator 1:** By being patient, tolerant, and forgiving. By taking care of someone who needs us, like an older person or a sick person. By helping your parents, sharing your talents, your ideas, what’s in your heart and so much more!!!! So, aren’t you glad Jesus taught us all these wonderful things?

**Children:** Yes!!!

*Children sing a song.*

**“Thank You Jesus”**

(to the tune of “Clementine”)

Thank you, Jesus.  
 Thank you, Jesus.  
 Thank you, Jesus, for your light.  
 You have shown me my potential  
 Thank you, Jesus, the Christ.

**Narrator 1:** So, now after these great teachings, the children of Unity Town would like to wish you a....

**Everybody:** Merry Christmas!

**Narrator 1:** And we invite you to sing a song with us!

**“Christmas Is Everywhere”** words by Bernadete Leal  
 (to the tune of “Love Is in the Air” by John Paul Young)

Christmas is everywhere,  
 Everywhere I look around.  
 Christmas is everywhere,  
 It’s here in Unity Town.

We learned about Christmas and Jesus,  
 And we should let our light shine.  
 Together as a big family,  
 Together we will spread love around.

Christmas is everywhere.  
 Christmas is everywhere.  
 Oh, oh, oh  
 Oh, oh, oh  
 Oh, oh, oh



# Sounds of Christmas

Christmas music warms the heart, body and soul. Singing increases your lung capacity, gets the blood moving, and puts a lift in your attitude. Singing Christmas carols weaves a tapestry of threads that connect us with other Christian communities, past and present.

Young people do not learn these songs in school anymore; therefore, I believe it is up to us to pass on this beautiful legacy of our story in music. Sing with your kids, play the CDs in your class, take assembly time to teach one or two per year. Go caroling with your families. Give the gift of music that will last a lifetime.

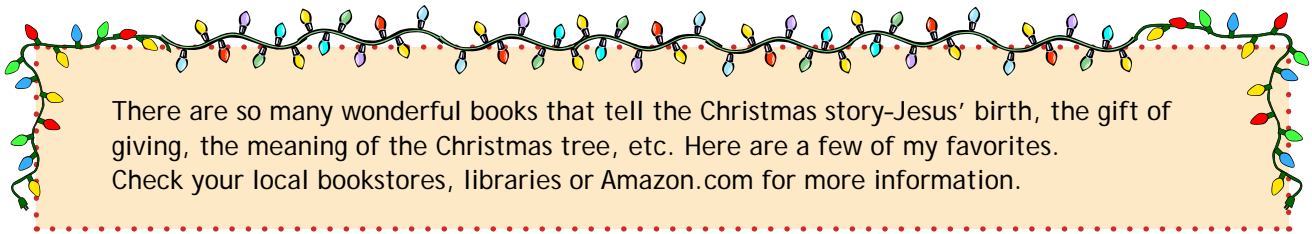
The following is a list of carols that serve as a basic repertoire. Perhaps you have a favorite not listed here, if so be sure to include it.

Away in the Manager  
 Mary Had a Baby  
 We Wish You a Merry Christmas  
 Deck the Halls  
 Twelve Days of Christmas  
 Silent Night  
 The First Noel  
 Joy to the World  
 We Three Kings  
 O Come, All Ye Faithful  
 Go Tell It on the Mountain

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
 Angels We Have Heard on High  
 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing  
 What Child Is This?  
 It Came Upon a Midnight Clear  
 The Friendly Beasts  
 O Christmas Tree  
 Good King Wenceslas  
 God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen  
 I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Suggestion: Wee Sing for Christmas by Pamela Conn Beall and Susan Hagen Nipp is great for younger classes.

# Share the *Stories* of Christmas



There are so many wonderful books that tell the Christmas story—Jesus' birth, the gift of giving, the meaning of the Christmas tree, etc. Here are a few of my favorites. Check your local bookstores, libraries or Amazon.com for more information.

## **Alfie the Christmas Tree**

By John Denver

Out-of-print but available for a price. "Say a prayer for the wind, and the water and the wood, and those who live there too!"

## **Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers**

By Andrew Clements

Angels have always brought light and truth to the earth and this is one angel's account of that night.

## **The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate**

By Janice Cohn and Bill Farnsworth

## **How the Grinch Stole Christmas!**

By Dr. Seuss

Classic reminder that Christmas isn't in the stuff but in the heart.

## **Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree**

By Robert Barry

A tree too big becomes a tree for many.

## **The Nativity**

By Julie Vivas

Whimsical illustrations tell the story with all the characters but in a fun way. Angels wear boots and hang all over trees.

## **Once Upon a Christmas**

By James Dillet Freeman

A collection of stories from Unity's poet laureate telling the old story in refreshing new ways.

## **The Polar Express**

By Chris Van Allsburg

This is a new classic focusing on the value of believing.

## **Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect**

By Richard H. Schneider and Elizabeth J. Miles

This is a story of finding the perfect Christmas tree and why looks are deceiving.

## **Wombat Divine**

By Mem Fox and Kerry Argent

Wombat has difficulty finding the right part in the nativity play but ends up in the perfect spot.

# Waking-Up at Christmas Time!



You may use older children for narrators or you may break the parts up for several younger children. Invite church members to build a free-standing door, frame and window for the center of the stage. Do this early so the children can get used to practicing with it, as much of the activity centers around the door. Also, let the audience know that they will be participating by singing the familiar carols. Provide them with a page that contains the songs they will be singing.

By Kym Farmer, Youth Ministry Director,  
First Church Unity, Nashville, Tennessee  
(inspired by Jesus' Christmas Party, by Nicholas Allan)

The stage is set with a bed, door, window, small table with blankets and lit candle. The stable is created with a couple bales of hay and a manger. The door, or door frame, has a sign that says "Bethlehem Inn" on the side that is showing and "Closed No Room in the Inn" on the other side. There is also a table for the Christ candle set apart from the stage set and a microphone there for the narrators. Microphones can also be set near the door, stable, and window to pick up most of the dialogue.

**SOLOIST:** "I Heard the Bells," adapted

I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play  
And wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth goodwill to all

But in despair I bowed my head (trailing off slowly, sorrowfully), there is no peace on earth I said ...

(**NARRATOR 1 and 2** come on stage, **NARRATOR 1** lights Christ candle, and speaks.)

**NARRATOR #1:** We welcome many lights at Christmas time. It is part of the celebration. But perhaps it also reflects our hope that "the light *will* shine in the darkness, and darkness will *not* overcome it."

It is in the darkest part of winter that we celebrate the coming of the Christ. It is in the darkest part of our lives that we can also welcome the Christ. Isn't it the darkness that truly brings out the beauty of the light?

**NARRATOR #2:** (Shakes jingle bells briefly.) We "hear the bells" at Christmas time. The bells that remind us of Christ's presence in our lives. But do we wake up? Do we look joyfully at all the lights around us in our lives, or do we remain asleep to the grace and wonder in our lives?

We have celebrated over two thousand Christmases, and still it sometimes seems that we live in so much darkness. We may "hear the bells" at Christmas time, but do we let them wake us up? Or do we continue to say that "there is no peace on earth"? Perhaps this year we can shake off the slumber of darkness, and be willing to see the Christ anew.

