“Come to the Manger”
by
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What
Want an engaging and memorable children’s Christmas play with lots and lots of adorable children without the hassle of rehearsing an engaging and memorable Christmas play with lots and lots of adorable children? Look no further! This script is designed to be a spontaneous Christmas pageant for any child in attendance who wants to participate! Attendees walk in the door, no children’s rehearsals needed, and get to choose which character in the Christmas story they want to play and go up on stage and help tell the story of the birth of Jesus! Further enrich your event with crafts and activities, costume making and reflection times! So, join in and Come to the Manger in an engaging and entertaining and easier way this Christmas!

Themes: Christmas Eve Service, Children

Who
Narrator 1 (adult/older teen)  Mary (adult no lines)
Narrator 2 (adult/older teen)  Joseph (adult no lines)
Narrator 3 (adult/older teen)  Guides
Narrator 4 (adult/older teen)

When
The first Christmas

Wear (Props)
Narrators wear neutral clothing which then they put on Biblical costuming for the part they are depicting over their neutral attire. Guides are dressed the same as the children in the audience who they are guiding on the stage.

Why
Luke 2

How
Strong Narrators are a must. A sufficient number of responsible guides is a must. Clear instruction to your audience through various mediums is a must.

Time
Approximately 15 minutes
Example Christmas Eve:


COSTUME PICK UP: Children choose which character they want to be and put on their costume piece.

ACTIVITY: Go to activity based on which character they choose. (Ex: Shepherds make cotton ball sheep, Angels make halos, Magi make decorated jewel boxes, Stars make glittery stars.) Be aware some children may change their minds after seeing craft activity. Suggest having more craft materials than you do costumes for this reason in case they want to do more than one activity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: invite families into seating area and give announcement/instructions.

PRESENTATION: Come to The Manger

REFLECTION: can been done in small groups together in material given to families to discuss on the way home or at home.

Give your Guides the following instructions: #1 Rehearse Guides to know which line they should leave their seats and go on stage #2 Give Guides clear instruction on where to sit/stand/move on stage. (tape, rope or otherwise denote these areas for each group) #3 Instruct Guides to help keep children around them safe and attentive while on stage. #4 If you want, your Guides can act as your Greeters and be already dressed as they greet and explain the premise of the evening to those entering and help lead any crafts/activities.

Thoroughly communicate to your audience through various mediums what is expected of them. Write it in your program/bulletin. Put it up on the screens. Make signs on the doors as people enter. Announce it prior to starting the presentation. Have Greeters clearly explain the premise of the pageant to those entering. Use audible/visual cues on screens during the presentation if you have them.

Examples:

Greeters/Guides say: “Welcome! Merry Christmas! This evening all our children get to choose what they want to be as a part of the Christmas Story we are going to tell tonight/today! Come with me! (lead to area where children can choose which part they will want to play if any) Would you like to be a shepherd, or a star, or a magi, or an angel? (let child choose. Changing their mind or choosing not to participate are acceptable options) Great! You can either #1 Head over to this craft/activity area to do a shepherd/angel/magi/star activity and/or #2 Head into find a seat. During the telling of the story all the kids will be invited to join us up on stage to hear the story. You’ll know when the (enter their choice “shepherd/magi/star/angel”) are supposed to go
because other (enter their choice) will be going up as well. Parents are more than welcome to join their children on stage. You can go up on stage when they call the other (enter their choice) but you don’t have to go up on stage. You can participate in your seat and be a part of the story. Do you have any questions? More information is also written in your program/bulletin.”

Program/Bulletin reads: Welcome and Merry Christmas! We are excited to invite you to “Come to the Manger” today/tonight! All children in attendance today/tonight are invited to help us tell the wonderful story of Jesus’ birth by choosing to play a role in the story! You can be a Shepherd or an Angel or a Magi or a Star shining brightly! Costumes are located (insert location). Please pick one up before the storytelling begins. While you are watching the presentation pay close attention because we will be calling for you to Come to the Manger and join us up on the stage to help us tell the story. Shepherds, Angels, Magi, Stars, in that order, pay attention! You will know when it’s time to come leave your seats and walk down the aisles and join us up on stage when we call for you! Parents are more than welcome to join their children on stage as well. Know that we have older adult and teenage “Guides” dressed up as Shepherds and Angels and Magi and Stars to help show children when and where to Come to the Manger up on stage and to help watch over and guide children while they are on the stage. Children can return to their seats at the conclusion of the presentation which is after we sing a verse of “Away in a Manger” (or however you choose to conclude) You can keep your costume/please return costumes at the end of the presentation in the bins located at the exits when the presentation has ended, etc. See you at the manger!

