

a script from
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“Hunting for Christmas”

by
Tracy Wells

SYNOPSIS

In this mix of performance and activity, children will have fun and learn as they take part in a scavenger hunt to discover what the Christmas Story is all about. A no rehearsal, easy-to-follow script aids biblical guides as they share the good news that Jesus has been born.

Themes: Christmas, Nativity, Children's Church, Sunday School, Scavenger Hunt

CAST

Variable number of biblical Guides, either gender

There are 14 different sections in this play (including the introduction and conclusion), so you can use as many or as few guides as you'd like.

PROPS

This program has a lot of flexibility and uses small items or pictures, so if you'd like, you can choose to hide the items in gift boxes hidden around the church or you can just hide the items. You can simply find images of the items on the internet and print/cut out several sets of each, or you can obtain small versions of each for children to take home or return to you once the program is completed. You could even get a 12-piece nativity or blank puzzle and then write or put a picture of each item on the back. Once the participants have gathered their items, then can put the puzzle together. For this program you will need one set of the following

"Hunting for Christmas"

2 items for each participant or family:

1. A halo (pipe cleaner) or feather or set of wings: signifies Gabriel appearing to Mary
2. A pillow or small piece of fabric: signifies Gabriel appearing to Joseph in a dream
3. A small donkey or sand: signifies Mary and Joseph traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem
4. An ink stamp, quill pen or small scroll: signifies Mary and Joseph reporting for the census
5. Small "No Vacancy" sign: signifies there being no room at the inn
6. Hay or small barnyard animal: signifies Mary and Joseph staying in the stable
7. Small baby: signifies the birth of Jesus
8. Shepherd's hook (pipe cleaner) small sheep, or cotton ball: signifies choir of angels appearing to the shepherds
9. Star: signifies the star that guided the shepherds and the magi
10. Small gift box, or piece of faux gold: signifies the gifts the magi brought to Jesus

11. Crown or jewel: signifies the magi meeting with Herod

12. Heart: signifies the love Jesus brought for us all.

HOW

The Activity: Again, you have a lot of flexibility in how you set this up. You can hide the items randomly around the church, school, or performance space or you can designate stations and hide the items for that area in the vicinity around the station. It would work best to divide the children into groups, or if it's a family event, individual families can function as one group.

Performance: You have some flexibility in how you set this up as well. You can designate one biblical Guide for each station, with the guide performing their segment of the script multiple times throughout the event, once for each group that visits the station. Each group can be provided with instructions on how to visit each station and can be set free to do so or can be assigned a helper that will take them from station to station.

Another option is to assign each group their own biblical Guide and that Guide takes them from station to station. In this case, it would be a lot for each guide to memorize all of the scripts for each station, so you might have a laminated copy of each script segment at the station and have the Guide perform it while reading to their group before the kids hunt for the item at that station.

You can choose to have the groups visit the stations in any order and then use the last script to help the groups use their items to tell the full Christmas story in chronological order.

You can also stagger start times and have each group go from station to station in chronological order. I'm sure there are many other ways to set this up as well, so feel free to do what's best for your group.

For the purposes of the script, all lines are designated as performed by "Guide." Again, these lines can be assigned to any number of actors as you see fit.

In addition to the scripts that correspond with items, you will find Introduction and Conclusion segments to use as well.

Guide is center stage, ready to welcome the assembled group. The following script segments correspond to each station, as indicated by the title above the segment.

Introduction

Guide: Hello everyone, and welcome to our Christmas scavenger hunt! Today we will go on a hunt for items that will help tell the story of the birth of Jesus. As we celebrate Christmas, it's important to take a moment to remember the nativity story and to be thankful that God sent Jesus to us here on earth.

There were a lot of special moments that happened around the time Jesus was born. Today we're going to hunt for those moments and put them together to tell the story of Christmas. Is everyone ready to hunt for Christmas? *(waits for response)* Great! Then let's get into groups. *(assigns groups if it hasn't been done already)* We're lucky to have several guides who will help us learn more about each event, so make sure to listen closely to what they have to say. Now let's start the hunt!