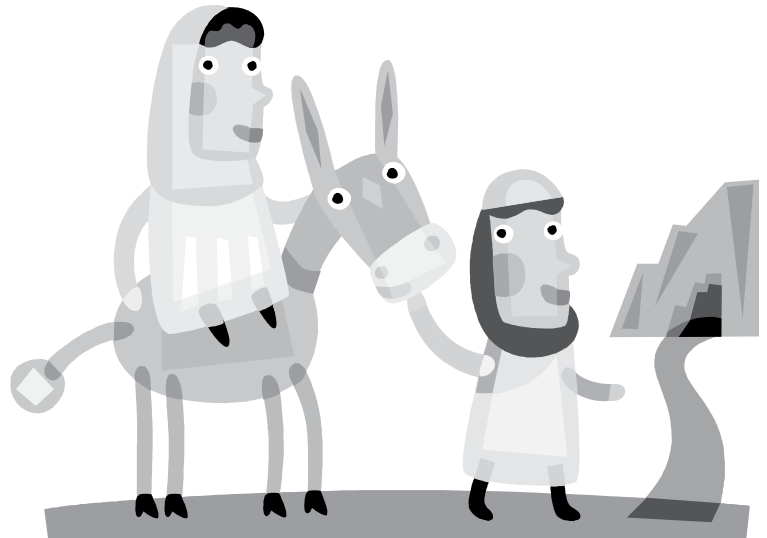
(**NARRATORS** exit. **INNKEEPER** comes in, turns sign on door to read "CLOSED: No room in the Inn," blows out small candle, then climbs into bed with great show of going to sleep. Shortly, **MARY** and **JOSEPH** walk up to the door and knock loudly. **INNKEEPER** jumps awake, staggers to the door, and opens it.)



**INNKEEPER:** NO ROOM!! (Slams door and starts back toward bed. **MARY** and **JOSEPH** knock again. **INNKEEPER** returns and opens the door again.)

**JOSEPH:** We've traveled a long way to reach you. We have important work to do here. Won't you open your heart to us?

**INNKEEPER:** I have *no room* inside ...Well, all right. There *is* the stable around back (gestures toward stable). Just sign the register. (Hands the book to **MARY**. **MARY** signs, then hands it back. **INNKEEPER** looks at the signature, then responds.)



**INNKEEPER:** (irritated) Hey, what kind of a joke is this? "Love and Wisdom?" Very cute. No pet names for each other! Write your birth names! (Hands the book back to Joseph, who signs.)

**MARY:** But we couldn't have come this far if Joseph hadn't been wise enough to guide us to a safe place.

**JOSEPH:** And without Mary's constant love, I would have lost heart long ago. It took the best of BOTH of us to get this far.

**INNKEEPER:** (Snatches back book.) All right, *all right!* Have it your way. I don't want to hear any more about it! Just let me get back to sleep!

(**INNKEEPER** closes the door and goes back to bed. **MARY** and **JOSEPH** walk to the stable and sit down on bales of hay on either side of manger. Light gradually grows in the manger, as **MARY** and **JOSEPH** watch. During this time:

**CONGREGATION SINGS:** "Away in a Manger" verse 1, softly.

(As song concludes, **JOSEPH** walks back to the door, and knocks loudly again. **INNKEEPER** jumps up again, goes to door, opens it.)

**JOSEPH:** Excuse me, but do you have another smaller blanket we could borrow?

**INNKEEPER:** (more aggravated) You keep waking me up! Oh, all right, *here!*

(Closes the door, goes back to bed grumbling about the extra blanket. **JOSEPH** goes back to the stable, hands the blanket to **MARY**, who picks up the baby from the manger and wraps him in the blanket. During this time...)

**CONGREGATION SINGS:** "First Noel" verse 2, softly.

(**STAR** comes on stage, shines BRIGHT LIGHT (large flashlight) through window onto **INNKEEPER**, waking him up. He pulls blanket over his head as **STAR** speaks.)

**STAR:** I am a star! I bring divine light. I shine like the Christ-light within you. I lead wise people to their own Christ. The light of God's love always guides us to the Christ child born within us.

(to Audience) I think I woke him up, but I can't get him going!



(**INNKEEPER** gets up very aggravated, pulls the curtain closed, goes back to bed. **STAR** turns off light, goes to stand by stable. During this time...)

