

AMAZING

*grace*  
in a Manger

A  
CHILDREN'S  
CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE



# AMAZING *grace* in a Manger

## A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

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# AMAZING *Grace* in a Manger

## A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

### Notes for Leaders

#### Speaking Parts

There are six sections with a total of 54 lines that can be assigned to three or more children. If there is a large number of children available for speaking parts, different children can be assigned to each of the six sections. There are also 14 Scripture readings (indicated by an **R** in the script), which can be read by one or more child(ren) or an adult. Longer readings can also be broken up to accommodate the number of parts needed. Children may also be assigned as "Leaders" of liturgy and prayers. All those with numbered speaking parts are angels and should be dressed in angel costumes (such as white robes with optional halos and/or wings). Note where extra non-speaking angels in angel costumes can enter and exit, if desired, depending on the number of children you have available.

#### Children's Songs

Songs by children are indicated in the script and include verses of "Amazing Grace," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Joy to the World" and "Away in a Manger" (for youngest children). Additionally, children can be assigned verses for congregational hymns if

## Amazing Grace That Secures Hope

*(Children sing)*

The Lord has promised good to me,

His Word my hope secures;

He will my shield and portion be

As long as life endures.

### Recitation by the Children

Song by Young Children..... Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,

The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,

But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.

I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky.

And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with thee there.

### Amazing Grace That Gives Eternal Life

*(Congregation sings)*

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

*(Children sing)*

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who called me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

Recitation by the Children

Song by Congregation..... Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,  
Once for ev'ry sinner slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of his train;  
Alleluia, alleluia! Christ the Lord returns to reign.

Yea, amen, let all adore thee,  
High on thine eternal throne;  
Savior, take the pow'r and glory,  
Claim the kingdom as thine own.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Thou shalt reign, and thou alone!

Amazing Grace That Tunes Our Voices

*(Children and congregation sing)*

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

Recitation by the Children

Song by Children ..... Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King:

Let ev'ry heart prepare him room

And heav'n and nature sing,

And heav'n and nature sing,

And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

Let men their songs employ,

While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

## Offering

## Closing Prayer

☞ Thank you, Lord, for sending these children, your precious messengers, to bring your Word to us this day. May we respond in praise and thanksgiving for your amazing grace in a manger—our Savior, Jesus, as we spread this good news wherever we go. Amen.

## Benediction

- ☐ May Jesus, God's amazing grace in a manger, open your eyes, crush your fear, protect your coming and going, instill in you the hope of eternal life, and tune your voices to sing his praises this Christmas and forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Medley ..... Away in a Manger/Amazing Grace

*(Children sing)*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

*(Congregation sings)*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

*(Children sing)*

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky.  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.



*(Congregation sings)*

Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come:

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

*(Children sing)*

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay

Close by me forever and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,

And take us to heaven to live with thee there.

# AMAZING *grace* in a Manger

## A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

### Complete Script

Pre-Service Music

As We Gather

*As we prepare for worship, pray that the sounds of hymns, God's Word and children's voices will draw you to God's amazing grace in a manger—Jesus—and that all of the blessings he brings will resonate in your heart.*

Processional Hymn ..... Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled

Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies

With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,

Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

### Invocation and Call to Worship (with selections from Luke 2)

**L** In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Hear the sound of the angels declaring, "Fear not, for behold, I bring good news of great joy that will be for all people."

**C** Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!

**L** Hear the announcement of God's promise delivered: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

**C** Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound!

**L** Hear the song of angels and mankind together praising God:

**C** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

### Prayer of the Day

**L** Heavenly Father, tune our hearts and open our eyes to receive the message proclaimed by the children whom you sent to bring us the joyous message of Jesus' birth and the amazing gifts he brings. Give us new insight into the Christmas story and inspire us to worship with a sense of awe and with great joy. Amen.

## A Meditation

Ⓛ Amazing grace! How sweet the sound. We all know the hymn. It's been a favorite of Christians for a long time. In fact, this year marks the 250th anniversary of the hymn. You may be thinking, "That's nice, but what does this song have to do with Christmas?" The truth is, the birth of Jesus is God's amazing grace. Jesus is the embodiment of God's underserved love (that's what grace means), lying in a manger, sent to save a wretch like me; like you. He came to seek and save the lost. He came to open the eyes of the blind, whose vision of God is clouded by worldly ideals and ungodly ways because of sin. He came to crush fear and restore our reverence and awe of our heavenly Father. He came to protect us from the power of Satan who wants to pull us away from God's grace. He came to give hope to the hopeless with the promise of eternal life with him where there will be no more crying or pain. And he came to tune our hearts toward him and put a new song in our mouths—a song of praise to our God—a song that all who believe in him will sing around his throne in heaven for eternity. So, what does the hymn "Amazing Grace" have to do with Christmas? Everything! Now let's listen to the sweet sound of our children who will proclaim this good news of Jesus' birth—God's amazing grace in a manger.