Gabriel Appears to Mary (halo or feather or wings)

Guide: Our story starts with a young lady named Mary who was about to be married to a man named Joseph. One day, before the wedding, Mary was home, doing some chores around the house. Suddenly, out of nowhere, an angel named Gabriel appeared before her. How do you think Mary felt when she saw the angel? *(waits for response)*

Mary was frightened, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." That calmed Mary a great deal, and she listened as the angel told her God's plan. He told her that she would become pregnant with the Son of God and that her Son will be holy. Mary was surprised by this news, but she was honored that God had chosen her for such an important task. She prayed to God and thanked him for the gift of His Son and asked God to watch over them. Now it's time for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.)

Gabriel Appears to Joseph (small pillow or fabric scrap)

Guide: When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant with the Son of God, he didn't understand. How can this be? Was such a thing even possible? It just didn't make sense. He thought and thought about it and finally decided that maybe they shouldn't be married after all. That night, when he laid down and went to sleep, an angel appeared to him in a dream. The angel told him that everything Mary said was true—she was

pregnant with the Son of God! The angel told Joseph that he shouldn't be afraid to take Mary as his wife and when the baby was born, he should name him Jesus. What do you think Joseph did when he woke up the next morning? *(waits for response)*

When Joseph awoke the next morning, he believed Mary, and took her as his wife. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

Mary and Joseph Travel to Bethlehem (donkey or sand)

Guide: Several months later, Caesar decreed that everyone must journey to the town of their ancestors for the census. Does anyone know what a census is? *(waits for response)* A census is when the government collects information about all of the people who live in the land. Mary was many months pregnant by this time, but she and Joseph packed up their belongings, took a donkey from the stable and began their long journey. They traveled from Nazareth, where their home was, to Bethlehem, which was the town of David, who was Joseph's ancestor.

The journey was long and difficult, spanning several miles and across difficult terrain. It was hard on Mary, because she was due to give birth any day, but God watched over Mary and Joseph, and they arrived safely. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

The Census (small ink stamp, quill or scroll)

Guide: When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, they went to the census taker to be counted. As the head of the household, Joseph had to provide their names, where they lived, and what he did for work. Back home in Nazareth, Joseph was a carpenter. Does anyone know what a carpenter is? *(waits for response)*

A carpenter is someone who builds things like doors, chests, cabinets, beds, and tables out of wood. The census taker recorded all of the information Joseph gave him on a long scroll. When the census taker had everything he needed, Mary and Joseph began to look for a place to rest for the night. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

No Room at the Inn (no vacancy sign)

Guide: Mary and Joseph went to all of the inns in Bethlehem, but every time they knocked on a door and asked the innkeeper if they had any rooms available, they were given the same answer. Does anyone know what that answer was? *(waits for response)* There was no room at the inn!

Mary began to grow very worried indeed, as she could tell the time was coming quickly for her to give birth to her baby. But God was watching out for them once more. One of the innkeepers took pity on Mary and Joseph and offered to let them stay in the stables out back behind the inn. Mary and Joseph were grateful for the innkeeper's kindness, and they accepted. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

A Place in the Stable (barnyard animal or hay)

Guide: The stable was warm and dry, and filled with the sights and sounds and yes, even the smells, of the animals who lived there. What kind of animals do you think Mary and Joseph saw when they went out to the stables? *(waits for response)* Donkeys, cows, sheep and horses called this humble wooden structure home. But they made room for Mary and Joseph, who gathered the soft, warm hay into mounds for their beds.

They found an old wooden manger and filled it with hay, readying it for the baby that was soon to be born. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

Jesus is Born (baby)

Guide: That night, in the warm hay, in the humble stable out back behind the inn, a wonderful thing happened. Does anyone know what it is? *(waits for response)* Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus! She cleaned him and cared for him and wrapped him strips of cloth to keep him warm. As she held him in her arms, she smiled, knowing that all the months of waiting was finally over—Jesus, her son, the Savior, was here.

Mary laid him in the manger and as he slept, she watched him and smiled, filled with so much love for this tiny little boy who God had given to her. Then Mary and Joseph prayed to God, thanking him for the gift of his Son. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

Angels Appear to the Shepherds (shepherd's hook or sheep or cotton ball)

Guide: That same night, in a field outside of Bethlehem, some shepherds were tending to their sheep, keeping them safe from harm and trying their best not to doze off in the cool night air. Suddenly in the sky up above them an angel appeared! The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. Listen carefully, for I proclaim to you the good news that brings great joy to all the people." Does anyone know what that good news was? *(waits for response)*

