

WORSHIP KIT

Who Came to Bethlehem?

A Children's
Christmas Service



WC6

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A Children's
Christmas Service

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Who Came to Bethlehem?

A Children's
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About the Service

In this children's Christmas service on CD, two detectives look for clues to find out who came to Bethlehem and why the birth of the baby Jesus is so important. Mini-dramas, rhyming recitations, Bible readings, meditations, hymns and prayers all serve as evidence to help the detectives, the children and the congregation discover the truth that Jesus was born to save us all from sin and death forever.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

Join us for a children's Christmas service in which detectives search for clues to discover **Who Came to Bethlehem?** Mini-dramas, rhyming recitations, Bible readings, meditations, hymns and prayers all serve as evidence to help the detectives, the children and the congregation find out the truth that Jesus was born to save us all from sin and death forever.

Bulletin Notice

Tonight in this children's Christmas service we assist detectives searching for clues to discover **Who Came to Bethlehem?** Mini-dramas, rhyming recitations, Bible readings, meditations, hymns and prayers all serve as evidence to help the detectives, the children and the congregation find out the truth that Jesus was born to save us all from sin and death forever.

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Notes for Leaders

Speaking Parts and Songs: The Meditation may be read by the pastor or another worship leader. Older children may read the eight Bible passages presenting "Clues from the Christmas Story" and "Clues from the Prophets." (These passages may be divided by verses, if necessary, to allow for more readers.) There are rhyming speaking parts for two "detectives" and 35 other children (these parts may be combined as needed for fewer speakers). The hymn "Away in a Manger" is sung by the children; other children's Christmas songs or choir anthems may be added to the service as needed.

Set, Costumes and Props: The two detective characters may be dressed as police detectives or as "Sherlock Holmes and Watson" characters. Each detective should carry an exaggerated, oversized magnifying lens (these can be made from a large embroidery hoop, round picture frame or round wire loop attached to a dowel rod, painted or covered in colored tape; the hoops can be open, without glass or plastic lenses). A manger and simple bench for the nativity scene should be placed at the center of the chancel area. Mary (with a doll for baby Jesus), Joseph and as many angels and shepherds as needed should wear biblical costumes.

Nativity Scene: Children in costume may portray Mary (carrying the Baby Jesus in her arms), Joseph, the shepherds and angels. They should come forward from the side or up the center aisle and take their places in the chancel area at the times designated during the service. At the close of the service, after the hymn "Silent Night," these costumed characters may lead the children's recessional down the center aisle.

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Complete Script

[The children, except for the two detectives and the nativity characters, may enter during this opening hymn.]

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Vom Himmel Hoch LM:

From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made.

How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us his own dear Son.

Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.

- The **Invocation** is spoken by the pastor:

P We gather to worship on this holy night in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- The **Responsive Reading** (*From Isaiah 9 and Galatians 4*) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder,

C And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom,

C To establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

P But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law,

C So that we might receive adoption as sons.

- The **Prayer** is read by the pastor:

P Heavenly Father, through your prophets you promised to send an Anointed One, a descendant of the great King David. When the right time finally came, you sent forth your only Son to save us. The Child of Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord, would grow to adulthood and take up his road to the cross, there to suffer and die for the sins of the world. In the gift of your crucified and risen Son, through faith in his name, we receive forgiveness and eternal life. Accept our songs of praise as we gather on this holy night in Jesus' name to celebrate his birth. Amen.

- A **Congregation Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Tempus Adest Floridum 76 76 D:

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the Undefiled, to the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth, wise men sought and found him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth glory all around him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
He is still the Undefiled but no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth, beautiful the story;
Praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glory!

- The **Meditation: So Many Questions!** is delivered by the pastor:

P Have you ever noticed how many Christmas hymns ask questions? We've sung two such hymns already: "Who is this child so young and fair?" "Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?" We will sing more questions—listen for them: "What child is this?" "Why lies he in such mean estate?" "Shepherds, why this jubilee?" "What the gladsome tidings be?" A child was born on that first Christmas night. His mother certainly knew who he was, as did Joseph and the angels, but others had questions about Mary's baby boy. Even when the shepherds told everyone what they learned from the angels, people wanted to know more. The reading from Luke's Gospel tells us: "All who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them." People may have been asking each other: Just who is this child?

Long ago God had promised to send a Savior. Down through the ages, again and again in the words of the prophets, God described his Promised One. The one to come would crush the power of that ancient serpent, Satan. The Coming One would be a little child, a baby born of a virgin. He would be a King, a mighty Son of David who would reign forever. He would be a suffering Servant and a Lamb led silently to slaughter. He would be the Messiah, the Christ, which means "the Anointed One." With so many and varied descriptions, it is no wonder that many people wondered then, as they still wonder today: "Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?"

Our children are going to tell us how God kept his promise. Let's listen as our "detectives" try to unravel some of these ancient and mysterious clues to help us find an answer to the question: "Who came to Bethlehem?"

- The **Presentation by the Children** begins with a **Detective Dialogue**, spoken by 2 speakers: Detective 1 and Detective 2:

[The two detectives come up the center aisle to the front of the church, examining hymnals, the floor and even people's faces with their magnifying lenses as they walk forward. They talk to each other as they look around, making comments: "Look, I think this hymnal is a clue!" "There are footprints here on the carpet! Maybe we should follow them!" (Asking a member:) "Where were you on the night of December 24?" They reach the chancel area and after examining the carpet, steps and manger, they turn and speak to the congregation.]

Detective 1: Something strange has happened here;
We'll solve the mystery—have no fear!

Detective 2: In Bethlehem, in David's town,
A mystery guest waits to be found!

Detective 1: Who came to Bethlehem that night?
Let's bring some hidden clues to light!

Detective 2: We'll hear God's Word and find each clue.
Someone came. Do you know who?

- **Clues from the Christmas Story** from Luke 2:1-5 is delivered by a reader:

R In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

- **A Recitation** is delivered by 6 speakers, during which Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus arrive:

1. Caesar said in his decree:
"Everyone owes tax to me!"
2. "All the world I must count
So people pay the right amount!"
3. Joseph hears and must obey,
He, too, Caesar's tax must pay.
4. His ancestors once wore the crown,
So he must go to David's town.

5. So Joseph walked, up hill and down,
To Bethlehem, to David's town.
6. His wife to be, his Mary mild,
Came with him and she was with child.

[Joseph and Mary, carrying the baby, come up the center aisle. They are seated at the manger, but Mary keeps the child in her arms, covered and hidden. The detectives watch them arrive and then speak their lines.]

- A Detective Dialogue is spoken by the 2 detectives:

Detective 1: So Joseph, then, and Mary came,
And someone else...what was his name?

Detective 2: Let's find more clues! What can be found?
Who else came to David's town?

[The detectives pick up a Bible and examine it with their magnifying lenses, opening it and pointing to a verse.]

Detective 1: The prophets said that God would send
His Promised One, the sinners' friend.

Detective 2: The Promised One, so says one clue,
Will be a baby born for you!

- Clues from the Prophets from Isaiah 9:6-7 is delivered by a reader:

¶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

- A Recitation is spoken by 3 speakers:

7. We know that when this child is grown,
He'll be a king on David's throne.
8. A crown will rest upon his head.
"His kingdom will not end," God said.

Tune..... Vom Himmel Hoch LM

A musical score for two voices (Soprano and Bass) in common time. The Soprano part (top staff) starts with a half note followed by eighth-note chords. The Bass part (bottom staff) starts with a half note followed by eighth-note chords. The score consists of two staves, each with four measures. Measure 1: Soprano has a half note, then eighth-note chords. Bass has a half note, then eighth-note chords. Measure 2: Soprano has eighth-note chords. Bass has eighth-note chords. Measure 3: Soprano has eighth-note chords. Bass has eighth-note chords. Measure 4: Soprano has a half note, then eighth-note chords. Bass has a half note, then eighth-note chords.

Creative
Communications
Sample

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Vom Himmel Hoch LM:

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To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made.

How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us his own dear Son.

Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.