

a script from



WORSHIP

“This Little Light: A Christmas Candlelight Program”

By
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“This Little Light: A Family Christmas Candlelight Program”

What This easy to stage Christmas candlelight program is perfect for family or children’s Christmas Eve services or Sunday School programs. A storyteller shares the light of Jesus while faithfully recounting the story of His birth. And as everyone joins together in familiar song, the light spreads, just as Jesus’s light has spread all over the world.

Optional actors can be added to enhance the program, performing the tale while it is read, bringing this beautiful story to life.

Themes: Christmas, Nativity, Children’s Christmas Eve Service, Family, Jesus’s Birth, Light, Candlelight

Who Storyteller

Optional Actors (no speaking lines) including:

Mary

Joseph

Angel

Innkeeper

Shepherd

Angels (optional)

Magi (3)

Optional “Light Carriers” if using real candles.

When Modern Day/Biblical Times

Costumes Storyteller can wear modern clothing or can be dressed in Biblical attire. If using the optional actors, they should all be dressed in Biblical attire. Optional Light Carriers can dress modern or Biblical.

Set No set required. You can choose to have a nativity setup if you’d like or any other set if using optional performers. The Storyteller can stand at a podium or can be seated in a rocking chair.

Props Candles (real or battery operated) enough for Storyteller and audience.
This script bound into a storybook or binder.
If including the optional actors you will also need the following:
Basket of linens
Doll wrapped in cloth
Shepherd's hook
3 bottles or boxes
Additional scenery to create a nativity scene can be added at your discretion.

Why Luke 2, Matthew 2, John 8:12

How This may be performed as a reader's theatre with the script bound into a storybook or binder and need not be memorized. Children can gather around the Storyteller or may be seated with their families. As the Storyteller is reading, you may choose to have actors performing the scenes. Their stage directions will be noted following a *. These actors will portray the characters as indicated and can act out the actions being described, or the Storyteller can pause and have the actors say any dialogue attributed to their character. In either case, if using actors it is recommended that you do have a rehearsal or two so everyone understands the timing. Additionally, if acting out scenes, the Storyteller should sit or stand to one side of the playing area. Also, consider breaking up the Storyteller lines between multiple speakers.

If using real candles, Light Carriers can light candles when indicated. They can also assist with electric candles, crossing to the audience as if to light their candles, but instead instructing them when to turn on their candle.

For the song, you can use lyric sheets or display the lyrics on screens.

Time 20-25 minutes

At start of scene, **Storyteller** are center with all other **Children** gathered around them.

Storyteller: Welcome, one and all, and thank you for joining me here tonight (or whatever time of day) for a special story. This is a story of peace in a time where the world felt uncertain... a story of love in a time where people felt unheard and unseen... a story of hope, in a time of darkness. And in times of darkness, what helps us see? (perhaps waits for an answer) Light, of course. The world needed light. And God knew this. He could see that His people were hurting. They needed help. God wanted them to feel His light in a way they hadn't before. So He sent His light directly to the people of the world. He sent... (holds up a finger) a baby.

Mary enters, holding a basket of linens. She sits or kneels and folds the linens.

Storyteller: There once was a young girl named Mary who lived in the village of Nazareth.

Joseph enters. During the next line, **Mary** sees him and stands and they clasp hands and look at one another, lovingly.

Storyteller: Mary was betrothed to Joseph. They had vowed to live their lives together as man and wife and were preparing to do so. Joseph was a carpenter and would make a fine husband for Mary.

Joseph exits and **Mary** resumes folding the linens. During the next line **Angel** enters.

Storyteller: One day, while Mary was completing her chores, an angel named Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you.” Mary was frightened, for angels don’t usually appear out of nowhere, do they? (perhaps waits for an answer) So the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Listen, you will become pregnant and give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

Angel exits. Perhaps **Mary** paces nervously or otherwise reacts to the news.

Storyteller: Mary didn't know what to think about the news the angel Gabriel had brought. She wondered, “Why was I chosen for such an honor? To carry the Son of God? To be his mother? Why, it's unimaginable!” But the more she thought about it, the more the idea warmed inside her.

*Mary places her hands on her belly. Perhaps there is a lighting change with **Mary** in a spotlight. Or perhaps a light seems to emanate from within her belly, such as from a touch activated light in her costume. Or perhaps the **Storyteller** crosses to **Mary** with a candle and holds it near her belly.*

Storyteller: Inside her belly a light was growing. A light sent down to earth from God. A light for each and every one of us.

*If using **Light Carriers**, they should cross to one section of the audience, perhaps a quarter of the audience, either from the front or a side, and begin to assist them in lighting their candles.*

***Storyteller** may recite the next lines as this is happening.*

Storyteller: And as the light grew inside of her, it also spread throughout Nazareth, and then into Galilee... word that the prophecies were finally coming true. Word that the Son of God was coming, and with him a light that would shine all across the world. *(holds up one finger)* Now, let us shine our light as we sing our song.

***Storyteller** and **Light Carriers** indicate that audience should hold up either their lit candles, or their finger as they sing.*

All (singing): 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.

*During the song, **Mary** should turn or exit and don a garment that either adds a pregnant belly or conceals her belly in some way so that she might be pregnant. At the end of the song, a now pregnant **Mary** enters, happily, perhaps rubbing her belly.*

Storyteller: Mary and Joseph spent the next several months preparing for the coming of their baby—the Son of God. They set up a warm and loving home where Jesus could be born and raised and grow up into the man God needed him to be. But as it grew closer to the time when Jesus was to be born, Joseph received news.

Joseph enters and crosses to Mary.

Storyteller: There was to be a census—a decree from Caesar Augustus himself that required everyone to travel to the ancestral home of their family. Joseph told Mary, “As I am from the house and family line of David, we must journey from Nazareth in Galilee, to Bethlehem in Judea. We must set off right away.” So Joseph and Mary began their long journey to Bethlehem, and of course along with them came the little light Mary carried inside her.

Joseph takes Mary by the arm and carefully helps her several steps away. During the next line Mary and Joseph look around in amazement. They knock on doors but are turned away.

Storyteller: When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem they were surprised to see the once quiet village filled with people and activity. People from all across the land had come to register for the census and they all required lodging. No matter how many inns Mary and Joseph visited, no matter how many doors they knocked on, there was no room in any of them. A very scared and very pregnant Mary turned to her husband and cried, “What are we going to do, Joseph? It’s cold and dark and this baby could come at any moment!” But Joseph was calm and said, “God will find a way for us. We just have to follow his light.”

Mary and Joseph look down at her belly. Perhaps it glows. Innkeeper enters. Perhaps he is suddenly bathed in light. Mary and Joseph look up and cross to him.

Storyteller: There was still one door left to knock on, and though there was no room in his inn, the innkeeper took pity on Mary and Joseph and led them to the stables out back.

Innkeeper crosses to manger and extends his arm to Mary and Joseph, who follow.

Storyteller: The innkeeper said to them, “it isn’t much—only a home for my cows and sheep and horses. But it is warm and dry and you will be safe here.” Mary and Joseph thanked him, and they thanked God for providing for them in this dark hour.

Innkeeper exits. Mary and Joseph clasp their hands in prayer. If using Light Carriers, they should cross to one section of the audience, perhaps a quarter of the audience, either from the front or a side, and begin to assist them in lighting their candles. Half of the audience should have lit candles. Storyteller may recite the next lines as this is happening.

Storyteller: *(holds up one finger)* Now, let us shine our light in the darkness, as we sing our song.

Storyteller and Light Carriers indicate that audience should hold up either their lit candles, or their finger as they sing.

All (singing): Out in the darkest night,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Out in the darkest night,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Out in the darkest night,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

During the song, Mary should turn or exit and doff her garment or pregnant belly. At the end of the song, Mary is turned with her back to the audience. She now holds the baby doll wrapped in cloths. Joseph stands near her, protectively. During the next lines Mary should turn and finish wrapping the cloths around him and place him in the manger and kneel beside it.

Storyteller: And it was there, in the soft, warm hay of the stables that Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in the manger. She gazed down into his tiny face and said to Joseph, “Here he is. The Son of God. Entrusted to us from our Father above. “ And Joseph replied, “We shall name him Jesus, just as the angel Gabriel said we should.”

