

Meet the Cast – all age service



A all-age service outline to go with the **SGM Lifewords** booklet *Christmas: Meet the Cast*.

- **Welcome, carol and opening prayer**
- Children sing – “We bring you good news at Christmas” (to the tune – “we wish you a merry Christmas)

We bring you good news at Christmas x3
Christ Jesus is born

Make Jesus your King
Give your life to him
We bring you good news at Christmas
Christ Jesus is born

And we won't go until we've told you! X3
Christ Jesus is born

- ‘Producer’ enters. (Holding clipboard etc.)

Stage (front of church) bare with box of props at back, children sitting around the sides of stage half- facing congregation.

Producer explains they're ready for performance/rehearsal of Christmas presentation

“Let's get ready to *meet the cast*.”

Chooses children to be Mary/Joseph/shepherds/wise men/Herod. (Children may know who they are in advance). Give each either full costume, headdress, or one prop from a props box – eg

Mary – sewing

Joseph – staff or carpentry tool

Shepherds – toy sheep/crooks

Wise men – gifts

Herod – crown

Each character or group of characters sit in different part of stage

Producer – “Most important! The star of the show is Jesus Son of God!”

Enthusiastic applause!

Producer explains to congregation that their part is to read out the words that come up on PowerPoint (or OHP or held up)

Producer calls Mary to centre stage –

PP “Shocking news!

(producer to encourage congregation, if not joining in enthusiastically!)

(All children show shocked faces!)

[there will need to be someone facing the children to prompt them with the actions and gestures]

Reader: “Mary was engaged to Joseph. God sent the angel Gabriel with a message for Mary.”

Enter Angel Gabriel – mimes speaking to Mary.

Reader: “Don’t be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son named Jesus.”

PP “That’s impossible – she can’t be pregnant!”

(All children shake heads.)

Reader: “Mary asked how this could happen?

Gabriel replied, “Nothing is impossible for God!”

(Mary and Gabriel sit down)

PP “What will Joseph say?”

(All children shrug shoulders and shake heads)

Producer leads Joseph to centre stage.

Joseph paces up and down

Reader : “The wedding’s off!”

Joseph lies down to sleep. Gabriel stands over him.

Reader: "Mary's baby is from God. He will save the world" Go ahead and marry her.

Mary joins Joseph. Both sit down

- **Song**

PP "Things get even more complicated..."

(All children rotate fingers either side of their head)

("trumpet fanfare" acted out by all children) Child stands up and reads:

"Emperor Augustus calls a census of everyone. Go to your home towns to be counted"

Mary and Joseph stand up and walk to sign saying "Bethlehem" at back of stage, as reader reads:

"Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. Mary's baby was soon to be born." They sit down behind crib as reader reads:

"Mary gave birth to God's son, Jesus, in a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn."

PP "Is this the end of the story?"

(All children make "cutting" gestures with hands)

- **Song**

PP "What happens next?"

(All children spread out hands and look at one another)

Producer brings shepherds to centre stage as reader reads:

"That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep"

Angel Gabriel and other children (particularly suitable for under 5s) wearing star headdresses (or other "angelic" props!) stand behind shepherds.

Reader: "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you!"

- Angels sing (to tune – Row, row your boat)

Jesus, Jesus Christ,
He is born today,
He will be the Lord of all,
Hip, hip, hip, hooray.

Go and worship him,
Lying in the hay,
He will be the Lord of all,
Hip, hip, hip, hooray.

Shepherds run to stable and join tableau.
Angels stand at back of tableau.

- **Song** (During song all except Mary and Joseph sit down)

PP “But not everyone is so happy...”
(All children scowl and fold arms)

Producer stands Herod at one side of stage as reader reads:

“When Jesus was born, a man named Herod was King.”

Producer to set off wise men walking round church (following child holding up star) as reader reads:

“Wise men from eastern lands followed a star to Jerusalem looking for a newborn king.”

Wise men stand before Herod as reader reads:

“Go and find the baby king then come back and tell me.”

Wise men and star carry on to the tableau as reader reads:

“They followed the star to baby Jesus.....and worshipped him as their king.

PP “The wise men wise up!”
(All children do “thumbs up”)

Wise men kneel and give gifts then run and sit down as reader reads:

“God warned them not to go back to Herod!”

PP “Outwitted!”

(All children shake fists and stamp feet)

Herod stands up and stamps about as reader reads:

“Herod was furious! He sent soldiers to kill all the baby boys.”

PP “Jesus escapes”

(All children shout “hooray!”)

Reader: “The child Jesus grew. He became strong and wise, and God blessed him.”

PP “and that was just the beginning....”

(All children run on the spot)

Producer brings Mary to centre stage and says

“Mary knew her baby was the Son of God”

He brings Joseph to join her and says

“Joseph was told that Jesus was born to be Saviour”

Shepherds join them

“The shepherds were excited because this baby was the Lord”

Wise men are added

“The wise men worshipped them as their new King”

Herod is added

“Herod saw Jesus as a threat, and wanted to get rid of him”

Producer to look out to all and say

“What about you? Jesus says “Who do you say I am?””

- **Song**

Producer to repeat

“Jesus says “Who do you say I am?””

- **Optional short talk** on “What about you? Who do you say I am?”
- **Popcorn praise** - Children and adults to shout out together:
“Thank you Jesus that you are (Lord, king, Saviour, friend etc)
- **Prayer and final song.**

Suggested songs:

Come and join the celebration
 Lord I lift your name on high
 Bells they are ringing (Jim Bailey)
 Have you heard the story?*

Talk about Jesus*

O little town of Bethlehem

Hark the herald angels sing

*from “It’s Christmas!” (Children’s Ministry)

Optional extras

- Add a short challenge on “Who do you say I am?” aimed at all ages.
- Beforehand, children to have drawn pictures/written about “who Jesus is” – these can be shown, read out as part of the service (it can be effective to scan in pictures and use as part of a PowerPoint or on acetates)
- Short prayers could be added at various points in the service e.g. after every character discovers who Jesus is. These can be prepared by children beforehand or by adults in congregation – standing up and praying from the body of the congregation.