The angel said, "Today, your Savior is born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord." Just then an entire choir of angels appeared in the sky, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth piece among people with whom he is pleased." The shepherds knew then that they must travel to Bethlehem to see their newborn Savior. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

The Star Guides the Way (star)

Guide: After Jesus was born, high up in the night sky above the stable where he lay, a bright star suddenly appeared. Now this wasn't just any ordinary star...this was the biggest and brightest star that anyone had ever seen! What do you think the star was trying to tell the people of the world? *(waits for response)*

The star that seemed to be saying, "here, in this place, you will find the one you've been waiting for...the Messiah...the Son of God!" It could not be denied. It could not be ignored. It was not just a beacon of light, guiding all those who wished to kneel before the newborn king...it was a beacon of hope, that a more loving and peaceful world was upon us. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

The Magi Travel West (small gift box or jewel)

Guide: Far away, in the east, wise men called magi gazed up at the night sky, looking for answers in the stars. And like so many others that night, they were surprised to see the sudden appearance of that bright star...the star unlike any other. They knew a star like that held great meaning...they knew it must mean that the Savior was here. The magi decided then and there that they must follow that star...that they must travel to the place it was leading them...no matter how long it took...no matter how far the journey.

So they packed their things and each selected a gift to bring to the newborn king. Do you know what gifts they brought? *(waits for response)* They brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And though the journey would take many weeks, the magi knew it was what they must do. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

The Magi Meet with King Herod (crown)

Guide: As the magi traveled to see Jesus, they stopped at the palace of King Herod, who was the ruler of the land. Herod had seen the star too, so he questioned the magi about their reasons for following it. When the magi told Herod they were journeying to meet the newborn king of the Jews, Herod became troubled. Does anyone know what he was upset about? *(waits for response)* Herod was upset because he thought that he was supposed to be the king of the Jews, not some tiny baby! But he kept his feelings to himself and asked the magi to provide him with information about this newborn king when they journeyed home.

When the magi arrived, they knelt before Jesus and gave him their gifts. Later that night they had a dream in which an angel warned them not to give Herod any information about Jesus. When the magi awoke, they decided they wouldn't tell Herod about Jesus and would take a different route home. Now it's time to for our hunt! At this station you'll be hunting for a *(fill in the blank with the item you chose)* Let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

Jesus Brings Love to the World (heart)

Guide: The day that Jesus was born changed the world forever. Jesus was the one and only Son of God, sent here to earth to live among us. Can anyone tell me why God sent his Son Jesus to live here among us? *(waits*

for response) God sent Jesus to earth to teach us about God, to help us know how God wants us to live, and to take away our sins. That's why all those years ago, on that very first Christmas, the day Jesus was born, God gave us the greatest gift we could ever receive...the gift of Jesus Christ. And by coming to us, Jesus brought with him goodness and light and love for the entire world, which is why we celebrate his birth every year at Christmas.

Now it's time to for our hunt! What do you think we'll be hunting for at this station? *(waits for response)* Then let's go!

Guide directs and assists the participants as they hunt. Once all participants have found their item, Guide directs them to the next station.

Conclusion

Guide: Today we hunted for items from the nativity story to help us remember the story of Christmas. We learned that Mary and Joseph were both visited by angels who told them Mary would become pregnant with the Son of God, whom they would name Jesus. We learned that they had to travel many miles from their home in Nazareth, to the town of David, called Bethlehem, to be counted in the census.

We learned that when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, all of the inns were full and that an innkeeper took pity on them and allowed them to stay in the stable out back. It was in this stable where Jesus was born. We learned that the night Jesus was born, some shepherds in a field were greeted by a choir of angels who told them the good news of the Savior's birth.

We learned about the wise magi, who saw a bright star in the sky and followed that star, first stopping to meet with King Herod, who asked them to return with information about Jesus. The magi continued on their journey to meet Jesus, gave him gifts, and then had a dream that they should not tell Herod about Jesus, so they returned home another way.

Finally, we learned about the peace and love Jesus brought to the earth on the day he was born and why we celebrate his birth every year on Christmas Day. And that's the amazing story of Christmas. God loves us so much that he sent his one and only son, Jesus, here to earth to live with us and to bring peace, love, and good will to the entire world. Now it's our job to remember why Jesus came, and spread love and good will to others, not just at Christmastime, but every day of the year.

Merry Christmas everyone!

The End.