### Amazing Grace That Opens Eyes

*(Children sing)*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found;

Was blind, but now I see.

*(All those with numbered speaking parts are angels  
in angel costumes, gathered behind the manger.)*

\_\_\_ 1. Today is the day! Are you all ready, angels? The Savior God promised will soon be born, and we get to make the announcement.

\_\_\_ 2. I've been practicing our song all morning. I can't wait!

\_\_\_ 3. *(Pointing ahead)* Look! Here come Mary and Joseph. They've made it to Bethlehem just in time for the baby to be born.

*(Mary and Joseph walk from back toward manger.)*

\_\_\_ 4. Bethlehem has waited a long time for this moment. God's prophet, Micah, told everyone that something big would happen here.

Ⓜ O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. (Micah 5:2)

\_\_\_ 5. Something big is about to happen here. *(laughing)* Or should I say, something small. And God has put everything in place for it to happen.

Ⓜ 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, who was with child. (Luke 2:1-5)

*(Mary and Joseph sit on either side of manger.)*

Ⓜ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

\_\_\_ 6. *(Looking into manger)* Here he is. Baby Jesus, God's amazing grace in a manger.

\_\_\_ 7. Aw. Little Jesus is crying.

\_\_\_ 8. How sweet the sound of this baby's cry. His cry is a reminder that he will suffer the punishment for all people's sins in order to save them.

\_\_\_ 9. People have wandered from God's ways. Because of their sin, they're lost and separated from God.

\_\_\_ 10. And they're blind to God's goodness and don't know how desperately they need him.

\_\_\_ 11. But this child has come to open their eyes and lead people back to God's loving arms, where they will be safe forever.

\_\_\_ 12. It's just like God's prophet Isaiah said.

Ⓜ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped ... and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing. (Isaiah 35:5, 10a)

\_\_\_ 13. ( *Holding up the first heart, then placing it on manger*) Amazing grace indeed! Here for all to see.

### Song by Congregation.....Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates

Lift up your heads, you mighty gates! Behold the King of glory waits.

The King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Life and salvation he doth bring; therefore rejoice and gladly sing.

To God the Father raise your joyful songs of praise.

Come see the baby, meek and small, who gives amazing grace to all.

The Child who in a manger cries has pow'r to open ev'ry eye

To see the glory of the Lord and all the love that he outpoured.

To Christ the Savior raise your grateful hymns of praise.

### Amazing Grace That Crushes Fear

*(Children sing)*

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed!

*(Shepherds enter in area right or left of manger scene.)*

\_\_\_ 14. *(Motioning for other angels to follow and walking toward shepherds)* Come on, angels. We're up.

Ⓜ In the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night

\_\_\_ 15. *(Pointing to shepherds)* I kind of hate sneaking up on them like this. Aren't we going to scare them?

\_\_\_ 16. Nah! Once they hear the good news we have for them, their fear will be crushed. Just watch. *(Stepping toward shepherds)*

Ⓜ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

\_\_\_ 17. I told you so.

\_\_\_ 18. *(Shaking head, then speaking to shepherds)* Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

\_\_\_ 19. *(Stepping toward shepherds)* For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

\_\_\_ 20. *(Stepping toward shepherds)* And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

*(Extra non-speaking angels in angel costumes may enter and join in following chorus.)*

\_\_\_ 21. *(To angels)* Everybody! *(All angels together)* Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

*(Extra non-speaking angels in angel costumes exit. Shepherds go to manger. Angels with numbered speaking parts stay.)*

Ⓜ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-16)

\_\_\_ 22. The shepherds will get to see just how precious God's amazing grace is when they meet baby Jesus.

\_\_\_23. Jesus is the one who has the power to crush everyone's fears. Instead, they will learn what it's like to live in awe of God's mighty power and unconditional love.

\_\_\_24. Pretty soon, all of Bethlehem will hear the good news.

Ⓜ When they saw [Jesus], they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told unto them. (Luke 2:17-20)

*(Shepherds run toward back and exit.)*

\_\_\_25. Now all of Bethlehem can celebrate. *(Holding up second heart)* God's amazing grace through Jesus crushes fear! *(Place second heart on manger.)*

Song by Children .....O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,

Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel.