

The Mystery of Christmas
A congregational Christmas program for a small church...

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The Mystery of Christmas is based on the prologue of John's gospel (John 1: 1-14). The program may be expanded to include more people (see notes, p. x) but can easily be done with 3 children or youth and 1 narrator. 'Children's chorus' may be done by the 3 children or, if more children are available, by a larger group. Later in the program, other children may take the parts of Mary and Joseph or, if you have a small group, the three children with the reading parts can simply drape biblical clothing over their regular clothes.

The carol selections for this program come from *The Book of Praise*, 1997. However, for the more adventurous, the writer has provided some alternative words to contemporary Christmas music.

Congregational song: *People in Darkness*, #124 or *God Has Come* (tune: *Jingle Bell Rock*), see p. 5.

Children's Chorus (shouting):

"It's a girl" "It's a boy"

"It's a boy" "It's a girl"

Narrator: It's all about life. How it starts? Where it comes from? When it begins? Christmas is all about life.

Three Children:

Child 1: Our cat had six kittens

Child 2: Our dog had twelve puppies

Child 3: My mom had twins; and my dad had a cow!

Narrator: According to John the very first thing that was born was the "Word".

Children's Chorus: The Word?

Narrator:

The Word. But it's kinda confusing so listen closely...

In the beginning was the Word

And the Word was with God

And the Word was God

He was with God in the beginning...

Children's Chorus (repeat as a choral chant):

In the beginning was the Word

And the Word was with God

And the Word was God

He was with God in the beginning...

Three Children:

Child 1: Wow! That's amazing!

Child 2: That's confusing!

Child 3: That's a mystery!

Chorus Sing: *I wonder and I wander*, #142 or *Jesus Our Loving Saviour* (tune: *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer*), see p. 5.

Narrator: Now let's get back to the Book of John and the Word of God.

Child 1: Is the mystery going to become clearer?

Narrator: Well, it continues "through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

Child 2: Wait a minute. Everything that was or will be made is made because Jesus wanted it to be made.

Child 3: Does that include me?

Narrator: Everything and everybody!

Child 1: Are you sure that includes my brother?

Children's Chorus: Everybody!!!

Narrator: And as importantly nothing was made without him. Nothing in all of creation was made without Jesus.

Congregational song: *Twas in the moon of wintertime*, #144, or *Jesus is Our Saviour* (tune: *Winter Wonderland*) see p. 6.

Narrator: The story continues

Children's Chorus: There's more?

Narrator: Lots more. "In him was life and that life was the light of men."

Child 1: Jesus is a heartbeat and a light bulb, too.

Child 2: Get serious. This is important stuff.

Child 3: I know but sometimes it makes me laugh to think how amazing this all is.

Congregational song: *Joy to the world*, #153, vs. 1&2, or *Fill your Hearts* (tune: *Deck the Halls*), see p. 6.

Children's Chorus (chanted): Jesus is the Life, Jesus is the Light, Jesus is the Life, Jesus is the Light.

Narrator: If we believed Jesus is the Life and the Light and it is all connected imagine how marvelous life will be.

Child 1: Wow! But how come there are still so many bad things that happen and people seem to be so sad so often?

Narrator: What a great question! The writer of John knew we would ask that one too. He next writes, “The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it.”

I think he meant that Jesus is there even when the bad stuff happens but sometimes we just can’t see past the darkness.

Child 2: But the light keeps shining?

Narrator: Yes the light keeps shining.

Congregational song: *The people that in darkness*, 171, vs. 1&2 or *We’re Dreaming of Christ this Christmas* (tune: *White Christmas*), see p. 7.

Child 3: Is that the end of the story?

Narrator: No. Our greatest excitement as Christians at Christmas and all year long is found in John 1 verse 14, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

(Mary and Joseph with shepherds and angels gather to form a manger scene)

Child 1: So God really came to live with us? We are to believe that Jesus was God and yet was born like everyone of us?

Narrator: Yes. We call that the Incarnation.

Child 2: Sounds like a flower!

Child 3: I’m still not sure I get it. Words becoming flesh...how does that work?

Children’s Chorus:

It’s a miracle!

It’s confusing!

It’s a mystery!

Child 1: It’s the wonder of Christmas!

Congregational song: *Silent Night* (154)

Narrator: Oh, the story is not completed yet. In John we hear “We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Child 1: Can you imagine seeing the glory of God?

Child 2: Imagine God’s glory in the birth of a baby.

Child 3: Can you imagine?

Narrator: Can you move from the imagining to believing? This Christmas open yourself to receive the glory of the One and Only Son of God. Every time you sing a Gloria think of the Word becoming flesh.

Child 1: And the Light shining in the darkness.

Child 2: And the light being one

Children's chorus:

It's a miracle!
It's a mystery!
It's the wonder of Christmas

Chorus Sing: *Away in a manger*, #149 or *Angels Sing* (tune: *Jingle Bells*), see p. 7.

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Community Snack—Mystery Biscuits

Prior to the event, pre-bake enough mystery biscuit to serve one per person. (The mystery biscuits begin with a marshmallow inside but, when they are cooked, they are empty.)

At the event, have the participants prepare a mystery bun, explaining that the buns remind us that Jesus body was put in the tomb on Good Friday and, on Easter morning, Jesus' body was gone. He had risen. As they are baking, enjoy the pre-baked biscuits.

You will need: Rolls of prepared refrigerator biscuits
Large marshmallows—1 per biscuit
Melted butter
Sugar and cinnamon mixture

Method: Wrap one biscuit around 1 marshmallow, dip in butter and roll in cinnamon/sugar. Bake as directed on the refrigerator biscuit package.

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Contemporary Words

God Has Come

(Tune: Jingle Bell Rock)

God has come
God is coming
God will be here
Open your hearts and shout out a cheer
Laughing and playing
And singing God's praise
Jesus' coming will change your ways

God has come
God is coming
God will be here
Tell the news you know
Open your hearts and shout out a cheer
Christmas Day is, Christmas Day is,
Christmas Day is near

Jesus Our Loving Saviour

(Tune: Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer)

Jesus our loving Saviour
Come down from heaven above
Filling his world with beauty
Covering it with love

Mary and dear Joseph
Heard the angels say
They would give birth to Jesus
The Child of Holy Way

On the first Christmas Eve
Jesus Christ was born
In a lowly manger
Hope and peace adorn

Then the angels praised him
Shepherds and wise ones came
Offering their lives to Jesus
Singing glory to his name

Jesus is Our Saviour

(Tune: Winter Wonderland)

Jesus is our Saviour
Came to offer God's favour
One beautiful night
A glorious sight
God being born in the world

All the children sing the story
Of a baby bound for glory
Was Mary's wee boy
A bundle of joy
Offering love to the world

Jesus came to teach us how to live life
Filled with love in the midst of strife
Came to show us how to love each other
And learn to know him as our brother

So we share this Good News
Inviting all his way to choose
For Christ is Lord
Forever adored
Sending us out in the world

Fill Your Hearts

(Tune: Deck the Halls)

Fill your hearts with news of Jesus
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Calling us from bondage frees us
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
As a baby in a manger
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Jesus came, He was no stranger
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Celebrate our faith together
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Light a candle, help a neighbour
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Sing a carol, share a story
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Welcome Christ the King of Glory
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

We're Dreaming of Christ this Christmas

(Tune: White Christmas)

We're singing of Christ this Christmas
The baby born to save the world
For he came from glory
To share the story
Of life lived forevermore
We're dreaming of Christ this Christmas
Praying that all will know his love
For when Jesus calls us
God's promise he shows us
A love with so much more to show

We're longing for Christ this Christmas
To bring his Spirit to our lives
May we live as Children of God
And shout his praises out abroad.

Angels Sing

(Tune: Jingle Bells)

Angels sing
Shepherds pray
Shout it's Christmas Day
We can all dance and sing to the Living Way

Jesus is
Prince of Peace
Offering God's own love
Share your faith
This Christmas time
Package it with love.