**CONGREGATION SINGS:** “First Noel” verse 1

(**SHEPHERDS** walk up to the door and knock. **INNKEEPER** jumps out of bed again, stomps exasperatedly over to door, flings it open, stands with hands on hips.)

**SHEPHERD #1:** We heard that Love abides here. We have left everything to follow our light to the Christ.

**INNKEEPER** (angrily): WHO???

**SHEPHERD #2:** We’re looking for Mary and Joseph.

**INNKEEPER** (exasperated): They’re around the back! (Slams door, goes back to bed. **SHEPHERDS** go to the stable. During this time...)

**CONGREGATION SINGS:** “We Three Kings” verse 1

(**WISEPEOPLE** enter carrying gifts, knock on the door. **INNKEEPER** again stomps out of bed, flings open the door, and throws up his hands.)

**WISEPERSON #1:** We’re the Wise Ones, the ones who follow the Christ. We’ve come to see ...

**INNKEEPER** (shouting): AROUND THE BACK!!!! (Slams door, stomps back to bed.)

**WISEPERSON #2:** Do you think he is wise enough to go with us?

**WISEPERSON #3:** Apparently not!

(**WISEPEOPLE** walk back to the stable, **MARY** places baby back in the manger. **WISEPEOPLE** set their gifts down by the manger.)

(**ANGELS** come in, walk to the window, pull back curtain.)

**ANGEL #1** (to audience): We’re carrying a message from God. Do you think he can hear it?

**ANGEL #2:** Let’s give him a chance.

**CONGREGATION** and **ANGELS SING:** “Angels We Have Heard On High” (in very loud voices)

(**INNKEEPER** jumps again, sits up staring at Audience rubbing eyes, placing hands over ears, etc. As song finishes, he throws off cover and speaks.)



**INNKEEPER:** ALL RIGHT, THAT DOES IT!!

(Stomps out of door, back to stable, shouting.) ALL RIGHT, WHAT'S ...

**EVERYONE ON STAGE:** SH-H-H-H-H-H-H.

**SHEPHERD #1:** There is new life here. The Christ-child is born.

**INNKEEPER:** (Full of wonder.) A baby? At *my* place?

**ANGEL #1:** Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ, the Lord of your being.

(**INNKEEPER** bends over, gently picks up Christ-child from manger, and holds him close to his heart. As **NARRATOR #3** speaks, Christ-child is gently held, hugged, and passed from one to another at the stable. As speaking ends, baby is returned to **MARY**.)

**NARRATOR #3:** Although sometimes it may seem VERY hard to wake up, God never sleeps. God is always knocking at the door of our hearts. This Christmas, we can wake up and make room for the Christ-child in the manger of our hearts, and in the still silent night of our minds. Though we may have been slumbering, the Christ-child can awaken us to the light. We can hear the bells of truth and love and wisdom ringing in our souls.

**SOLOIST** and **CHILDREN** sing 3rd verse of "I Heard the Bells":

Then peal the bells more loud and deep. God lives within and never sleeps.

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to all.

**INNKEEPER:** (to **MARY** and **JOSEPH**) I'm going to tell everyone at the Inn!!

(Then **INNKEEPER** rushes to front of the stage shouting to the audience.)

**INNKEEPER:** HEY, EVERYBODY, WAKE UP!!

WAKE UP!! Did you hear? Did you see? THE CHRIST IS BORN IN *YOU* TODAY!!

**ALL ON STAGE:** THE CHRIST IS BORN IN *YOU* TODAY!! (All point to the audience as they say "you.")

(All on stage pick up jingle bells from manger as **ALL SING** the following.

I HEARD THE BELLS (adapted)

I heard the Christ within me say, "Do not despair this holy day.

On Christmas morn, new hope is born for peace on earth, good will to all!"

(Children take well deserved bows.)



# Advent Wreath Tells *Our Story*



by Kym Farmer, Youth Ministry Director,  
First Church Unity, Nashville, Tennessee

## (Scene 1)

**Props Needed:** costumes for animals, 4 red barrels with signs, headgear for candles and wreath, feather duster, 4 flashlights, and small candles for the congregation

**Scene:** Bethlehem stable. Animals (donkey, sheep, cows) sitting around on scattered bales of hay, preening, filing hooves, etc. They are talking with each other about present events. They are quite disgruntled. There are also four large packing barrels off to the side, painted red, large enough for a child to fit into, with a child sitting in each one out of sight.

**DONKEY:** Well, I have *never* seen so much activity in this town in all my born days. You would think Bethlehem had become the center of the world with all these unruly *people* (shudders) everywhere.

**COW 1:** They say every inn in town is filled.

**COW 2:** Yes, and now they're even beginning to put the overflow in *here!*

**EVERYONE:** (astounded) WHAT?!?!?!?

**COW 2:** That's right. (Jerks thumb over shoulder to indicate back of stable, where manger can be dimly seen.) I saw the innkeeper show a couple in here earlier today. He said they could stay here for the night.

**SHEEP:** *Well!* I've never known old Ebenezer to be so *big-hearted* before! What got into *him?*

**COW 2:** (remembering thoughtfully) Well, I must admit that this couple seemed different. Special, somehow. And the woman is preparing to give birth soon.

**STORK:** (Alarmed, comes running down center aisle in a dither, flapping wings, ends up at side of stage.) What?? *What??* What's that you say? Why wasn't I notified? No one said anything to *me!* I'm supposed to be *told* about these things. There are arrangements to be made, people to notify, preparations! I have to have some notice, y'know. I can't be expected to handle everything *overnight!*



**SHEEP 2:** Oh, settle down! It's a wonder anybody knows anything with all this uproar. We'll let you know if you're needed.

(Just then **WREATH** comes bursting into stable, hurrying, huffing and puffing, out of breath, looking frantically about. The animals stare in disbelief.)

**WREATH:** Am I late? Has it happened yet? Where is everybody? Good grief, I thought I would *never* get through all those people out there! What a *crunch!* I think some of my leaves might have gotten smashed (checks leaves for damage). Those people were acting just *beastly!*

(Animals look at each other in indignation, hands on hips or arms folded.)

**DONKEY:** (Jumps down.) Hey, wait just a minute! Who are YOU? (looking WREATH up and down)

**WREATH:** (notices animals for first time) I'm the ADVENT WREATH.

**EVERYONE:** Whaaaaat???

**WREATH:** (patiently) The ADVENT WREATH. I'm supposed to get everyone prepared for the COMING. That's what Advent means—The Coming.

**DONKEY:** (Snorts in disdain.) I think you're a little late for that. Everyone's already *come!*

**WREATH:** Not quite everyone! We have to prepare ourselves for the most important one. That's my job—to help people prepare for the birth of the Christ.

**STORK:** Hey! Birth announcements are *my* department! Who invited you here, anyway, Butt-in-ski!

**SHEEP:** The birth of *what?*

**WREATH:** The birth of the Christ—the light of the world. Christmas is a time of LIGHT in our lives; so during Advent we celebrate the LIGHT!

**SHEEP 1:** I *thought* it seemed awfully bright outside tonight. Is that what you mean?

**WREATH:** Well, that's part of it. Let me get myself organized here, and then maybe you'll understand better. I want to do my job right! (Goes over to round red barrel, begins to dust it off, pounds on side of barrel, hollers down inside.) HEY!! Wake up in there!! We're late! We've got to get moving or we won't be ready on time!