Signs on doors with details: Did your child get a costume located (insert location)? Did you grab a program? Did you get a chance to do a fun craft/activity located (insert location)? All children in attendance tonight/today are invited to get a costume from (insert location) and Come to the Manger and join us for the telling of the Christmas story on stage with us when it’s time! (create signs in general for “craft/activity area” “shepherd costumes” “star costumes” “return costumes here at the end of the presentation” etc.) When in doubt make a sign and communicate!

Costumes: Costuming can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. You can pre-make costumes laid out on tables for kids to simply pick up and put on or you can have the children create part of or their whole costume as part of a pre-presentation craft/activity. Suggestions: cotton ball sheep for the Shepherds, glittery stars for the Stars, Halo headdresses made of garland for the Angels, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh little craft boxes for the Magi. Choose things that will dry quickly or don’t require dry time/paint mess, etc. as children may be wearing their “Christmas best” and may be carrying the items with them up on stage. Glue dots/tape and markers as opposed to paints and glue. Consider preprinted cutouts that can be cut out, colored and put on like a hat/headband as an easy option.
Announcements before Presentation:

“Welcome! Merry Christmas! Tonight’s/Today’s presentation is going to be a fun one! This evening/today all our children get to choose what they want to be as a part of the Christmas Story we are going to tell tonight/today!

I’m looking out over a lot of well-dressed children ready to be a part of telling the Christmas Story tonight. I see Shepherds, and Angels, and Magi and Stars! Great! You’ve probably already heard it and maybe read it in the program/bulletin but let me just give you a little bit of instruction before we start.

All children present here tonight are welcome to choose a costume located (enter location) and put that on and when it’s time, during our telling of the story of Jesus’ birth, we will invite you to join up on stage to be a part of telling the Christmas story!

There’s still time to grab a costume if you haven’t had a chance. You can do that now. Or just raise your hand and one of our Guides will bring you one. All our kids should be in their seats right now, but kids, make sure you’re paying attention during the story. Especially pay attention to when you need to come up on stage with us. You will know when to come up on stage because if you’re a Shepherd, look for the other shepherds when they start going on stage.

If you’re an Angel keep your eye out for the Angel! If you’re one of the Magi traveling from afar, look for those other Magi and travel with them and if you are a Star keep watching the sky for other twinkling Stars and follow them!

During the telling of the story all the kids will be invited to join us up on stage to hear the story. Children can choose to stay in their seats if they want to as well. You don’t have to come up on stage if you don’t want to. Parents are more than welcome to join their children on stage too and with our smaller participants’ parents are encouraged to join their children on stage.

Know that we also have other adults and teens who are Guides for you and your children and are dressed up like Shepherds and Angels and Magi and Stars to help show children when and where to Come to the Manger up on stage and to help watch over and guide children while they are on the stage.

So, are we ready? Then let’s all Come to the Manger and hear the Christmas Story!”
Come to the Manger

**Narrator 1:** Have I got a story to tell. One you may know very well. It has angels, shepherds, magi and stars shining bright on this holiest of holiest, Christmas eve night. It's about hoping that good dreams we've long had will come true. It's a love story from heaven. A love story written...for you. And with much anticipating, we've been a long time waiting for this day, so elating, to finally be here. So without further ado, come, let me take you to the manger, where all the hopes and dreams of the world will come true.

During the next narration Mary and Joseph and in the back making their way slowly toward the stage. They are finishing their long journey to Bethlehem.

**Narrator 2:** (Pointing at some distance down the aisle in the back of the theater/sanctuary) Look! Here comes blessed Mary, and her faithful husband, Joseph. They've been traveling a long way from their little town of Nazareth. The days have been tough. The road has been hard. But finally, up ahead, Bethlehem sits not too far.

**Narrator 3:** God told Mary she was going to have a little baby. A sweet and perfect baby boy. And its almost time for him to come and give the world great joy. And after such a long trip, she is most ready to rest.

But all the rooms in the inns of this tiny town are taken. But one innkeeper does his best.

**Narrator 4:** He had no room in his inn. They were already packed to the brim. Like them, many have traveled so very far for the census that Caesar demanded so he could boast and raise taxes. But what he had, he gave. He was sorry, it wasn't much. It was his stable, where the animals sleep. Tonight, maybe they can help keep them warm and such.
Narrator 2: So they went to the stable, and there Mary and Joseph were able to thank God for providing them some place and some peace. It was going to be a good story for the ages, at least. Because there, amongst oxen and donkeys and rams, amongst strange noises and stranger smells, was born...the Great I Am. God’s holy perfect lamb. A baby boy. Heaven’s joy. The Savior of all Man.

Narrator 3: Jesus. God’s only son. The perfect gift for a weary world. Jesus. God intended him for the manger and then so much more. Jesus. Like a light in the darkness, he came to make hopes real. Jesus. He would be for all people. And we’ll start with some shepherds in the field.

Narrator 1: (Dressed as a Shepherd beckoning and directing the Shepherds in the audience to come forward and sit where directed.) Come, all you shepherds. Come now. Now’s the time to tend to our flocks through the cold, cold dark night. Come, all you shepherds. We need you in the fields here. The sheep are all bleating for their Shepherd to come near. Come shepherds, come. We work hard to protect our sheep. And when night comes we are still working even as we sleep on the cold, cold ground. There are wild animals all around. So, we have to keep watch to make sure our sheep do not wander or get taken away. That’s how we devote our lives each day. We are shepherds, and although we are very, very, very poor, We must be worth so much more than the dirt we sleep in on the floor Because, well...wait and see!

Narrator 2: (Dressed as a brilliant Angel beckoning and directing the Angels in the audience to come forward and sit where directed) Heaven is preparing a chorus to sing of the birth of a baby, Jesus, the King of Kings.
So come, angels! Come angels!
From every corner of heaven, come!
Come, angels, the Lord has summoned his heavenly hosts to announce this holy little one!
Come angels! We must tell the world of this gift God has given to all mankind.
Come now, angels. Come and ready yourselves to sing praises to God, the Most High!
Hark, ye herald angels, the heart of heaven has taken on humanity,
God’s love for all the eye can see,
born this day just a tiny baby,
but His love is huge and we must say it loud!
God Himself to the earth has come down!
We are the first in time to tell this timeless story
Of God taking off his glory
And walking in his own story.
Ready? Are you ready? Watch and you will see.
Nothing will ever be the same after this declaration we are making.

Moving a little toward the Shepherds and addressing them with great voice.

Do not be afraid! I bring you good news that will cause great joy,
in Bethlehem, a baby is born. And he’s so much more than just a little boy!
He is for all the people! He has been born for you!
He is the Messiah, the Lord! Come and see him! All of you!

Narrator 1: God wants to see us shepherds?
He wants us to see the birth of His Son?
But who are we that God would want us to greet the holy one? ‘
We are poor, nothing great. Could this gift really be for everyone?
Are you sure he wants us to come to the manger?

Narrator 2: Jesus is a gift for all people, so don’t be a stranger.
He’s just over there, born poor, just like you, in a stable.
All who are able, come to the manger!

To the Angels.

Angels, now is the moment! With joyful voices we raise glorious praise!
Shout praises with me!
Glory to God in the highest!
“Come to the Manger”

Guides and children repeat then louder.
   Glory to God in the highest!

Guides and children repeat then louder still.
   Glory to God in the highest!

Guides and children repeat then spoken to the Shepherds.
   Now, go!

Direct Angels to sit.

Narrator 1: (To the Shepherds)
   Should we go to Bethlehem and see
   this gift of love,
   sent from above
   that God has given to you and me?

Guides and children respond enthusiastically “yes!”.
   Then come to the manger with me!

Directs Shepherds to sit down in a new place closer to the manger.

Mary picks up Jesus and walks him toward the Shepherds. She shows him off to them
   moving around the group so they can all see.

Narrator 4:
   So, these poor shepherds came. God Himself invited them to see
   his gift for all people. They came to the manger on bended knee.
   And Mary delighted to share Jesus with them.
   He would grow strong and love all people. Even the poorest, like
   Him.

Mary moves away from the Shepherds and joins Joseph who has moved away from the
   manger to another place on stage closer to where the Magi will enter.

Narrator 2: (Dressed as Narrator)
   And on that first Christmas day,
   in a land far away,
   some wise men stood gazing at the sky.
   For a star shone most bright
   that holiest of nights
   over Bethlehem and these magi wondered why.
Narrator 3:  
(Dressed as Magi)  
Could this be? Was it true?  
I’ve heard about this!  
A light sent from heaven!  
We cannot dismiss  
this sign and a chance to go see this little baby  
born the king of kings, the Lord of Lords,  
the Messiah most holy.  
He is the one who will save all there is to save.  
Come, we must go, though it be a long way.

Beckoning to the other Magi from the audience.

So come, all ye Magi.  
Come all who are wise enough  
to make the long journey  
and see heaven’s eyes in the  
face of a child who gives love without bias  
to all nations, to all people.  
See the star? Like Heaven’s steeple.  
So come, magi come.  
We have a long journey ahead.  
Come, magi come.  
The road will be our bed  
until we can lay our head  
and our gifts at the feet of this little king.  
Come, all who are wise, and we will bring  
the very best we have to offer.  
We will empty our coffers  
and still, could we ever bring  
enough treasures to honor such a King?

Narrator 1:  
(Dressed as Narrator)  
So these Magi from far away, though the journey was so long,  
packed up their best gifts to bring to Jesus and went on and on  
for days upon days and weeks upon weeks  
until finally in Bethlehem they found what they went to seek.  
A sweet little boy.  
Heaven’s heart. The world’s joy.  
A tiny little king who would bring peace  
to all from the very greatest to the very least.

Narrator 3:  
(Laying down his gift near Jesus)  
We bring gold, we bring frankincense, we bring precious myrrh.
“Come to the Manger”

We bring all that we have to honor this Savior.
We lay down our gifts at this tiny treasure’s feet.

Directing Guides and children to put down their “treasures” if you have chosen to add this element.

Come Magi, lay down your gifts here. Do not keep anything from Jesus that you have to give. All who are wise, give your treasures, and when every treasure is given then give how you live:
Your life every day
Live your life like the treasure you are.
A treasure of God’s to give away.

Help Guides and children finish placing treasures near Jesus and then direct them to sit down.

**Narrator 1:** Jesus. The name that holds the weight of a world.

**Narrator 2:** Jesus. The hope of every man, woman, boy and girl.

**Narrator 1:** Like a light in the darkness God’s Son humbly came.

**Narrator 2:** Like a light in great darkness he carried the name Of God to the orphans. The lonely and the lame.

**Narrator 3:** He brought hope to the hopeless
And he can do the same
To those still walking in darkness
Who call upon his name.

**Narrator 1:** The dark is so dark.

**Narrator 2:** The light is so dim.

**Narrator 3:** Thank God for the star
That guides us to Him.

**Narrator 4:** *(Dressed like a Star)*
Darkness, emptiness, loneliness, fear.
All who want the light to shine on them come here
To the manger.
Come, follow the light
That breaks the darkest darkness
On this holiest of nights.

www.skitguys.com
"Come to the Manger"

Beckoning all the Star Guides and children to join on stage.

So come Stars, come Stars!
It's our turn to shine.
We will not let darkness hide this little light of mine.
Come Stars to the manger.
Be the light in dark places.
We'll shine bright
And share the Light
Across all the faces
Of those who look to the heaven.
This love born tonight erases
Any traces
Of darker ages.
That first Christmas night
a single star showed the way to Jesus.
Proving one star, one little light
Ultimately frees us
From the darkness all around us.
This little light of mine
Can brightly shine
leading others to Jesus.

Arms raised to the sky and "twinkling" fingers. Guides lead the children to do the same.

So, Stars, stand and shine brightly
On Christmas Day
And every day after then.
We are a bright city on a hill
Not easily hidden.
Be the light of Jesus
Wherever you may go
And guide those walking in the dark
To come to the manger.
To come home.

Guide children to sit down.

Mary and Joseph move center to a more prominent place. They coo over Jesus.

Narrator 1:  (Dressed as Shepherd)
So, now you've heard the story
You may have heard before
Of Shepherds...
“Come to the Manger”

Narrator 2: *(Dressed as Angel)*
…Angels…

Narrator 3: *(Dressed as Magi)*
…Magi…

Narrator 4: *(Still dressed as Star)*
…Stars…

Narrator 1: …and Jesus.
Emmanuel.
God with us.

Narrator 2: …and I’m pretty sure
It will not be the last time
You hear this story
Of God’s glory
Born in Bethlehem.

Narrator 3: The story of God come down.
Born to be our friend.

Narrator 1: He came for the poor.

Narrator 3: He came for the rich.

Narrator 2: And everyone in between.

Narrator 4: He came to bring light to a dark, dark world.

Narrator 3: He came for you and for me.

Narrator 1: Jesus came for all people.
That first Christmas day.
Those who were nearby…

Narrator 3: …or far, far away.

Narrator 2: Jesus came to show God’s love walking around on the earth.

Narrator 4: So, on Christmas day we joyfully celebrate God’s gift, his birth.

Narrator 1: So come, Shepherds.
Narrator 2: Come, Angels,
Narrator 3: Come, Magi.
Narrator 4: Come, Stars.

Narrator 1: Come however, wherever, whoever you are. With God, you’re never a stranger. So, come…everyone. Come to the Manger.

Consider keeping children and Guides on stage and ending with a verse of a familiar Christmas song. I suggest “Away in a Manger”. At the conclusion of the song, Guides can lead the audience in clapping if they have not done so yet and help children return to their seats.

The end.