Perhaps a light shines down or comes from the manger, or a star light shines above them. You could even have a light wrapped up in the baby doll blankets.

Storyteller: And as Mary and Joseph gazed down at Jesus with wonder and love, some shepherds were nearby in the fields, keeping watch over their sheep.

Shepherd enters, holding a shepherd's hook.

Storyteller: The shepherds were used to the darkness. Each night, under an endless cloak of stars they stood in the fields. While everyone else slept comfortably in their beds, these shepherds carried out the important work of keeping their flocks safe from whatever the darkness might hold—their only light from the moon and stars above.

Shepherd looks up.

Storyteller: But on this night—this most holy of nights—when the shepherds looked up they saw not only the moon and stars, but an angel of the Lord.

Angel enters. *Perhaps she is bathed in light or a light emanates from her.* **Shepherd** is startled.

Storyteller: The darkness gave way to a heavenly light that could only be described as the glory of the Lord. The Shepherds were terrified. They had encountered many things out in the darkness of the fields, but never anything like this. A shepherd cried out, “Who are you? And why are you here? And the angel replied, “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.”

Shepherd is exuberant.

Storyteller: The shepherds were overjoyed! “The Messiah! The one the prophets said would come to save the world. And now he’s finally here!”

Perhaps additional **Angels** enter and cross to stand behind **Angel**.

Storyteller: Then suddenly more angels appeared—a great company of the heavenly host praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Angels exit. During the next few lines, **Shepherd** points to the light above the manger.

Storyteller: And just as quickly as they arrived, the angels disappeared into the night sky. But in the distance, a light shone down from the heavens—a bright star that shone above a manger where a baby slept.

Perhaps a light emanates from inside the **Shepherd**, near his heart. He touches it.

Storyteller: And deep inside, down in their souls, the shepherds felt a warmth and a light that wasn't there before. And they knew they must go to that manger and kneel before the Messiah they had waited so long for.

Shepherd crosses to manger during the next few lines. If using **Light Carriers**, they should cross to one section of the audience, perhaps a quarter of the audience, either from the front or a side, and begin to assist them in lighting their candles. Three quarters of the audience should now have lit candles. **Storyteller** may recite the next lines as this is happening.

Storyteller: *(holds up one finger)* Now, let us feel the light inside each of us, as we sing our song.

Storyteller and **Light Carriers** indicate that audience should hold up either their lit candles, or their finger as they sing.

All (singing): Deep down in my soul,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Deep down in my soul,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Deep down in my soul,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

During the song **Shepherd** crosses to manger. When he arrives, he kneels.

Storyteller: Now the shepherds weren't the only ones who saw the bright light over Bethlehem. Far away, in the east, three Magi saw a distant star—a light brighter and bolder than the rest—and they knew it meant the Messiah had come.

Magi enter, each holding a bottle or box. During the next few lines they slowly cross to the manger.

Storyteller: And though it took them many months, they journeyed from afar, following that bright star which would lead them to the newborn king.

Magi kneel at the manger and hold out their gifts.

Storyteller: When they arrived they knelt before the baby Jesus and said, “We have come to worship the child. We have brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to honor him, for he is one we have been waiting for. Long may he reign.”

Magi bow. Perhaps a light emanates from them or from their boxes and bottles.

Storyteller: And as the Magi bowed before Jesus, they felt a warmth and a light they had never felt before. God had sent his only Son to us here on earth, so that we might feel his light and love. And though he was only a baby, on the day Jesus was born, so long ago, that light began to grow and spread. It grew so bright that it filled the world, just as God intended.

*If using **Light Carriers**, they should cross to the last remaining section of the audience and begin to assist them in lighting their candles. The entire audience should now have lit candles.*

Storyteller may recite the next lines as this is happening.

Storyteller: And as we once again celebrate the story of Jesus’s birth it’s our turn to spread that light and help it grow, by letting the world know how much God and his only son, Jesus, love each and every one of us. *(holds up one finger)* Now, let us all shine our lights, as we sing our song one more time.

Storyteller and Light Carriers indicate that audience should hold up either their lit candles, or their finger as they sing.

All (singing): 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.

Storyteller: Merry Christmas everyone! Now go out into the world and let your lights shine!

End of play.