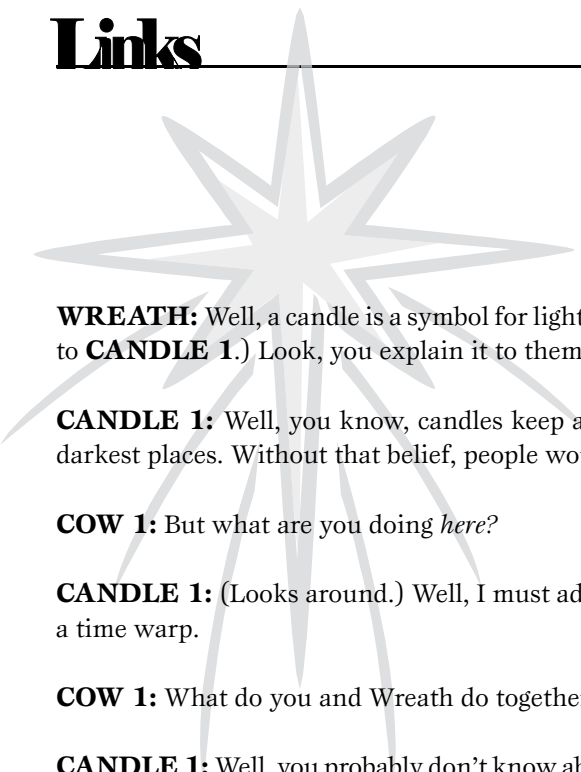
**CANDLE 1:** (Rises up out of barrel, has gold garland flame over head, straps over shoulders holding up barrel as child stands.) I'm ready! I'm ready, already! I've BEEN ready! What took you so long??

**WREATH:** Never mind now. Where's your sign?

**CANDLE 1:** (Flips sign over to outside from inside of barrel. Sign says "Hope.") Here it is.

**SHEEP 2:** What does *that* mean?





**WREATH:** Well, a candle is a symbol for light, too, you know. This candle represents the HOPE in the human heart. (Turns to **CANDLE 1**.) Look, you explain it to them, will you? I've got a lot of stuff to do still. (Hurries out.)

**CANDLE 1:** Well, you know, candles keep away the darkness. We help folks remember that light *is* possible, even in the darkest places. Without that belief, people would have no HOPE. They would never prepare for the birth of the Christ.

**COW 1:** But what are you doing *here*?

**CANDLE 1:** (Looks around.) Well, I must admit, I've never been *here* before. I think old Wreath must have been caught in a time warp.

**COW 1:** What do you and Wreath do together?

**CANDLE 1:** Well, you probably don't know about this yet, but hundreds of years from now, old Wreath and four of us candles get together before the celebration of the birth of the Christ. But (straightens up proudly) *I* get lighted first, to remind people of the importance of HOPE in preparing a place for the birth of the Christ. The light of HOPE is the first Advent light!

## (Scene 2)

**WREATH:** (Comes bursting through the door, hurrying back in.) Goodness gracious! I've got to hurry, hurry, HURRY, or nothing will be done on time. It's a good thing it's so light out there, or I wouldn't be able to get so much done.

**SHEEP 1:** Exactly why *IS* it so bright out there? I tell you, all this strange activity makes me very nervous. What's going on around here?

**WREATH:** This is a time of LIGHT. The light helps us see more clearly so we can be prepared. (Goes over to second red barrel; pounds on side, hollers inside.) Hey! Come on out of there! It's your turn!

**CANDLE 2:** (Stands up out of the barrel with straps to hold the barrel up, speaks joyfully, playfully.) Hey, Hey, *Hey!* I...am...*tooo-ge-ther!* I am ready to outshine, out-shout, out-dance all of you! Because *I* am the candle of JOY! (Flips sign saying "joy" over barrel from inside. Starts snapping fingers, dancing, etc.)

**DONKEY:** Get a load of the hot-shot. I think I like the belly-dancers at the inn better!

**WREATH:** OK, OK. Settle down, now. Don't upset everything and everybody. You're *supposed* to *help* everyone; you know—help everyone prepare for the birth of the Christ. Besides, you're the symbol for an even *greater* light.

**STAR:** (from balcony or ladder or side) I am the light that represents JOY. I am the reason it is so bright outside. I have shined as brightly as I could so that everyone would feel JOY from knowing that the Christ will be born! I am the Star of Bethlehem.

(WISEPEOPLE enter)



**SHEEP 2:** Boy, is this place getting crowded! Are all these guys planning to stay the night, too? I already gave up *my* sleeping spot!

**COW 1:** Don't look at me! I gave up my *food trough* for the baby to sleep in!

**WISEPERSON 1:** Relax, my friends. We didn't come to take away anything, just to give as you have done.

**WISEPERSON 2:** We followed that brilliant star all the way to Bethlehem. It let us know that something wonderful was about to happen.

**WISEPERSON 3:** The star will always represent JOY for us, because we felt such JOY when we realized that the Christ was to be born.

**WISEPERSON 4:** We brought gifts of JOY, because we are so grateful that God's promise of the birth of the Christ is going to come true! (WISEPEOPLE place gifts around manger.)

**WREATH:** (Looks around at everybody.) Whew! I'm glad I made it here before everyone else! (Turns to animals.) So you see, to prepare for the Christ, you need HOPE (points to **CANDLE 1**, who turns flashlight on face and smiles) and JOY (points to **CANDLE 2**, who again dances and sings briefly, then settles down).

**DONKEY:** I think I'm beginning to see the light!

**WREATH:** Well, it's a good thing, because we have *other* guests coming! I'd better hurry! (Hurries out again.)

### (Scene 3)

**DONKEY:** Well, can you beat it? I've never seen this stable so stuffed, and the Advent Wreath tells us that even *more* are coming! I don't know where we're going to *put* everybody!

**SHEEP 2:** This is sure more excitement than we ever had up on the meadows! But I'm not so sure I like being pushed around like a bunch of—well, just pushed around, that's all.

**WREATH:** (racing back in) OK. I think everything's ready now. It's hard to stay ahead of these *next* customers—they move *fast*! (Grabs a feather duster and begins to hurriedly dust off **CANDLE 3**.)

**STORK:** What's that she's using to clean that next candle off with? *Well!* I'm glad I've been useful for *something*!

**SHEEP 1:** Listen! What's that sound?

(**ANGELS** enter singing "Silent Night" and carrying candles. **STORK** backs up in awe. As song finishes, a **SHEEP** comes running into the stable, out of breath. She runs up to the other sheep, very excited with her news. **CANDLE 3** has risen out of the barrel, and is shining flashlight on her own face, as are the **other 2 candles**.)

**SHEEP 3:** Woolly! Fluff! You'll never guess what I just saw! There we were out on the hillside, and suddenly the whole world seemed filled with light! Then these beautiful beings of light appeared. You'll never guess what they looked like!

**SHEEP 1:** (Points to angels.) Did they look something like *that*? (New sheep turns around and gasps.) But say—where are your shepherds? You didn't run off and *leave* them, did you??

**SHEEP 3:** No, they're coming, too! They're right behind me—as *usual*. (Shepherds enter.)

**SHEPHERD 1:** That's right. Beautiful angels visited us, and suddenly we could see clearly where to go, and what to do.

**SHEEP 2:** What's an angel?

**SHEPHERD 2:** An angel is a messenger from God. After we received God's message, we were led to the Christ—right here!

**SHEEP 1:** But what was the message the angels brought?

**CANDLE 3:** I think I can answer that. (Flips over sign, from inside of barrel, which reads "Peace.") I am the candle of PEACE. The message from God that angels bring is PEACE ON EARTH.

**SHEPHERD 3:** That's right, that's what they said, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward all."

**CANDLE 3:** So our hearts must be peaceful, and we must be willing to listen to the messages from God in our thoughts in order to be ready for the Christ.

**WREATH:** (Points to each candle.) Hope, Joy, and Peace. But there's another important way to get ready. And for that we have to follow the guidance of our hearts. (Everyone bows head in prayer as **WREATH** walks over to **CANDLE 4**.)

## (Scene 4)

**ANGELS** sing to the tune of *Wings of Song* #119:

Love is the Christ-child power  
 Love is the Christ-child way  
 Love, Love, God's Love  
 Watch our Christ—child grow!



(Then song is repeated, with all others on stage joining in. As they sing, **MARY** and **JOSEPH** walk in).

**JOSEPH:** Mary represents Love. When our heart is filled with the love of Christ, we can welcome the Christ into the world.

**MARY:** Joseph represents Wisdom. When we think about only the Christ, our thoughts are filled with wisdom and light and love.



**WREATH:** When Wisdom and Love join together, we can *all* be a part of the birth of the Christ. (As **WREATH** speaks, **MARY** and **JOSEPH** walk to manger, where light has been increasing. **MARY** picks up the Baby Jesus.)

**CANDLE 4:** Jesus taught us more about Love than anybody. (Flips sign over from the inside of the barrel that says “Love.”) Jesus said to love God, love each other, and love ourselves. He was our best Teacher, and the *true* Light-bringer. And he taught us that we, too, were the LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

**DONKEY:** So actually, we’re celebrating *two* things at once—the birth of Baby Jesus here tonight in Bethlehem, and the birth of Christ inside each one of US!

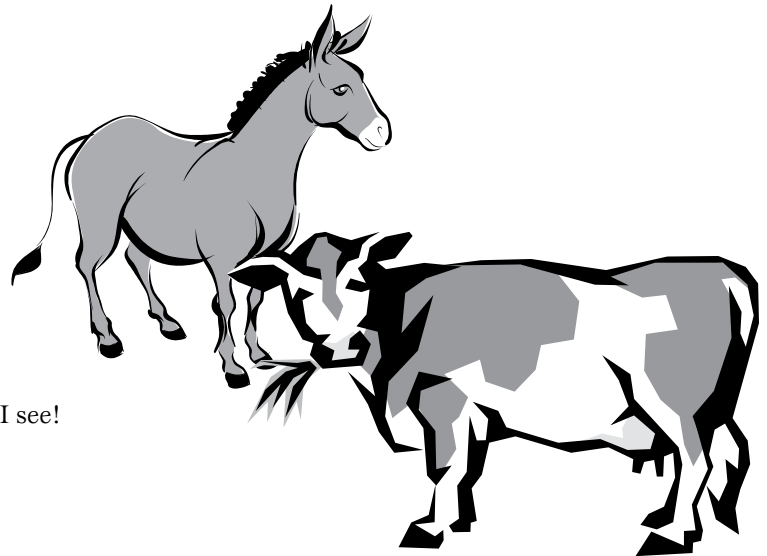
**WREATH:** That’s right! (to audience) We have all come together today in Hope and Joy and Peace and Love, so that we might honor the Christ in every person. And so that we might remember together what Jesus taught us:

**ALL:** (loudly, together) “LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU!”

(**ALL** sing **with congregation** the closing song, to tune of “Let There Be Peace on Earth.”)

Now there is light on earth  
 I let it begin in me.  
 Now I know the light within  
 The Christ-light that shines for me.  
 With Christ at our center  
 Family all are we.  
 Let me live with my family  
 In love eternally.

Let Christ be born in me  
 Let this be the moment now.  
 With every gift I give  
 Let this be my joyous vow:  
 To praise the Christ and love the Christ in everyone I see!  
 Let hope and joy and peace and love be born in me!  
 Let hope and joy and peace and love be born in me!



(Note: last line is repeated!)

**WREATH:** (to audience) God bless us, everyone!!

(Optional: all characters exit, pick up candle from teacher, pass out to audience, saying “You are the light of the world! Pass it on!”)

(EXIT, THE END)